

**Come! Live in the light of God's heart:
God's Peace is at hand
First Sunday of Advent
November 27, 2016 10:30 a.m.**

— GATHERING —

Processional

Opening Words Carrie Mast, Worship Leader

***Call to Worship**

L: We gather in worship today in the midst of a world filled with violence, conflict and war. We find it difficult to feel hopeful.

C: We too often live as if in a fog. We often feel overwhelmed with hopelessness, doubt and despair.

L: Advent reminds us that peace is at the center of God's heart

C: We gather today longing for peace.

L: As the sun breaks through the fog, may we today see glimmers of light that point to God's peace.

All: Come Jesus, come morning star. As we worship today may we be renewed in our commitment to live in the light of God's heart.

— PRAISING —

***Opening Hymn** "Praise the One who breaks the darkness" STS 1

Candle Lighting

Psalm Reading

Special Music "Come Jesus, Come Morning Star" Linda Cable Shute
Chancel Choir

— PROCLAIMING —

Conversation with Children

Hymn "He came down" - peace Back of hymnal

Conversation Laurel Neufeld Weaver

Hymn "He came down" - peace Back of hymnal

Confession

L: We long to live as a hopeful people.

C: God of peace, we confess that too often we get caught up in the turmoil and pain that we see around us, tempted to take sides in the battle for our hearts.

L: We know your heart, our loving God, yet too often we live limited by shortsightedness and partial understandings.

C: Save us, Lord, from the pride and foolishness of narrowmindedness that prevents seeing others near and far as sisters and brothers.

All: We confess that we too often flounder, failing to live in the light of God's heart.

Hymn "Beauty for brokenness" (*verses 1 & 5, then refrain*) STS 115

Scripture Reading Isaiah 2:1-5

Sermon "Peace Practice" Wanda Stopher

— RESPONDING —

***Hymn of Response** "Christ is the world's true light" HWB 334

Words of Assurance

L: Throughout the tumult of life, God holds you close in love. Rejoice, because God's heart is our heart -- God's peace is our strength, God's compassion is our example, God's heart is our hope.

All: We choose to live in the light of God's peace. We choose to live in the light of God's heart. Grant us the courage to do it.

Pastoral Prayer George O'Reilly

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory "O Come, O Come Immanuel" arr. Peter Terry

— SENDING —

***Hymn** "It came upon a midnight clear" HWB 195

***Benediction**

***Postlude**

**Please stand (remain seated if that is more comfortable for you)*

HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book STS – Sing the Song

Large-print hymnals and bulletins are available on the cabinet next to the parlor.

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH

101 S. Jackson Street

Bluffton, Ohio 45817

Phone: 419-358-5766

Website: fmcbluffton.org

Office Hours: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

Pastor – Wanda – Monday-Thursday, 9-4, off Friday

Pastoral Associate – George – Tuesday-Friday, 9-4, off Monday

Director of Youth Ministries – Shannon -- Tuesday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Custodian's schedule: 7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.; weekends as needed

GREETERS: Ruth Naylor, Rich and Gloria Bucher

HOST: Mary Anne Moser

NURSERY WORKERS TODAY: SS – Marilyn Bishop, Kevin Cluts, Jen Benroth

Worship – Andrea and Tyson Goings, Seth Andreas

NURSERY WORKERS NEXT WEEK: SS – Wendy Chappell-Dick, Bobbie Chappell, Mary

Pannabecker Steiner

Worship – Carrie Mast, Jacob Biesecker-Mast, Rachel Diller

SOUND SYSTEM: Art Shelly

CHANCEL: Anita Lehman

The video of the most recent worship service may be viewed on the church's homepage, www.fmcbluffton.org. Videos normally are posted on the Tuesday following the service. Previously recorded worship service videos may be found at tinyurl.com/fmc-videos

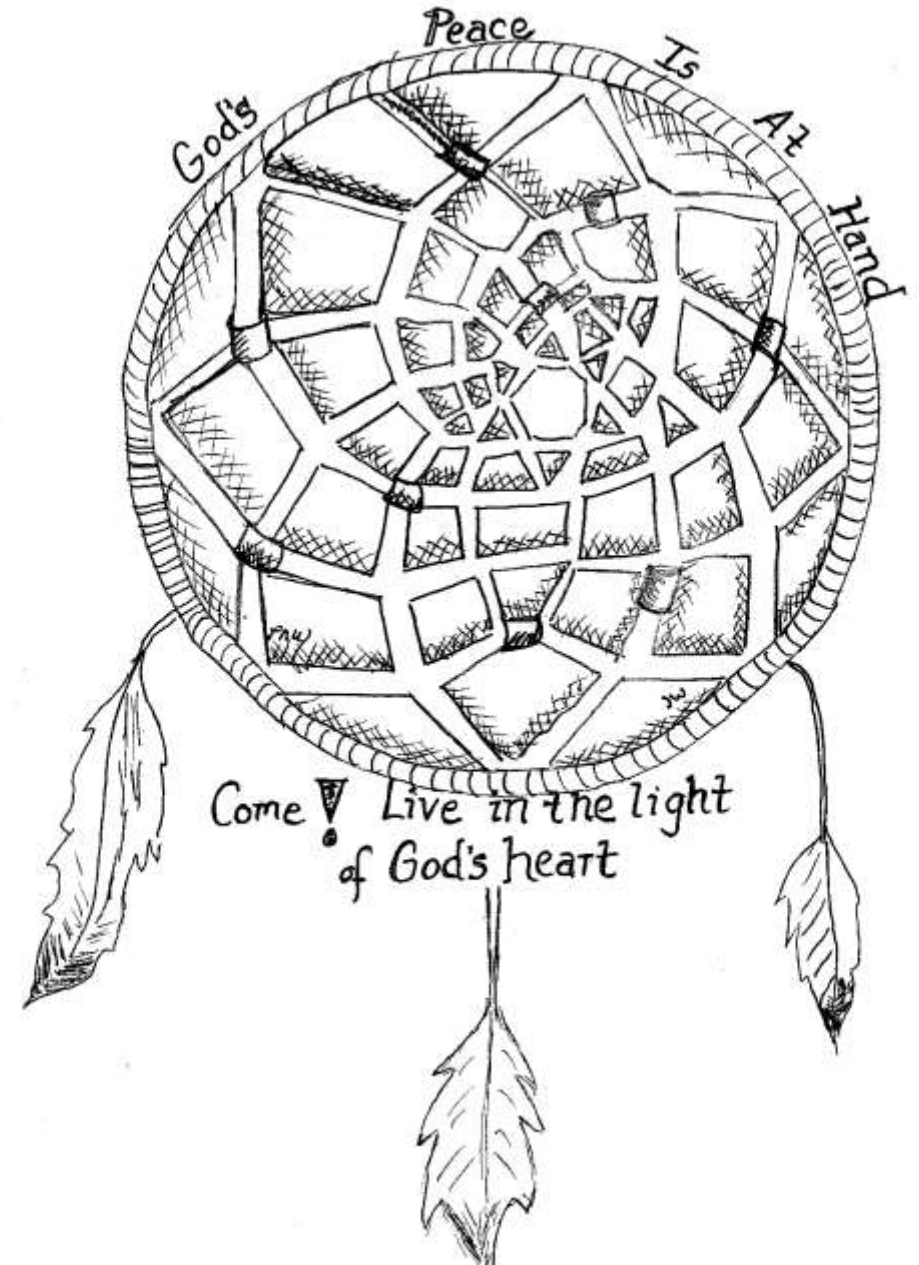
OUR STEWARDSHIP

Worship attendance last Sunday	195
Worship attendance at Maple Crest last Sunday	6
Sunday school attendance last Sunday	89
Spending plan giving Nov. 20, 2016	\$4,288
2016 Proposed spending plan	\$418,276.00
The offering Nov. 20 totaled \$5,296.52. Money was received for these special funds: Grades K-5 - \$1.27, Sojourners - \$1, Faith and Life - \$10, Capital campaign - \$100, Kitchen services - \$6.25, Doris Hamman memorial - \$270, Deacons Benevolent - \$335, MDS - \$100.	

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor – Wanda Stopher – 419-551-1079 (cell) -- fmc.wanda@bluffton.edu
Pastoral Associate – George O'Reilly – 402-619-7099 (cell) – fmc.george@bluffton.edu
Youth Ministry Director – Shannon Thiebeau – fmc.shannon@bluffton.edu
Director of Music – Mark Suderman Organist Coordinator – Lucia Unrau
Custodian – Mick Hardy
Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker - fmc@bluffton.edu

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.



COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bluffton University will present Handel's "Messiah" at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 4, in Founders Hall. Jonathan Wey will conduct. The orchestra includes professional players, as well as Bluffton faculty and staff. Soloists are Leah Crane, soprano; Mitzi Westra, mezzo-soprano; Joseph Purifoy, tenor; and Mark Gilgallon, baritone.

Bluffton University's Camerata Singers and University Chorale will headline "A Festival of Lessons and Carols," the university's Christmas choral concert, at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11, in Yoder Recital Hall. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for senior citizens. They are available at <http://tickets.bluffton.edu>, or at the Marbeck Center information desk. Dr. Mark J. Suderman, professor of music, will conduct Camerata Singers, and Jonathan Wey, visiting conductor, will direct the University Chorale. Ana Yoder Coulter, an adjunct instructor, is accompanist.

The Bluffton University music department will present "Christmas Festival" during Forum at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6, in Yoder Recital Hall. The forum will feature University Chorale, directed by Jonathan Wey; Camerata Singers, directed by Mark Suderman; Saxophone Ensemble, directed by Adam Schattschneider; Low Brass Ensemble, directed by Roy Couch; and a vocal solo.

GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

Happy birthday to Harvey Bauman, 96, November 27.

Please offer prayers for the family of Treva Suter, who died November 19 at Bluffton Hospital. A service was held at First Mennonite on November 23.

Mary Ann Kooker has returned to Mennonite Memorial Home, Room 121, after a time in St. Vincent Hospital Toledo. She will continue there as she rests and recovers. Short visits are welcome.

Adan Ortiz continues to face health issues and is in need of transportation to appointments. If you are available as a driver, please call Adan at 419.358-0955.

Welcoming Statement

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.

TODAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2016

8:30 a.m.	Youth Choir
9:15 a.m.	Christian education; coffee hour, FH
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service, Wanda Stopher preaching

THIS WEEK

Monday (11-28)	Volunteers leave for Our Daily Bread, 9:45 a.m.
Tuesday (11-29)	Morning prayers, 7 a.m., sanctuary Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor
Wednesday (11-30)	Cherub Choir, Adult Bells, 6 p.m. Jubilate, 6:45 p.m. Youth Bells, Chancel Choir, 7 p.m.
Thursday (12-1)	Community meal, Senior Center, 6 p.m. Congregational Discernment Team, 5-6:30 p.m. Worship, 7 p.m., parlor

NEXT WEEK

8:30 a.m.	Youth Choir
8:30 a.m.	SHYF pancake breakfast fundraiser, FH
9:15 a.m.	Christian education; coffee hour, FH
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service, George O'Reilly preaching

to our worship service today. Please sign and pass the friendship pads in the pews. Wireless hearing aids are available. If you would like your children watched over while you worship, our staff will care for them in the nursery downstairs. Worship activity bags for children are available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Come! Live in the light of God's heart! Advent 2016 is a time when we gather as people of ever-changing light. In this season, the shadows lengthen and the light is lowered. The Advent scriptures begin, offering low light and long shadow. They give us a long look at ourselves and our world. In this time of waiting we anticipate the growing, dawning light and celebrate the arrival of Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's heart for peace, justice, healing, restoration, and salvation. These embody God's heart and therefore, are the characteristics of God's people and God's kingdom reign. In this season of watching and waiting we long for the light of God's heart to shine in its fullness, and we are challenged to live into that light!

Due to a scheduling error at the Fort Wayne office of the Red Cross, the First Mennonite December blood drive has been rescheduled for Thursday, Dec. 15 from 1-6 p.m. Volunteers are needed for this event: 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, sponsor code "fmennobl." (Note that this scheduling change results in a change to our next blood drive, which has been rescheduled for Thursday, Feb. 9.)

Advent pancake breakfast: The SHYF will hold a pancake breakfast fundraiser Sunday, Dec. 4 from 8:30-9:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall. We hope to have some LIVE Christmas music and some seasonal flavored pancakes!

Volunteers for Our Daily Bread will leave for Lima on Monday, Nov. 28 at 9:45 a.m.

The Christian Education Commission invites you to attend a time of Christmas carol singing on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 6:30 p.m. Children and youth of the church will be involved in selecting and leading this time of Christmas celebration. Please bring a plate of snacks or cookies to share during intergenerational fellowship immediately following the music.

String players of all ages and abilities are invited to participate in a string ensemble to play during the Christmas Eve Service. We will have 1-2 brief rehearsals, with times to be confirmed. If you and/or your children would like to join us, please contact Rhonda Winstead (rhondaandwalt@yahoo.com or 419-890-7012) or Laura Hartzler so that we may share music and rehearsal information.

Greeters are needed for the month of December. Please contact Mary Amstutz at 419.358. if you are able to serve as a greeter.

DISC – Discernment, Insight, Support, Caring: Have you ever faced a life-changing decision and felt overwhelmed with the options in front of you? Have you ever been in conflict with family members or friends and felt the only choices you had were hopeless? Have you faced a serious illness and didn't know how to cope with all the medical decisions or financial responsibilities that you had to handle? There is no reason to face issues such as these alone. Confidential DISCOVERY teams can be formed to walk with anyone at FMC who needs help making a decision or coming to a workable response to a personal crisis issue. See a pastor or a deacon if you would be interested in forming a DISCOVERY team.

During November, we have heard stewardship testimonies and have been challenged in worship to think about stewardship in a variety of ways. Please see the "Here and now" bulletin board for Kyle Miller's testimony on reconciling oil pipeline work and stewardship.

Gifts Discernment surveys have been distributed via mailboxes. Extras are available on the table next to the office door. Please complete and return by December 11 to the table outside the church office.

Three regional gatherings for CDC members are set for early 2017: February 25 at Southside Fellowship (Lambright Center, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN); March 4, First Mennonite Church, Urbana, IL; and March 11, First Mennonite Church, Wadsworth. Regional gatherings allow us to hear developments and work in progress and to meet others in the conference. They are intended for all in the conference -- not only leaders in congregations or the conference.

The Congregational Discernment Team asks for your help in ongoing efforts to identify the pastoral leadership needs of our congregation. To understand the identity of First Mennonite Church and to know our shared story, we must share our stories with each other. As part of developing an understanding of our collective past experience, the CDT asks that you each respond to the two questions they posed in the November 13 bulletin. Extra copies of the insert are available on the table in front of the Blessings Board in the fellowship hall. Please respond to the questions and pin your response paper to the Blessings Board.