

**Third Sunday of Advent
December 13, 2015
10:30 a.m.**

— GATHERING —

Call to Worship “Pilgrim” Lawton/Silva

(See insert – sing as directed)

Welcome Greg Ring, Worship Leader

Responsive Reading

L: Sing aloud, O people, shout out your worship in a loud voice!

C: God takes away the judgment against us; there’s no need to fear disaster.

L: The Lord our God exults over us with gladness; singing loudly as on a day of celebration.

C: God delivers us from all that oppresses us, changing our shame into praise.

All: Rejoice! For God is our strength and our might and has become our salvation.

Invocation

— PRAISING —

***Opening Hymn** “Come thou long expected Jesus” HWB 178

Prophetic Scripture Reading Isaiah 12:2-6

Special Music “He is Born” arr. Trevor Manor

Youth Choir, directed by Laura Hartzler

Time with Children

Hymn “Holy Child within the manger” STS 28
(Sing v. 1)

Conversation Hymn “Holy Child within the manger” Chris Gott STS 28
(Sing v. 3)

Special Music “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” Arr. Susan E. Geschke
Adult Bell Choir, directed by Ray Raeburn

Lighting of Advent Candle

Don and Sunita Hooley

Prayer of confession – Assurance of pardon

L: In the presence of God and each other, let us confess our sin.

All: Merciful God: we confess that we have failed to be an obedient church; we have not done Your will; we have broken Your law; we have rebelled against Your love. So often we have failed to trust You, and have built fences around ourselves. We have refused to hear the cries of the needy, the hungry, the discouraged, the ill in mind or body. Free us from being behind the bars of our own selfishness, and lead us to discover the freedom of those who have joyful trust in You.

L: As the bars around us are removed, let us silently confess our sin.

(Silent confession)

L: Together, let us accept God’s forgiveness.

All: This is the confidence we have in God: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Special Music “Cry Out and Shout” Knut Nystedt
Chancel Choir

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory “In Dulci Jubilo” arr. Paul Laubengayer
Lucia Unrau

— PROCLAIMING —

Gospel Reading Luke 3:7-18

Sermon “What Should We Do?” Wanda Stopher

***Hymn of Response** “On Jordan’s banks the Baptist’s cry” HWB 183

Pastoral Prayer Steven Yoder

— SENDING —

***Hymn** “Fling wide the door, unbar the gate!” HWB 186

***Benediction**

***Postlude**

**Please stand, or remain seated if that is more comfortable for you.
HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book STS – Sing the Story*

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

Associate Pastor – Steve – Tuesday-Friday, 9-4, off Monday

Director of Youth Ministries – Shannon -- Tuesday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

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

GREETERS: Ken Shenk, Heidrun Awad

HOST: Wendy Chappell-Dick

NURSERY WORKERS TODAY: SS – Greg and Laura Hartzler

Worship – John and Julie Mackey, Sunita Hooley

NURSERY WORKERS NEXT WEEK: SS –

Worship – Bruce Steingass, Amy Freeman, Annette Heslep, Amelia Heslep

SOUND SYSTEM: Walt Paquin

CHANCEL: Lois Wetherill

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 288

Worship attendance at Maple Crest last Sunday (FMC DVD) 5

Sunday school attendance last Sunday 100

Spending plan giving Dec. 6, 2015 \$13,133.50

2015 Proposed spending plan \$419,469.00

Spending plan receipts as of November 30, 2015 \$339,444.00

Spending plan expenses as of November 30, 2015 \$351,364.00

The offering Dec. 6 totaled \$16,141.70. Money was received for these special funds: SS - \$210, Capital Campaign - \$240, Habitat – 100, SHYF winter retreat - \$220, SHYF SWAP - \$29, Rejoice subscriptions - \$250.2, Lily Schumacher VS unit – 25, MDS – 200, Kitchen service – \$9, Deacons' Benevolent - \$225, Chris Purves memorial - \$250, Stan Naylor memorial - \$750, Leonard and Velma Kingsley memorial - \$500.

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor – Wanda Stopher – 419-551-1079 -- fmc.wanda@bluffton.edu

Associate Pastor – Steven Yoder – 419-369-4753 (h) - fmc.steve@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 Steiner - fmc@bluffton.edu



Freedom Bound:

Trust

Bluffton. This person will oversee daily operation of the store, including supervising the volunteers, handling ordering of products and overall finances. Candidates must understand and embrace the mission of Ten Thousand Villages to support artisans in developing countries. Business and retail background is a plus. The job is about 30 hours per week. Interested applicants should send cover letter and resume to Linda Suter at suterlr@bluffton.edu or 122 Grove St., Bluffton. Applications will be received until January 1, after which interviewing will begin.

Brazo en Brazo: In the prayer circle last Sunday, Awilda gave thanks to celebrate her birthday. She expressed that this is a special birthday as she is grateful for progress, growth and nurture in Christian faith. To further celebrate, Joel and Awilda invited a group to a restaurant after the service. We discovered this group to be international. Persons from Ecuador, Mexico, El Salvador, Puerto Rico and the USA enjoyed friendly conversation and good food. -- *Paul and Ann Conrad*

Explore the mysteries of Christmas through song, both ancient and modern. Wendy Chappell-Dick, cello and dulcimer; Teri Sato, bowed psaltery; Steve Harnish, recorder; and Jan Wiebe, flute and vocal harmony, will perform “Songs of Forests and Thorns” Saturday, Dec. 19, from 9-11 p.m. at the Mustard Seed Café .

Mennonite Arts Weekend 2016 is scheduled for February 5-7 at Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati. The biennial gathering, organized and supported by members of [Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship](http://www.mennoniteartsweekend.org/), invites artists and art enthusiasts to join together for a weekend of presentations, workshops, performances and worship. Registration is now open – the deadline for early registration is January 15. Details about registration, nearby hotels, schedule and the names of participating artists are available at <http://www.mennoniteartsweekend.org/>. Forms are also available in the church office.

GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

Happy birthday to Margrita Klassen, 86, December 16, and Celia Blough, 93, December 18.

We are grateful that Rich Bucher’s December 7 surgery went well, and that his swift recovery allowed him to be released on December 10. He will continue his recovery at home. Please keep Rich and Gloria in your prayers in the coming months.

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.

TODAY, Dec. 13, 2015

8:30 a.m.	Youth choir
9:00 a.m.	Coffee time, FH
9:15 a.m.	Christian Education; Adult fellowship, FH
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service, Wanda Stopher preaching
Noon	Sojourners/Freudige class potlucks
6:30 p.m.	Christmas program, sanctuary; refreshments, FH

THIS WEEK

Tuesday (12/15)	Morning prayers, 7 a.m., sanctuary Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor
Wednesday (12/16)	Adult bells, 6 p.m.; Jubilate, 6:45 p.m.; Chancel choir and Youth bells, 7 p.m.
Thursday (12/17)	Church council, 7 p.m., AR

NEXT WEEK

9:00 a.m.	Coffee time, FH
9:15 a.m.	Christian Education; Adult Fellowship, FH
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service, Steven Yoder preaching

Scripture: Micah 5:2-5a; Isaiah 1:47-55; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

Welcome 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 available downstairs. Worship activity bags for children are available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today and throughout history, people around the world struggle to live with different political, social, and personal situations. This Advent, we await the coming of Jesus to lead us to a new freedom and to be released from what holds us back -- from our best selves, and from more compassionate interactions with others. This Advent, we pray that our trust in God can release us to let go of the fears that can entangle or paralyze us: the past, the unknown, or insecurity.

Featuring a skit, a monologue, instrumental solos and duets, hymns, and a trio that includes one of our pastors, the Christmas program will be held tonight at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. The program will be followed by refreshments in the fellowship hall.

Come and celebrate the coming of Christ to us as a child on Christmas Eve at 6:30 pm. With candles and song and scripture we will remember that the light shines in the darkness. An offering will be taken for the Deacons' Benevolent fund.

Spending Plan update: Our spending plan offerings will need to average \$11,336 for the remaining three Sundays of 2015 to cover our anticipated Spending Plan expenses.

-- Stewardship Commission

Christmas Sunday Brunch: Our annual Christmas brunch will take place Sunday, December 27, at 9:15 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Please bring food to share: egg casseroles, fruit, muffins, pastries. Coffee and juice will be provided. To save on use of paper products, all are asked to bring their own table service. There will be no Sunday school that morning.

-- Nurture Commission

Intent cards: If you have not yet returned your 2016 intent card to the church office, please do so by Sunday, Dec. 20.

SHYF will attend Camp Friedenswald winter retreat January 8-10. **JHYF will attend** the January 22-24 winter retreat. Please turn in your winter retreat forms and money **today**.

SWAP – This summer the SHYF are traveling to Harlan, KY from June 27-July 2. We need a few adults who are willing to come along to volunteer with us. If interested, please contact Shannon Thiebeau.

All of the prayer cards for our mission partners and young adults in service positions are now located on the literature carousel near the kitchen. These include cards for Lily Schumacher, Albuquerque; Jenny Steinmetz, Seattle; Janie and Neal Blough, France; and Nancy Frey and Bruce Yoder, Burkina Faso.

If you have quarterlies and Rejoice! devotionals that have expired we encourage you to recycle them on your own. We no longer have a place that takes them to use again in other settings. Thank you for your cooperation. -- Steven Yoder

Miriam Rumsey, a former FMC member, will celebrate her 90th birthday on December 21. A card shower is planned to help Miriam celebrate this occasion. Please send cards to:

Miriam Rumsey

c/o Morning Pointe of Brentwood

1522 Wilson Pike

Brentwood, TN 37027

“Swords to Plowshares,” written by **Lisa Weaver**, illustrated by Amanda Huston, designed by Alison King and published by The Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center would make a great gift with Bluffton connections. This hardcover picture book shares the story of John P. Klassen creating a medallion from bullets to give to Mennonite Central Committee workers as a thank you for providing food and relief supplies to their Russian village in the 1920s. All proceeds from book sales will support the mission of peace education at The Lion and Lamb. Consider giving a copy to your children, grandchildren, grandparents, teachers and readers of every age. Copies of the book and purchase information are available on the small display table in the fellowship hall.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Festival of Lessons and Carols, Bluffton University's Christmas choral concert, is at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. today in Yoder Recital Hall. Tickets, \$8 for adults and \$6 for senior citizens, are available at the Marbeck Center information desk.

Camp Friedenswald has been developing a new website, which will launch Tuesday, Dec. 15. Camp staff encourages all to check it out at www.friedenswald.org. Register for a retreat, make an end-of-year donation and/or provide them with feedback.

Manager for Ten Thousand Villages: The Etcetera Board, Inc. is seeking qualified applicants for the vacancy of store manager of the Ten Thousand Villages Store in