

**Christmas: Yes! Let it be new
December 31, 2017**

Focus statement: We marvel at the vastness of God's plan. We celebrate in exuberant praise what God has done and will continue to do.

Church bells call us to worship

Call to Worship

Leader: Yes! We will give thanks and rejoice!

All: We will praise the Lord from the heavens, from the heights, and with the angels!

Leader: We praise the Lord with the sun and moon! We praise the Creator of the shining stars!

All: Fire and hail! Snow and frost! Mountains and hills! Fruit trees and cedars!

Leader: Young men and women alike! Children and the aged ones too! Let us praise the name of the Lord.

All: Praise the Lord!

Leader: Yes! Let all things be new.

Lighting of Advent candle

Mary Edmiston, Lisa Shelly
Jean Miller, Mary Ann Suter and Sue Schaaf

Prelude

“Vom Himmel Hoch” setting by F.W. Zachau
LuAnn Stuckey (based on HWB 205)

Welcome

***Opening Hymn** “Let all together praise our God” HWB 213

Scripture Isaiah 61:10-62:3 LOGOS

Special Music “Silent Night” Franz Gruber
Ana Neufeld Weaver, piano

Conversation with Friends

Hymn “Maranatha, come” (refrain, vs.1, refrain) STS 2

Conversation Rhonda Winstead

Hymn “Maranatha, come” (refrain, vs. 6, refrain) STS 2

Wisdom and Wonder

Paul and Ana Neufeld Weaver

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory “What Child Is This” setting by J. Young
(based on HWB 215)

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

Scripture Luke 2:22-40 LOGOS

Sermon “At the Moment of ‘Enough’” George O’Reilly

***Hymn** “Let all mortal flesh keep silence” HWB 463

Confession

O God, the waiting is over, the time has come: you dwell among us! We marvel at the mystery of your birth. We are filled and guided by the Spirit as you open our eyes, our hearts, and our arms to receive you. Yes, we say, and yet we confess that instead of being drawn beyond our knowing, into the call of your infinite light, we examine your coming within the boundaries of our understanding. We confess that instead of marveling at the vastness of your mercy, instead of rejoicing with Simeon and Anna, instead of allowing your Spirit to move within and among us, we resist the mystery of your presence. We confess our struggle to step forth with vulnerability, honesty, courage, dreams, hope, and celebration emanating from the depth of our hearts. Forgive us.

(pause for silence)

Words of assurance

Pastoral Prayer Wanda Stopher

***Hymn** “Good Christian friends, rejoice” HWB 210

Benediction

Postlude “In Dulci Jubilo” setting by D.N. Johnson
(based on HWB 210)

**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: Todd Rainey

HOST: Fran Core

NURSERY WORKERS TODAY: SS – NO Sunday school

Worship – Tara and Kyle Miller, Christopher Harnish

NURSERY NEXT WEEK: SS – N/A

Worship – N/A

SOUND SYSTEM: Kevin Cluts

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

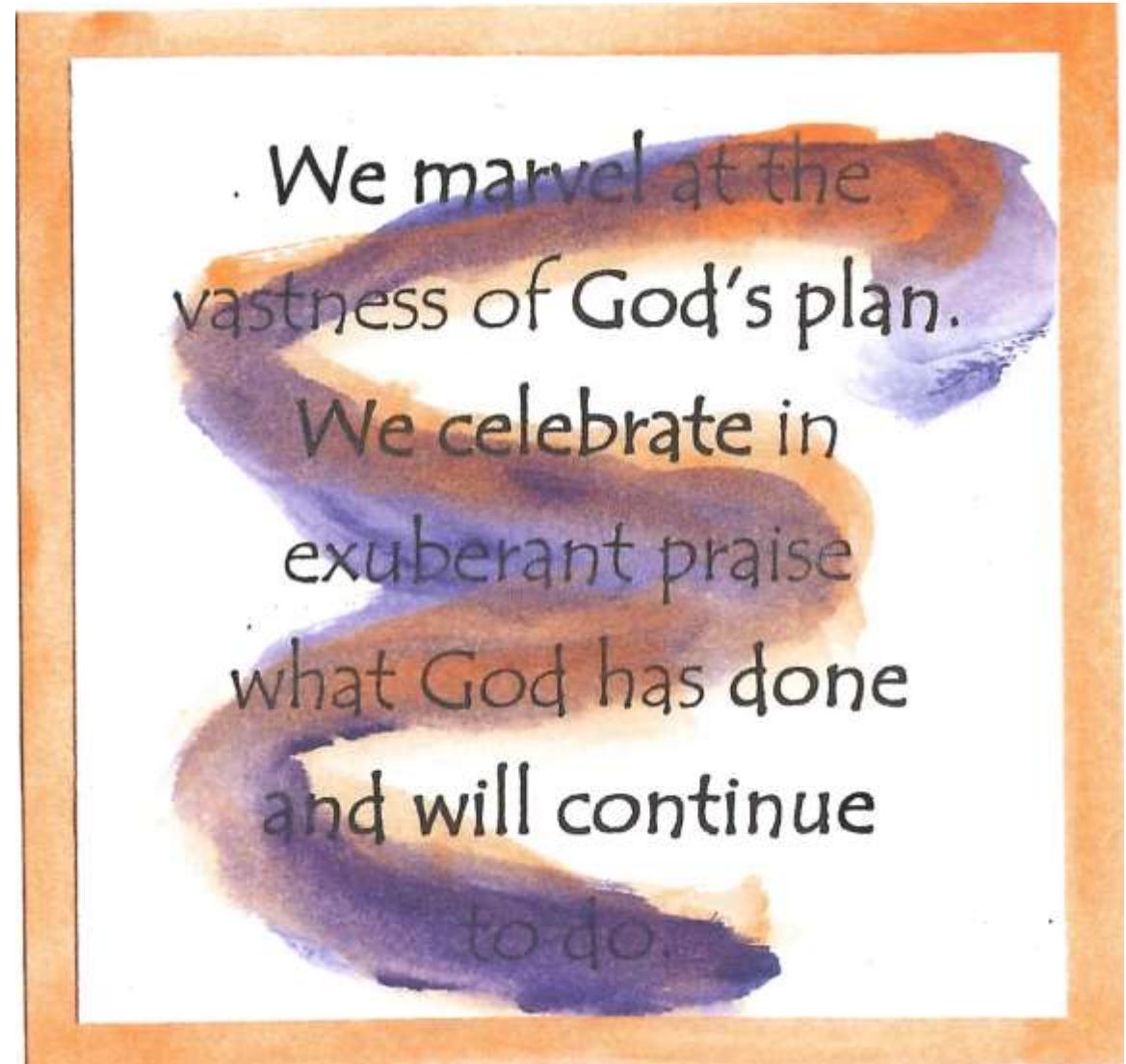
OUR STEWARDSHIP

Worship attendance last Sunday	FMC-217, MC-7
Spending plan giving Dec. 24, 2017 (includes e-giving)	\$20,129.00
Special fund giving Dec. 24, 2017 (includes e-giving): <i>Freudige-\$270; Sojourners-\$20</i>	<u>\$4,707.56</u>
<i>Faith and Life-\$35; Connections-\$50; Flooring-\$3,740; Deacons-\$250; \$P. Friesen mem-\$50</i>	
<i>Kitchen service-\$8.56; CDC-\$200; College schol-\$44; Habitat-\$10; MDS-\$20; MW-\$10</i>	
Total giving Dec. 24, 2017 (includes e-giving)	\$24,836.56
Total spending plan receipts as of November 30, 2017	\$343,260.57
Spending plan expenses as of November 30, 2017	\$368,683.61
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.



Take some time to engage with Menno Snapshots, reflections and stories written by people across the church that are regularly posted on MC USA's website. Recent blog posts have featured topics including contemplative prayer, reviving civility, new motherhood and digitizing the MC USA Archives. If you are interested in contributing to the Menno Snapshot blog, email JenniferC@MennoniteUSA.org.

GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

Mary Amstutz returned home Wednesday from St. Rita's Medical Center, where she was hospitalized after a stroke. She is recovering well. Family members are staying with her and have requested no visitors until further notice. Your prayers and cards are much appreciated.

Following a brief hospitalization after suffering a heart attack, Bob Flick has returned to Mennonite Memorial Home. Your prayers are appreciated and visits are welcome.

This week, students, faculty and staff at Bluffton University will prepare to return to campus and start the spring semester. Please pray for the safety of the campus community as many will travel from long distances.
-- Mennonite Education Agency

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 31 2017

9:15 a.m. NO Sunday school
10:30 a.m. Holiday brunch, FH
Worship, George O'Reilly preaching

THIS WEEK

Monday (1-1) **New Year's Day, OFFICE CLOSED**
Tuesday (1-2) Morning Prayers
Staff meeting, parlor
Wednesday (1-3) Cherubs, 6 p.m.
Jubilate, 6:30 p.m.
Chancel choir, 7 p.m.
No bell choir rehearsal
Thursday (1-4) Worship, 7 p.m., parlor

NEXT SUNDAY

9:15 a.m. SS, Coffee time
10:30 a.m. Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching

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 used during Advent. “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.” (Words from Carolyn.)

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

A representative of each Sunday school class must stop by the church office to complete a voucher for their class’ White Gift giving. Each class also needs at least one representative to bring forward their White Gift box on January 7. White boxes are located in the resource room and will be delivered to your room on Epiphany Sunday. All class representatives are asked to meet with Pastor Wanda in her office at 10 a.m. January 7 to review the process. Thank you for your help.

-- CE Task Force

SHYF and JHYF are attending the annual Winter Retreats at Camp Friedenswald January 5-7 and January 12-14, respectively. We ask for your prayers of safety, faith building, fellowship, and snow!

-- Shannon Thiebeau

2017 Spending plan update: Due to generous November giving the projected end-of-year deficit to the spending plan has shrunk by \$3,500 down from \$15,500 to \$12,000! On this final Sunday of the year, the challenge is for us all to narrow this gap even further! Please consider how you are able to further contribute to meeting our spending plan goals.

-- Stewardship Commission

“Retreat” is the theme for Mennonite Women, Monday, Jan. 8 at 7 p.m. in the fellowship hall. To encourage us in caring for our bodies, as retreat suggests, the Bluffton University nutrition students will share a program of “Healthy Eating” through a food

demonstration. The food they prepare will become our refreshments for the evening. Elfrieda Ramseyer will have devotions, and the kitchen crew will be Joyce Hostetler and Heidrun Awad.

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. Please empty your mailbox by 9 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 3. Any material left in boxes after that time will be recycled to accommodate changing boxes.

Beginning in January, the Freudige class will be studying “Trouble I’ve Seen” by Drew Hart. We know others in our congregation have studied this book and are hoping you may be willing to share your books. If so, please put your name in the book and place it in the MCC kit bag cart by the library. Thanks so much!

Correction to the new phone/address directory: Judy and Glenn Buller’s phone numbers are switched in the directory. Their correct phone numbers are: Judy, 419.306.1668, and Glenn, 419.306.6803. Please make the correction in your copies.

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>.

Threads of Grace, the sewing ministry at Grace Mennonite Church, Pandora, invites all to their all-day comforter knotting, Thursday, Jan. 11. Knotting is from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Cindy Luginbill at lucg@watchtv.net so they can plan accordingly.

Consider attending the 2018 Mennonite Arts Weekend Feb. 3-5 at Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati. Organized and sponsored by members of Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship, the event invites artists and art enthusiasts to attend presentations, workshops, performances and worship. This year’s featured artists include Theater of the Beat; Paul Buxman, painter; Brenton Good, painter/printmaker; Karen Newe, artist/designer/illustrator; Sadie Gustafson, Zook-singer/songwriter; James Heiks, conductor/song leader; Sarah Kathleen Johnson and Carl Bear, music, worship planners; Becca J.R. Lachman, poet; Sofia Samatar, writer; Eugene Friesen, cellist. The weekend culminates with a Sunday morning worship service with plenty of music, singing and artist participation. Register by January 15 for the early registration fee - adults, \$65 per person (\$75 after January 15); students, \$45 per person (\$55 after January 15.) For more information, see <https://www.mennoniteartsweekend.org/>.