

**Christian Education  
First Mennonite Church  
August 26, 2018**

**Music calls us to worship**

LuAnn Stuckey

**Welcome and announcements**

Victoria Woods-Yee

**Introductions**

**Prelude**

“Praise, My Soul”

setting by A.K. Organ

**Call to Worship**

**\*Opening Hymns**

Gerald Mast

**\*Responsive Reading**

Psalm 78:1-4 (NRSV)

L: Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

**C: I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old,**

L: things that we have heard and known that our ancestors have told us.

**All: We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.**

**Conversation with Friends**

Amber Shelly

“Come, let us all unite to sing” (v. 1 coming forward and v. 3 for return)

HWB 12

**Community Prayer**

Theda Good

**Scripture**

Mark 4:3-9

Theo Andreas

**Sermon**

“Listen Up”

Wanda Stopher

**\*Hymn**

“O God, who gives us life”

HWB 483

**Presentation of keychains and Bibles**

Carrie Mast and Judy Steiner

**Presenting our Tithes and Offerings**

**Offertory**

“Be Thou My Vision”

setting by R. Hartsell

**\*Hymn**

“Heart and mind, possessions, Lord” (vs. 1)

HWB 392

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**\*Hymn**

“You are salt for the earth”

HWB 226

**Benediction**

“Song of Praise”

setting by N. Raabe

**Postlude**

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

*HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book STS – Sing the Story*

*Please ask an usher for assistance in locating large print hymnals.*

**First Mennonite Church**  
**101 S. Jackson Street**  
**Bluffton, Ohio 45817**  
**Phone: 419-358-5766**

**Website: [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, Tues, 8:30 a.m.- 12 p.m.; [mastc@bluffton.edu](mailto:mastc@bluffton.edu)
- Director of Music – Mark Suderman, [sudermanme@bluffton.edu](mailto:sudermanme@bluffton.edu)
- Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker Steiner, [fmc@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc@bluffton.edu)
- Custodian – Mick Hardy, 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., weekends as needed

**Sound:** Melissa Friesen

**Greeter:** Sally Roth

**Nursery this week:** SS – Anita and George Lehman

**Worship** – John & Julie Mackey, Sunita Hooley

**Nursery next week:** SS – Wendy Chappell-Dick, Bobbie Chappell, Alice Ruth Ramseyer

**Worship** – Carrie Mast, Annette Heslep, Jacob Biesecker-Mast

**OUR STEWARDSHIP**

Worship attendance last Sunday	FMC-178, MC-7
Spending plan giving August 19, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$4,087.84
Special fund giving August 19, 2018 (includes e-giving): Freudige-\$10; SHYF-\$22	\$1,482.00
Deacons-\$400; Habitat-\$240; Relief kits-\$50; Flooring-\$60; Coll scholarship-\$100	
J. Moser-\$50; Memorials-\$500; ISAF-\$50	
Total giving August 19, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$5,569.84
Total spending plan receipts as of July 31, 2018	\$214,626.76
Spending plan expenses as of July 31, 2018	\$229,703.09
2018 spending plan	\$427,441.00

***Mark 4:3-9 (NRSV)***

***<sup>3</sup> “Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup> Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. <sup>8</sup> Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.” <sup>9</sup> And he said, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”***

*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.*

those dates, please contact Linda Miller, 419.358.0439 or [lindapmiller@juno.com](mailto:lindapmiller@juno.com) or Heidrun Awad, 419.358.1390 or [hawad@wcoil.com](mailto:hawad@wcoil.com).

**Please consider joining one of our musical ensembles.** We welcome new members in addition to the return of former members.

- Chancel Choir (**adults of all ages**) begins Sept. 12, 7 p.m., sanctuary
- Adult (**adults of all ages**) and Youth (**Grades 7-12**) Bells - begin Sept. 5 at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. respectively, assembly room
- Cherub Choir (**3 yr. old-1st grade**) begins Sept. 12, 6 p.m., children's choir room
- Jubilate (**2nd-5<sup>th</sup> grade**) begins Sept., 5, 6:30 p.m., children's choir room
- Youth Choir (**7<sup>th</sup> grade and up**) begins Sept. 16, 8:30 a.m., children's choir room

**Mennonite Women at First Mennonite** will celebrate 100 years of meeting together as an individual church this fall. On September 10, we will kick off the year with a birthday party to review highlights of the many groups and activities that have happened within our walls during this time. Joanne Niswander has found information in the university archives and will have some on display. Anyone with memorabilia that help highlight events and projects over the years should contact Lori Nester at 419-358-9650 or [nesterl@bluffton.edu](mailto:nesterl@bluffton.edu).

**Women's Retreat at Camp Friedenswald** is slated for Sept. 14-16. The theme is *Hearing Your Voice, Finding Ours*. Women ages 18-25 attend at no cost. Register at <https://friedenswald.org/retreats/#womens-retreat>. **Men's Retreat at Friedenswald** will be Oct. 12-14, with a focus on fellowship with each other in the midst of beautiful creation. Register at <https://friedenswald.org/retreats/#mens-retreat>.

**Jonas Beiler, an author and licensed family counselor**, will be the speaker at Bluffton University's opening convocation at 10:45 a.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 28 in Sommer Center. Beiler is the author of "Think No Evil: Inside the Story of the Amish Schoolhouse Shooting... and Beyond," which is this year's summer reading for first-year Bluffton students. The event will introduce Bluffton's 2018-19 Civic Engagement Theme: "When Talking is Tough: Respectful Conversations in a Divided Nation." Beiler will focus on the witness of the Amish following the West Nickel Mines School shooting.

**The Western Ohio Unit of Mennonite Disaster Service** raised a total of \$31,000 over the last 3½ years for a trailer, tools, and equipment to respond timely and efficiently to local disasters. FMC contributed \$2,400 to the project. Thank you! Pictures of the fully equipped trailer are on a bulletin board in fellowship hall. Lawrence Matthews is the MDS church contact and secretary/treasurer for the MDS Western Ohio Unit.

### **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.*

### **CALENDAR**

#### **Today, August 26, 2018**

9:15 a.m. SS, coffee time  
10:30 a.m. Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching, school cafeteria  
Noon Church picnic, Bluffton Village Park

#### **August 27-31, 2018**

Monday (8-27) Our Daily Bread volunteers leave, 9:45 a.m.  
Tuesday (8-28) Morning Prayers, 7 a.m. (prayer room upstairs)  
Staff meeting, 9 a.m.  
Swiss Historical Society, 7 p.m., AR  
Wednesday (8-29) Worship planning circle, 5 p.m., parlor

#### **Next Sunday, September 2, 2018**

9:15 a.m. SS, Coffee time  
10:20 a.m. Gather outside school to begin journey to the renovated sanctuary  
10:30 a.m. Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching  
Noon Connections potluck

**The annual church picnic is at noon today at the Bluffton Village Park. Please bring a hot and a cold dish to share, as well as table service for your family. (If you are visiting and/or forgot to prep for this, please join us anyway!) Water will be provided. The I75 overpass on County Line Road is closed. Plan on using an alternate route\* or ride a bike via the bicycle path. \*Alternate route: Travel east on Route 103 to Township Road 51. Turn right (south) on 51 to County Road 29. Turn right (west) on 29 and right again (north) on County Line Road.**

*~ Nurture*

*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.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Returning to and dedication of sanctuary:** On Sunday, Sept 2, we anticipate returning to the church! The collaborative hard work of many people will be realized.

- Gather at 10:20 a.m., in front of Bluffton Middle School, to offer prayers of gratitude for this temporary shelter.
- We'll make our first pilgrimage to the sanctuary as we begin the journey by walking. If you are not comfortable walking, feel free to take your place in the sanctuary or meet us in the fellowship hall.
- Later in the service we will dedicate the renovation and ourselves to God's work in the world.

**On September 2, we begin our year of walking,** using *We Make the Road by Walking* in individual and corporate worship. When we come together in corporate worship we, by the grace of God, become more than the sum of our individual journeys. Symbolizing this shared journey, the bulletin board currently used for the FMC photo gallery will be repurposed this year and used to help us be attentive to how we are "making the road by walking" together. There will be images and text and also opportunities for participation by all who worship with us. Please see Anita Lehman or Pastor Wanda with questions.

**Please save Saturday, Sept. 8** for A New Path Together, the commissions' workshop. Please attend and share in the process of education, thoughtful conversation, creative organizing/planning, and laughter as we discern a new path together. Everyone is invited!

- **When: Saturday, September 8**
- **Time:** Early birds may gather as early as 8 a.m.
- **Workshop begins promptly at 9 a.m. and concludes at 1 p.m.** (Lunch will be served before we end.)
- **Where:** The assembly room of Grace Mennonite Church, 502 Main St., Pandora
- **Please RSVP:** Via the FMC Facebook page under events or leave a note in Elizabeth Kelly's mailbox. (If you have already sent an RSVP, you don't need to do it again.) Childcare will be provided (let Elizabeth know).

~ Governance Task Force

**The congregational meeting** will be held Sunday, Sept. 9 at 12:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall, following the youth fundraiser meal. Annual reports are in mailboxes today. The agenda includes a ballot vote calling Wanda to renew her term. If you are unable to attend the congregational meeting, but would like to vote on this item, absentee ballots will be available by the following methods: (1) you may call the church office and cast your vote with Mary Pannabecker Steiner, who will place your vote in a confidential locked box, (2) you may email the church office at [fmc@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc@bluffton.edu) with your vote and Mary will place your vote in the locked box, or (3) you may come to the church office during office hours September 4-7 and place your vote in the locked box.

~ Kendra Nickel

**We will commission Carrie Mast** in her new role as interim children and youth ministry director in worship on Sunday, Sept. 23.

**We are on the threshold** of launching our year of using the book, "We Make the Road by Walking," by Brian McLaren. Here are a few opportunities to join a Sunday school class or learning circle for conversation partners to see where this journey will take us.

### **Three Adult Sunday School opportunities:**

- Faith and Life Class
- Freudige Class
- Living Faithfully.

### **Learning Circle Opportunities:**

- Sunday evenings (weekly) in the fellowship hall, beginning Sept. 2, at 5:20 p.m. with a light supper and then book discussion beginning at 6:05 p.m. Hosted by Walt Paquin; all are welcome.
- Sunday evenings, first and third of the month beginning Sept. 16 at Maple Crest in the family room, 6:30-7:45 p.m. Hosted by Rich and Gloria Bucher; all are welcome.
- Sunday evenings, first and third of the month starting Oct. 7 at 4:30-6 p.m. for the first meeting. Group may decide to change the time. RSVP appreciated but not necessary. Contact Theda or church office for address. Hosted by Theda Good in her home; all are welcome.

**Thank you all** for putting together the sweet and thoughtful parting gift of the overflowing cups of notes and love. May God overflow your lives with blessings.

~ Shannon Thiebeau

**Volunteers are needed to operate the elevator September 9-30.** If you are able to be at the church at 8:50 a.m. Sundays to help during SS and before and after worship on any of