

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH

Weekly Announcements 9-6-2020

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, Sept. 6, 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, Theda Good preaching, 10:30 a.m.

Learning circle, Zoom, 6 p.m.,

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

contact Carrie Mast for password

Sept. 7-12

Monday (Sept. 7) Labor Day, FMC office closed

Tuesday (Sept. 8) Morning prayers, Zoom, 7 a.m.,

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

Staff meeting, Zoom, 9 a.m.

Sunday, Sept. 13, 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.

Pastoral review summary in mailboxes

The First Mennonite constitution outlines the formal process for evaluation of pastors. There is a formal review during the third year of service, extending to a review every five years beyond. Staff Relations Committee initiates the plan for pastoral review about a year in advance of the employment anniversary. During May 2020, Staff Relations met with or received written information from about 50 people from the congregation and from Pastor Theda. You will find copies of the review in your FMC mailbox.

Happy birthday

Sept. 6 – Pete Suter

Sept. 7 – Landon Novak

Sept. 8 – Rachel Diller

Melissa Friesen

Denny Phillips

Sept. 11 – Susan Collier

Looking back and looking forward

When we began meeting virtually last March, we had no idea how long this would last or exactly how our worship would evolve. In March, we kept the order of worship as close to what it had been in person, in part because we were just figuring out how to transfer it to a virtual platform. But keeping things as close as possible to what we had experienced in person was comforting. Along the way, we have adapted and made small changes. Today, however, you may notice a number of differences. These changes are part of an effort to move forward with a plan that we hope will help us when we begin to transition from virtual worship back to gathering in person. We already know we're not likely returning to the way it was in worship or in any aspect of our lives. But we do look forward to the new day when we will gather and worship together. We welcome and appreciate your feedback as we navigate this transition.

~ Mark Suderman, Director of Music
Pastor Wanda

FMC's Reopening Task Force has developed a comprehensive guide for present and future gatherings throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Two documents have been developed. The first is a spreadsheet outlining our planned response to the various levels in the Ohio Public Health Advisory System. The second is a more detailed explanation of what appears in the spreadsheet. These guidelines follow the alert levels and accompanying distancing guidelines used by the state of Ohio, and are based on what we know now. As new information emerges about the virus and as new treatments and vaccines become available, the guidelines may be revised. The two documents were distributed to church members earlier this week and may be accessed on the website at www.fmc@fmcbluffton.org. Click on the "Reopening Guidelines" tab at the top of the home page, then follow the links on that page. Paper copies will be available in the literature rack in the fellowship hall.

Reminders

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. Prior to the event, we will provide the Zoom link. Plan to join us!

With the theme of *Voices Together* this fall, we plan to highlight special music by individuals, small groups, or families within the congregation using hymns from our current collection (HWB, STJ, STS), previous hymnals, or the new *Voices Together* hymnal when it arrives. Each Sunday a hymn will be presented in the way you choose: talk about its history, what the text is about, what the hymn means to you, a memory about singing it, or 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. We will need 10-12 individuals or groups.

GTF is looking for persons 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 Gifts Discovery ministry this fall and possibly beyond, please contact Gerald Mast, Greg Hartzler, Elizabeth Kelly or Pastor Wanda. You will help identify people with the gifts to serve as our first Ministry Circle Leaders, other Leadership Circle positions, and to help envision ways we can discover gifts that exist in the congregation as we move forward on our path together.

The Racial Justice Ministry has identified ways we work toward racial justice, as well as resources to help support this work. Conversations will continue and all will be invited to offer feedback. See the list at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ch4QZkMSpfoXb8LDiOnIzZsrrgewkibP4y4dBxnd1Y/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.

Taste and See Sunday school class will explore *The Book of Creation: An Introduction to Celtic Spirituality* by J. Philip. Celtic spirituality draws on the beauty and wildness of creation, and the correlating beauty and wildness in God and ourselves. All are welcome. Class meets at 9:15 a.m. at <https://zoom.us/j/342273765>

~ Anne Marie Spelman

Our Connections

MCHO Service Group will hold a chicken barbecue fundraiser Saturday, Sept. 26, from 4-6 p.m. with curbside pick-up at Bubba C BBQ, 158 N. Jackson St. Tickets are \$8 from service group members, by email to ivike4850@yahoo.com or by calling or texting 576-204-9232. Money raised will help purchase a new transport van for Mennonite Home.

Ministry Opportunities

Mennonite Disaster Service, Dayton update: Residents in the Dayton area continue to deal with home damage from the 2019 Memorial Day tornadoes. MDS is in need of day volunteers for the next few weeks (M-Sa) to help with work in progress. Scheduling is flexible. The work includes siding, roofing, windows, drywall and other miscellaneous work. Lynn Miller is the project director and Mitch Kingsley is a crew leader as his schedule allows. If you are able to volunteer, contact Lynn at 419.274.9704 or lynnamiller@protonmail.com or Mitch at 419.236.7106.

~ Lawrence Matthews

Habitat for Humanity - Lima Area will build a home in Delphos this fall. Check the Habitat website for updates on when they will need construction volunteers. Funds are also needed. The ReStore is open Thursday-Saturday for shopping and donation drop off. COVID-19 protocols continue for the protection of staff, volunteers, and customers. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are also available for volunteer help but without customers. Please consider volunteering as an individual or as a group. To volunteer or donate, contact Habitat at 419-222-4937, www.habitatlima.org, or habitatlima@habitatlima.org.

Elder Victim Ministry, a program of Crime Victim Services, seeks volunteers interested in checking on the well-being of elders and persons with special needs who live alone and have been a victim of crime. They are a critical connection for many isolated people. Participants are offered friendship, visits, help with problems, safety tips, referrals to other agencies, as well as prayer and messages tailored to his or her needs and faith beliefs. A background check is required of volunteers. Paid mileage and trainings are provided. To learn more, contact Elysia Bush at 419-302-2857 or ebush@crimevictimservices.org.