

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH

Weekly Announcements 8-16-2020

First Mennonite Church, 101 S. Jackson Street, Bluffton, Ohio 45817

419-358-5766 | fmcbluffton.org | Staff working from home

- Pastor Wanda Stopher – Monday-Thursday, 9-4, off Friday, 419-551-1079; wanda@fmcbluffton.org
- Pastor Theda Good – Tuesday-Friday, 9-4, off Monday; 419-549-2417; theda@fmcbluffton.org
- Children and Youth Ministry Director – Carrie Mast, 419-230-1568, mastc@bluffton.edu
- Director of Music – Mark Suderman, 419-230-5368 (cell); sudermanme@bluffton.edu
- Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker Steiner, fmc@fmcbluffton.org, 419-358-5766

Sunday, August 16, 2020

Taste and See SS, Zoom, 9:15 a.m.,

<https://zoom.us/j/342273765>

Sojourners SS, Zoom, 9:15 a.m.,

<https://zoom.us/j/4193583208>

Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching, 10:30 a.m.

Learning circle, Zoom, 6 p.m.,

<https://zoom.us/j/4193585766>,

contact Carrie Mast for password

August 17-22

Tuesday (Aug. 18) Morning prayers, Zoom, 7 a.m.,

<https://zoom.us/j/93803392337>

Staff meeting, Zoom, 9 a.m.

Thursday (Aug. 20) Deacons, 7 p.m.

Sunday, August 23, 2020

Sojourners SS, Taste and See SS, Zoom, 9:15 a.m.

Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching, 10:30 a.m.

Learning circle, Zoom, 6 p.m.

Happy birthday

Aug. 17 – Lisa Shelly

Kim Suter

Aug. 19 – Neil Kehler

Aug. 20 – Bruce Steingass

Aug. 21 – Mustaq Ahmed

Kay Huber

John Murray

Aug. 23 – Jeff Boehr

In-person pastoral visits are being scheduled on porches, patios, or pavements. Please contact Pastor Theda by email or text to get on her program.

The Racial Justice Ministry held conversation and brainstorming on August 4. Participants identified different ideas that the congregation could act on to work toward racial justice and also resources that could help support this work. One key outcome was to rename the group from the *Anti-Racism Ministry* to *Racial Justice Ministry* in an effort to define the group's work in terms of what it is for rather than what it opposes. Conversations will continue throughout the year and all will be invited to join to offer feedback at various times. Others may be called on to provide expertise or wisdom! To read a condensed version of this list, you may access this shared Google doc:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ch4QZkMSpfoXb8LDiOnlzZsrrgewkibP4y4dBlxnd1Y/edit?usp=sharing>. If you'd like to receive a printed copy via your church mailbox, please email Brent

Schroeder at brentschroeder@gmail.com or Jan Wiebe at wiebe.jan@gmail.com.

Save the date: A Zoom gathering of thanks and best wishes for Pastor Theda will be held Sunday, Sept. 13, at 2 p.m. Many individuals will participate in this FMC farewell event of celebration and fellowship to share memories and honor Theda. Closer to Sept. 13, we will provide specific zoom link information. Plan to join us!

Starting in September, the Taste and See Sunday school class will explore another way to “taste and see” the goodness and nearness of God. We will use *The Book of Creation: An Introduction to Celtic Spirituality* by J. Philip Newell. Participants are welcome to read the short book if they want to, and we will practice the suggested meditations during our time together on Sunday mornings. Celtic spirituality draws deeply on the beauty and wildness of creation, and the correlating beauty and wildness in God and in ourselves. Anyone is welcome to join! We meet at 9:15 on Sunday mornings on Zoom with this link: <https://zoom.us/j/342273765>

Prayer concerns

We remember Cheryl Zehr Walker and her daughters, Kate and Emily, in the sudden and tragic loss of Steve Walker. Steve was involved in running the sound system at First Mennonite when they lived in Bluffton and attended FMC 10-15 years ago. A service will be held later. Memorial contributions may be made to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center or Beyond Celiac or an organization of your choice.

Reminders

The Reopening Task Force continues to meet and discuss the ever-changing Covid-19 events and guidelines as they pertain to churches. We are developing a detailed plan for FMC with guidelines for a safe return to face-to-face gatherings. *Covid-19 Guidelines for Gathering* will outline four levels of distancing with respect to facilities, worship, programs and fellowship. We will parallel our levels with the state's yellow, orange, red and purple levels. We hope to share this plan with the congregation by the early part of September. In the meantime, any questions, concerns or suggestions may be directed to any member of the task force.

*~ Rita Dietrich, Theda Good, Monica Harnish, Carrie Mast, Karen McCullough,
Mary Pannabecker Steiner, Wanda Stopher, Mark Suderman, Lois Wetherill*

Because of your generous donations to FMC's scholarship fund, nine students will receive \$1,000 scholarships to attend Mennonite colleges during the 2020-21 school year, \$500/semester, which will be matched by the colleges. Students include Christopher Harnish and Ana Neufeld Weaver, Goshen College; Isaac Andreas, Seth Andreas, Cassidy Bush, Sophia Gott and Douglas Nester, Eastern Mennonite University; and Nthathi Phetlhu and Therisanyo Phetlhu, Bluffton University. Thank you for your contributions to the scholarship program. Your continued assistance makes it possible to provide annual scholarships to sustain this ongoing ministry of FMC. If you have not yet contributed, now is a great time to consider a financial investment in the lives and education of students from our congregation, supporting Mennonite higher education in the process.

Our Connections

The Western Ohio Unit of Mennonite Disaster Service had planned to open an overnight volunteer project in Dayton in April, in response to the 2019 Memorial Day tornadoes that devastated the Dayton metropolitan region. As a result of the pandemic, all MDS projects were closed and put on indefinite hold. Planning for an eventual opening continued between MDS bi-national and regional staff, along with WOU officers and the Dayton long-term recovery group, and in consultation with local and state health officials, work has begun. We currently are using local, day-only volunteers, who commit to following COVID-19 guidelines. Lynn Miller is serving as project director and Lawrence Matthews is the WOU chairperson. Others from our congregation may also soon be involved. Please keep this work, volunteers, and Dayton homeowners in your thoughts and prayers.

~ Lawrence Matthews

This year's annual Ohio Michigan relief sale and auction has been replaced with an online auction. The online timed auction will begin September 26 and close bidding October 3 at noon. Handcrafted quilt comforters, wall hangings, wood items, tools, silent auction items, children's auction, blessing bids, specialty items including an MCC centennial commemorative pitcher, will be available. Funds raised will benefit MCC. Learn more at <https://www.ohiomccreliefsale.org/>.

You're invited to view a webinar recorded during CDC annual meeting: Semilla Learning Tour, Wednesday, August 26, 7:30 p.m. EST. In January 2020, eight members of CDC congregations experienced a learning tour with SEMILLA, an Anabaptist seminary serving Latin American Mennonite churches. You'll hear stories from participants, as well as Willie Hugo Perez, executive director of SEMILLA, and hear the mission and vision of SEMILLA. Register at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AsbQMngfTXq8mS73dcDG9g.