

**Impossible Possibilities: Hope**  
**First Mennonite Church**  
**December 2, 2018**

Bells call us to worship

Welcome and announcements

Rhonda Winstead

Call to worship

\*Hymn

“Come, thou long-expected Jesus”  
*LuAnn Stuckey*

HWB 178

Special music

“Come Holy Savior, Come” arr. Anna Laura Page and  
*Cherubs* Jean Anne Shafferman

\*Responsive Reading

Isaiah 11:1-2, 6, 9 (CEB)

L: A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse; a branch will sprout from his roots.

**C: The Lord’s spirit will rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding,**

L: a spirit of planning and strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.

**C: The wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat;**

L: the calf and the young lion will feed together, and a little child will lead them.

**C: They won’t harm or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain.**

**ALL: The earth will surely be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, just as the water covers the sea.**

Special music

“Thy Kingdom Come”  
*Chancel Choir*

Mark Sirett

Conversation with friends

Judy Steiner

“Come, light of the world” coming forward, “Come, hope of the world” returning STS 3

Community prayer

Theda Good

Scripture

Isaiah 40:28-31; 2:1-4; 40:9-11

Melissa Friesen  
Justin Paul, Bob Suter  
Emily Rush

Luke 1:67-79

Sermon

“Alive with hopes and dreams”

Wanda Stopher

\*Hymn

“Lift every voice and sing”

HWB 579

Presenting our tithes and offerings

Offertory “Comfort, Comfort Ye My People” setting by K.T. Kosche

\*Hymn of dedication “Gloria” HWB 204

\*Offering words (*read responsively*)

L: We give these gifts, O God, believing the impossible is possible.

**C: May our gifts empower others near and far to hope.**

\*Hymn

“To us a Child of hope is born”

HWB 189

\*Benediction

Postlude

“Savior of the Nations, Come” setting by A.N. Vetter

*\*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

*HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book; STJ – Sing the Journey; STS – Sing the Story*  
*Please ask an usher for assistance in locating large print hymnals.*

*Please note that today's worship coordinates with We Make the Road by Walking, Chapter 14.*

**First Mennonite Church, 101 S. Jackson Street, Bluffton, Ohio 45817**  
**419-358-5766 | [fmcbluffton.org](http://fmcbluffton.org) | Office open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday-Friday**

**Church Staff**

- Pastor Wanda Stopher -- Monday-Thursday, 9-4, off Friday; 419-551-1079 (cell); [fmc.wanda@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc.wanda@bluffton.edu)
- Pastor Theda Good -- Tuesday-Friday, 9-4, off Monday; 419-549-2417 (cell); [fmc.theda@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc.theda@bluffton.edu)
- Interim Children and Youth Ministry Director – Carrie Mast, M-F, 8-10 a.m., [mastc@bluffton.edu](mailto:mastc@bluffton.edu)
- Director of Music – Mark Suderman, 419-230-5368 (cell); [sudermanme@bluffton.edu](mailto:sudermanme@bluffton.edu)
- Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker Steiner, M-F, 9-4, [fmc@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc@bluffton.edu)
- Custodian – Mick Hardy, 7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., weekends as needed

**Host:** Emily Griffioen | **Greeter:** Cheryl Slotter

**Chancel:** Anita Lehman

**Nursery today:** SS – SS – Pat Sheidler, Mitch Kingsley

**Worship** – Sue and Tom Schaaf, Ben Hartzler, Theo Andreas

**Nursery next week:** SS – Rachel Diller, Judy Diller

**Worship** – Carrie Mast, Melissa Friesen, Jacob Biesecker Mast

**OUR STEWARDSHIP**

Worship attendance last Sunday	FMC-188, MC-6
Volunteer hours Nov. 18-24, 2018	135.5
Spending plan giving Nov. 25, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$3,366.00
Special fund giving Nov. 25, 2018 (includes e-giving): K-5-\$2.23; Sojourners-\$15; Faith/Life-\$7	
Freudige-\$10; Faithful Living-\$5; SHYF- \$480; Kitchen service-\$6.89; Deacons-\$20;	
AR Ramseyer Memorials-\$30; Building fund-\$100	\$935.12
Total giving Nov. 25, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$4,301.12
Total spending plan receipts as of October 31, 2018	\$295,445.65
Spending plan expenses as of October 31, 2018	\$326,562.24
2018 spending plan	\$427,441.00

*First Mennonite Church is affiliated with the Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA. The Mennonites are named after Menno Simons, one of our early church leaders, and are rooted historically in the "Anabaptist" movement, which began in 1525, with origins in Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands now reaching around the world. Some primary Anabaptist convictions then and now are following Jesus Christ in service to others, rejection of violence and war, and joyful community life.*

*Impossible Possibilities:*

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**Unsigned notes:** Periodically the church office and/or a staff member receives unsigned notes commenting on a concern regarding First Mennonite. When we don't know who's delivering a message, we are unable to ask questions or to follow up. Therefore, please understand that we will not act on anonymous notes. We do appreciate your concerns in writing with your signature or shared in person.

-- FMC Staff

**Bluffton University schedule:**

**Dec. 2** – Holiday Collage Concert, 2:30 p.m., Yoder Recital Hall

**Dec. 2** – Tree lighting ceremony, following concert, approximately 4:30 p.m., Houshower House

**Dec. 4** – Music Department, “Christmas Festival,” 11 a.m., Yoder Recital Hall

**Dec. 9** – Messiah Concert, 4 p.m., Yoder Recital Hall

*In response to God's unconditional love for all people, we joyfully and unconditionally welcome you to join us on our journey of faith in Jesus Christ. We are committed to breaking down dividing walls and building community where all are loved and accepted. We believe in active inclusion and invite each one to participate in the life and ministry of our congregation.*

**CALENDAR**

**Today, Dec. 2, 2018**

9:15 a.m.	SS, coffee time
10:30 a.m.	Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching
Noon	Connections potluck
4:30 p.m.	Learning circle, AR
5:30 p.m.	Learning circle, supper provided, FH
6:30 p.m.	Learning circle, Maple Crest

**December 3-8, 2018**

Tuesday (12-4)	Morning prayers, 7 a.m. Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor Farmers Market annual dinner, 4-9 p.m., FH
Wednesday (12-5)	Adult bells and cherubs, 6 p.m. Jubilate, 6:30 p.m. Chancel choir and youth bells, 7 p.m.
Thursday (12-6)	Community meal, 6 p.m., senior center, FMC/MPS providing

**Next Sunday, December 9, 2018**

9:15 a.m.	SS, Coffee time
10:30 a.m.	Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching

*Welcome to our worship service today. If you are a visitor, please sign one of our guest books located at the entrances to the sanctuary. Wireless hearing aids are available. If you would like your children cared for while you worship, our nursery is downstairs in the church. Worship activity bags for children are available.*

### **New announcements**

**These members of SYF and JHYF** return today from their weekend at Camp Friedenswald work camp. Theo Andreas, Jacob Biesecker-Mast, Patrick Estell, Sophia Gott, Ben Hartzler, Ana Neufeld Weaver, Ellie and Ethan Nickel, Grace Pacquin, Makayla, Elam and Jacob Suter, John-Paul Yoder, and their sponsors, Walt Paquin, Carrie Mast, and Greg Hartzler.

### **Learning Circle changes for December:**

- \*Theda's Learning Circle will meet only on Dec. 9 from 4:30-5:30 p.m. in the assembly room.
- \*The Maple Crest Learning Circle will meet only on Dec. 9 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

**December 16 will be a busy day at FMC**, beginning with the SHYF's pancake breakfast fundraiser from 8:30-9:30 a.m. At 9:45 a.m., the children in preschool through fifth grade will retell the nativity story in the sanctuary. *(Please note that this event replaces the children's program previously held in afternoon or evening.)* Then at 6 p.m., we'll wind up the day with an intergenerational Christmas caroling at Mennonite Memorial Home and Maple Crest, returning to the church for snacks and hot beverages. All are encouraged to attend all three events!

**All are invited to attend the annual holiday brunch** at 9:15 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 30, in the fellowship hall. Please bring food to share: breakfast casseroles, fruit, breads, coffee cakes, muffins, cookies, etc. Coffee, tea, and juice will be provided. **Please bring your own table service.** There will be no Sunday school that morning.

-- *Nurture Commission*

**Mary Blosser is recovering** at Mennonite Memorial Home following a stroke. Our support and encouragement are appreciated.

**Geneva Shetler has pneumonia** and is receiving hospice care at Mennonite Memorial Home. Our prayers for Geneva, Luther and their family are appreciated.

### **New in the literature rack:**

- \* The November issue of the Central District "Reporter"
- \* Mennonite Mission Network's fall 2018 "Beyond" magazine is now available. If you prefer to read "Beyond" electronically, you'll find the current issue (as well as past issues) at: <https://www.mennonitemission.net/resources>
- \* MMN's December "Prayer Vine"

### **Reminders**

**The First Mennonite group subscriptions of "The Mennonite"** are up for renewal. If you are already subscribing as part of our church group rate, you have been contacted via e-mail or phone. If you are NOT currently a subscriber through First Mennonite but would like to join, please notify the church office at [fmc@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc@bluffton.edu) **by December 9**. Cost for the upcoming year's subscription is \$37.

**Habitat for Humanity needs your help** on Tuesday, Dec. 4 at Bluffton University. At 9 a.m., volunteers are needed to load furniture: (45 desks, 35 hutches for those desks, 25 dressers and 12 bunk beds) at Lincoln Hall on campus. The furniture is being donated to the Lima Habitat for Humanity ReStore. The money raised from the resale of these items will help build affordable, decent homes in the Lima area. Please contact Mark Suderman, volunteer coordinator, at [mark@habitatlima.org](mailto:mark@habitatlima.org) or 419-222-4937.

**A Red Cross blood drive** will be held Thursday, Dec. 13 in the fellowship hall from 1-6 p.m. If you can provide cookies, help with registration, make sandwiches, help serve food, or unload and load the truck with their equipment, add your name to the sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall. ***To schedule your blood donation appointment***, call 1-800-RED-CROSS or go to [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org), sponsor code "fmennobl."

**If you prefer to receive electronic copies rather than paper copies of documents distributed by the church office, please notify the church office at [fmc@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc@bluffton.edu). Examples of these documents include seasonal brochures at Advent and Lent/Easter, as well as the Menno-Life and Central District Conference's Reporter and Focus.**