

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH
Weekly Announcements 8-16-2020
First Mennonite Church, 101 S. Jackson Street, Bluffton, Ohio 45817
419-358-5766 | fmdbluffton.org | Staff working from home

- **Pastor Wanda Stopher – Monday-Thursday, 9-4, off Friday, 419-551-1079; wanda@fmdbluffton.org**
- **Pastor Theda Good – Tuesday-Friday, 9-4, off Monday; 419-549-2417; theda@fmdbluffton.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@fmdbluffton.org, 419-358-5766**

Sunday, August 23, 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 24-29

Tuesday (Aug. 25) Morning prayers, Zoom, 7 a.m.,

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

Staff meeting, Zoom, 9 a.m.

Thursday (Aug. 27) Council, 7 p.m.

Sunday, August 30, 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. 23 – Jeff Boehr

Aug. 25 – Heidrun Awad

Aug. 26 – Jane Weaver

Aug. 27 – Gary Wetherill

Aug. 28 – Perry Bush

Jerry Tripp

Aug. 29 – Cassidy Bush

Kerry Bush

You're invited...and encouraged!

With the theme of *Voices Together* this fall and with the lack of music ensemble gatherings due to COVID-19, we are planning a time of "special music" from individuals, small groups, or families within the congregation. This time of music will use hymns presented by you, the congregation. These hymns can be from our current collection (HWB, STJ, STS) or from previous hymnals or from the new *Voices Together* hymnal when it arrives. We are hoping that a broad spectrum of our congregation (from old to young, from musically gifted to musically challenged, from family to individuals) will be involved. Each Sunday a hymn will be presented in whatever way you choose: talk about its history, what the text is about, what the hymn means to you, a memory about singing it, or even what singing in general means for you. Then the hymn will be presented: by solo, quartet, piano playing it, playing a video of it if we have it in our files, or Mark will figure out a way to present it. Please contact Mark Suderman if you would like to participate in this venture. We will need 10-12 individuals or groups.

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

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!

GTF is looking for individuals who know the First Mennonite congregation well and can identify strengths, skills and other gifts in others. If you are interested in serving on the new Gifts Discovery ministry this fall and possibly beyond, please contact Gerald Mast, Greg Hartzler, Elizabeth Kelly or Pastor Wanda. You will help us identify people with the gifts to serve as our first Ministry Circle Leaders, other Leadership Circle positions that need to be called, and to help envision ways we can discover gifts that exist in the congregation as we move forward on our path together.

Reminders

The Racial Justice Ministry met virtually August 4 and identified ideas the congregation could act on to work toward racial justice, as well as resources to help support this work. Conversations will continue and all will be invited to offer feedback. Others may be called on to provide expertise. See a condensed version of the list at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ch4QZkMSpfoXb8LDiOnlzSsrgewkibP4y4dBlxnd1Y/edit?usp=sharing>. If you'd like to receive a printed copy via your church mailbox, please email Brent Schroeder at brentrschoeder@gmail.com or Jan Wiebe at wiebe.jan@gmail.com.

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 book; we will practice the suggested meditations during class. Celtic spirituality draws deeply on the beauty and wildness of creation, and the correlating beauty and wildness in God and ourselves. Anyone is welcome to join! We meet at 9:15 a.m. Sundays via Zoom at: <https://zoom.us/j/342273765>

~ Anne Marie Spelman

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 Nthati Phetlhu and Therisanyo Phetlhu, Bluffton University. Thank you for your contributions to the scholarship program.

Our Connections

Bluffton University students returned to campus last weekend and began classes August 17. While some campus events will continue for student participation, events and facilities are closed to visitors for at least the fall semester. While in a normal year BU encourages village residents and families of students, faculty and staff to attend campus events and enjoy campus facilities, during fall semester and maybe the entire year, campus events (music, art and sporting events) and facilities will remain closed to the public. The university hopes to offer livestreaming for some campus performances and events.

The Western Ohio Unit of Mennonite Disaster Service had planned to open a project in Dayton in April in response to the 2019 Memorial Day tornadoes. Because of the pandemic, all MDS projects were put on hold, but planning for an eventual opening continued and work has now begun. Currently, only local, day-only volunteers who commit to following COVID-19 guidelines are involved. Lynn Miller is project director and Lawrence Matthews is the WOU chairperson. Others from FMC may also be involved. Please keep this work, volunteers, and Dayton homeowners in your thoughts and prayers.

~ Lawrence Matthews

In January, 2020, 8 persons participated in a learning tour with SEMILLA, an Anabaptist seminary serving Latin American Mennonite churches. You are invited to join a webinar Aug. 26 at 7:30 p.m. ET, in which you'll hear

stories from the participants and Willie Hugo Perez, executive director of SEMILLA, and learn about the mission and vision of SEMILLA. Click here to register: [Register here](#)

MDS' August edition of *On the Level* is now available. In the current issue, you can read how MDS volunteers are working in Iowa and West Virginia. Click here to read: <https://conta.cc/3gfccYK>