

**Advent 2: Let it be so
December 10, 2017**

Focus statement: *We long to be comforted, we long for change. Moving from uncertainty and fear, we call upon God to make things ready—the mountains leveled, the paths made straight, our hearts prepared.*

Church bells call us to worship

Call to Worship

Darryl Nester

Leader: Awake! The invitation to carry light comes from the voice who cries out for a smooth way through wild places.

All: O God, your call is uncomfortable. How can we who are weak remove the rough and rugged places?

(pause for silence)

Leader: Quiet our questioning souls.

All: Lead us into your presence so all can see your way.

Leader: Let it be so.

Lighting of Advent candle

Tim and JP Schumacher

Prelude

Jackie Wyse-Rhodes

Welcome

***Opening Hymn**

“Comfort, comfort, O my people”

HWB 176

Scripture

Isaiah 40:1-11

LOGOS

Special Music

“Every Valley”
Chancel Choir

John Ness Beck

Conversation with Friends

Hymn

“Maranatha, come” *(refrain, vs.1, refrain)*

STS 2

Conversation

Rhonda Winstead

Hymn

“Maranatha, come” *(refrain, vs. 3, refrain)*

STS 2

Wisdom and Wonder

Walt and Grace Paquin

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

Jackie Wyse-Rhodes

***Hymn of Dedication** “Angels we have heard on high” *(refrain only)* HWB 197

Scripture

Mark 1:1-8

Melissa Friesen

Sermon

“Waiting and Making Ready”

Wanda Stopher

***Hymn**

“O God, how we have wandered”

STS 58

Confession

O God of blazing heavens, you come to us gently and tenderly, speaking peace and comfort into our fear. We long for you, we yearn for your promise of a new heaven and earth. Yet we confess that though we know how to get busy and prepare for this season, we do not know how to slow down or wait and make space for your presence. May our ordinary lives intersect with the power of your Word and the transforming presence of your grace. Empower us to “let it be so.”

(pause for silence)

Words of assurance

Pastoral Prayer

George O’Reilly

***Hymn**

“Hark! The glad sound”

HWB 184

Benediction

Postlude

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

HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book STJ – Sing the Journey

Large print hymnals are available. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating one.

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.-4 p.m.; Thursday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

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

GREETER: Joyce Hostetler

HOST: Don Hostetler

NURSERY WORKERS TODAY: SS – Melinda, Patrick, and Rebecca Estell, Victoria Woods-Yee

Worship – Annette Heslep Rachel Diller Grace Paquin

NURSERY NEXT WEEK: SS – Mary Pannabecker Steiner, Mitch Kingsley

Worship – Kendra and Ellie Nickel, Kevin Cluts

SOUND SYSTEM: Melissa Friesen

CHANCEL: Carolyn Rich

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

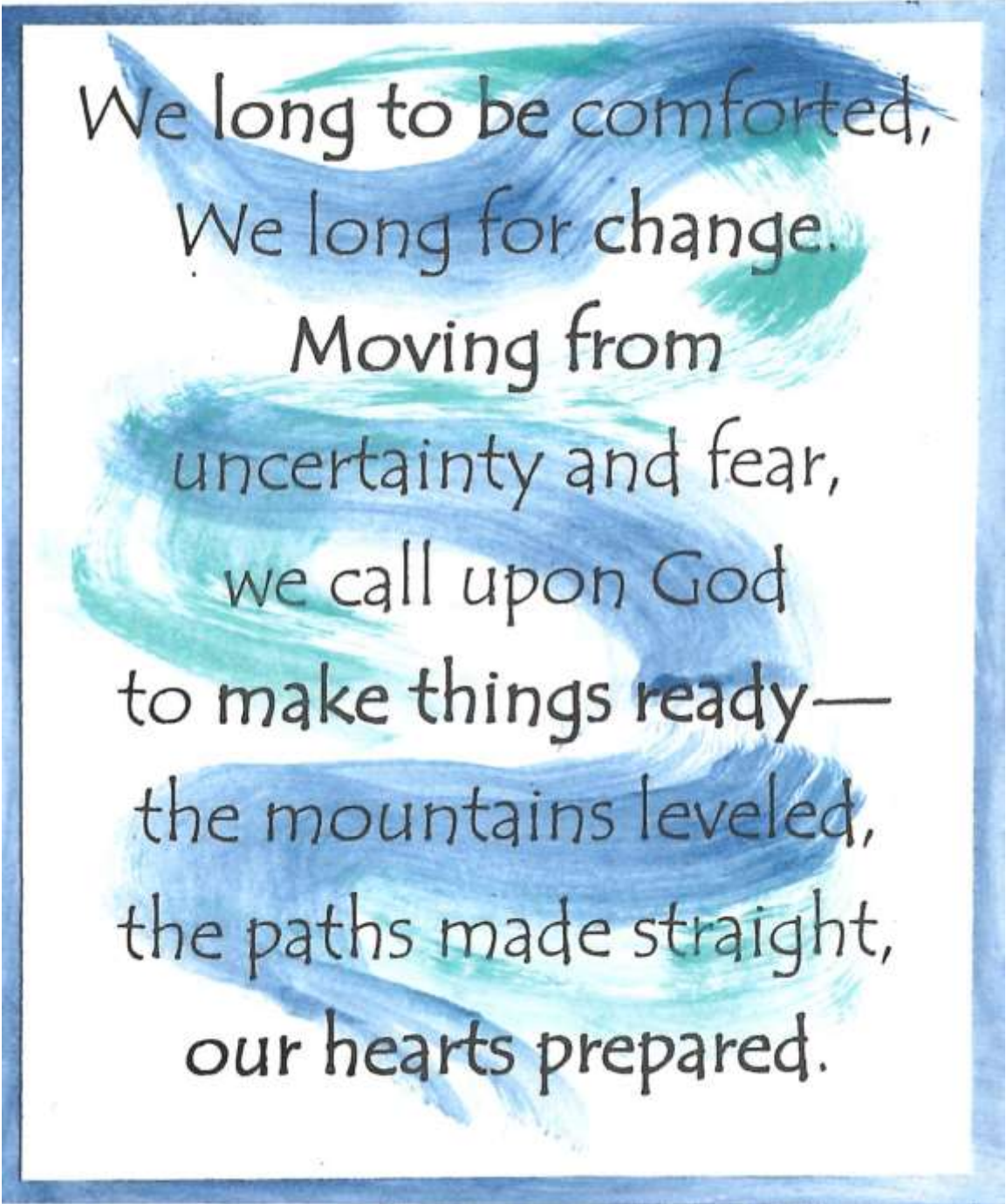
OUR STEWARDSHIP

Worship attendance last Sunday	FMC-251, MC-8
Spending plan giving Dec. 3, 2017 (includes e-giving)	\$11,469.00
Special fund giving Dec. 3, 2017 (includes e-giving): <i>Grades K-5-\$6.91, Grades 6-8-\$1;</i>	<u>\$4566.07</u>
<i>Faith and Life-\$13; Sojourners-\$44; Young Adults-\$4; Community-\$10, Deacons-\$300;</i>	
<i>Cap Camp Flooring-\$1,490, Kitchen-\$221.16; Betty Sommer memorial-\$2,120;</i>	
<i>Syrian student-\$50, Habitat-\$20, MDS-200, College scholar-\$86</i>	
Total giving Dec. 3, 2017 (includes e-giving)	\$16,035.07
Total spending plan receipts as of October 31, 2017	\$312,066.11
Spending plan expenses as of October 31, 2017	\$335,390.00
2017 spending plan	\$421,146.00

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 – sudermanme@bluffton.edu
- Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker Steiner - fmc@bluffton.edu
- Custodian – Mick Hardy

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.



Bluffton University will present the 122nd performance of Handel's "Messiah" at 4 p.m. today at Yoder Recital Hall. Tickets (at no cost) are required and must be reserved at <http://tickets.bluffton.edu> or at Marbeck Center. A free-will offering will be taken for music scholarships. Natalie Mallis, director of choral activities, is the conductor. The event will also be livestreamed at <https://livestream.com/bluffton>.

The board of The Mennonite, Inc. is accepting applications for the position of Executive Director. The executive director serves as chief executive officer for The Mennonite, Inc. and is responsible for publishing and administration, management of staff, and maintaining denominational relationships. The Mennonite is a multimedia and print publication and organization connected to MC USA. To read the full description, visit: <https://themennonite.org/mennonite-inc-seeks-next-executive-director/>.

Mennonite Mission Network and the Center for Community Justice will hold a learning opportunity for those who serve the needs of former inmates and their families on Saturday, Dec. 16, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. This workshop will include local experts and participants who will engage in case studies, hear testimonies from local ministries, explore the ways that organizations such as CCJ serve and support leaders in their efforts to care for and assist individuals (and their families) who are re-entering society after time in prison. Join us at MMN offices, at 3145 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46516 at no cost. Lunch and refreshments will be offered. Please RSVP to Ann Jacobs by Dec. 13 at [\(574\) 523-3007](tel:5745233007) or email at AnnJ@Mennonitemission.net.

GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

Your cards and kind words of support on the passing of my brother Iqbal Ahmed in Bangladesh is deeply appreciated by me and Becki. Thank you. -- *Mustaq Ahmed*

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, DECEMBER 10, 2017

9:15 a.m.	Sunday school, coffee hour
10:30 a.m.	Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching
11:30 a.m.	Congregational meeting to vote on Theda Good
Following vote	Going-away potluck, program for George O'Reilly

THIS WEEK

Tuesday (12-12)	Morning prayers, 7 a.m. Staff meeting, 9 a.m. Trustees, 7 p.m., parlor Farmer's Market annual potluck, 5-9 p.m., FH
Wednesday (12-13)	Pastor meeting with MMH residents, 2:30 p.m. Adult bells, Cherubs, 6 p.m. Jubilate, 6:30 p.m. Chancel choir, youth bells, 7 p.m. Stewardship, 6:30 p.m.
Thursday (12-14)	Red Cross Blood Drive, 1-6 p.m., FH Nurture, 7 p.m., parlor

NEXT SUNDAY

8:15 a.m.	Youth choir
9:15 a.m.	Sunday school, coffee hour
10:30 a.m.	Worship, George O'Reilly preaching
Noon	Community class potluck
3 p.m.	Children's Christmas program, snacks to follow

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 watched over while you worship, our staff will care for them in the nursery downstairs. Worship activity bags for children are available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to Carolyn Rich for designing the bulletin covers to be used during Advent. Carolyn explains: “Past-Present-Future. Living in the present, we can only draw our hope for the future from looking at the repeated themes of the past...from chaos emerges tiny seeds of increasing power to grasp the earth with roots, to stretch toward the sun and sprout leaves, to blossom and give forth fruit. ‘Let it be’ as we participate in God’s miracles of rebirth.”

LOGOS members during Advent include Rich Bucher, Chris Gott, Carrie Mast, Elfrieda Ramseyer, Greg Ring, Cheri Slotter, Ashton Cluts, Melissa Friesen, and Gary Wetherill.

Following today’s worship service, a congregational meeting will be held for voting upon the candidate. Votes will be counted immediately following the meeting. Results will be shared with the congregation after they are reviewed by Church Council and shared with the candidate.

Pastor Wanda will be out of the office on Wednesday, 12-13-17. Please contact Pastor George in the case of pastoral care needs.

All are invited to today’s potluck and time of thanks for Pastor George O’Reilly: Pastor George is nearing the end of his term with us as pastoral associate. He arrived in June of 2016 and concludes December 31, 2017. Let’s celebrate his FMC pastoral work with a potluck and time of sharing. Please bring a food item and dinnerware. There will be an open mic time after the potluck. *-- Nurture Commission*

The next First Mennonite blood drive will be held Thursday, Dec. 14 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 “fmenncbl.”

Following the children’s Christmas program at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 17, there will be fellowship with refreshments. Please bring your favorite snack (cookies, crackers, fruit, etc.) to share. Hope to see you there.

All are invited to attend the annual holiday brunch at 9:15 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 31, in the fellowship hall. Please bring food to share: breakfast casseroles, fruit, breads, coffee cakes, muffins, cookies, etc. Coffee, tea, and juice will be provided. ***Please bring your own table service. There will be no Sunday school that morning.***

We have created some temporary mail slots for new attenders. These are located in the bottom row of the side holding the second half of the alphabetized names. At the beginning of January 2018, all labels will be updated alphabetically. Therefore, please plan to empty your mailbox on Sunday, Dec. 31. Any material left in boxes after that date will be recycled to accommodate changing labels.

Singers of all levels and ages are invited to join a group going to Sunshine Homes in Maumee for caroling on Thursday, Dec. 28. We will meet at FMC at 11 a.m. and car pool. You should be back in Bluffton by 2:30 p.m. unless you want to join a group who will stay for lunch at Georgette’s (a coffee and sandwich shop run by Sunshine Homes residents.) Sign up on the list in the fellowship hall. *-- John Rich*

Revised Common Lectionary Readings for 2017-18 – We will follow Year B of the Revised Common Lectionary in 2017-18. You will find it at <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/lections.php?year=B&season=Advent>. *The church office will provide print copies upon request.*

The Stewardship Commission has launched Flooring to Flourishing, a yearlong capital campaign that will fund a plan for updating and improving our sanctuary space. The project features new flooring, redesigned steps at the front of the church, new hymnal racks to hold all of our singing resources, and patching and paint throughout our worship space. Our goals are twofold: to raise \$56,000 and to achieve 100 percent participation. With your help, at just \$1 a day for the next 365 days, we can reach our goal. As you contemplate your financial contributions to FMC for the remainder of 2017 and for the upcoming 2018 year, consider giving to both the capital campaign and the spending plan. Intent cards for consideration of your giving to the 2018 Spending Plan are in mailboxes. *There is also now a fund specification of Capital Campaign on our Vanco online giving site, listed in the “Miscellaneous” section.*

Still interested in working for Habitat for Humanity, but need a ride? Contact Lynn or Linda Miller and they will take you along on Tuesday and/or Thursday mornings. They leave Bluffton at 8:30 a.m. and return at 1:30 p.m. You may volunteer any Tuesday through Saturday at the ReStore for a 2- or 4-hour shift or all day. Contact Mark Suderman with any questions or to volunteer: mark@habitatlima.org.