

Epiphany: Yes! Let it be declared
January 7, 2017

Focus statement: Drawn by the light, we, like the magi, are sent forth in new directions. We are empowered to be God's illuminating presence in the world. Arise, shine, for the mystery of Christ has been revealed!

Church bells call us to worship

Call to Worship

Darryl Nester

Leader: Yes! The light is here. We carry it within us.

All: It is the star of the East; it is the morning sun.

Leader: It is as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

All: Praise the Lord!

Leader: You, O God, have caused the mountains to shake. You have torn open the heavens, and your glory reaches the earth.

All: May we, like the magi, seek you until we find you. May we offer our gifts in your presence, no matter where you are found.

Leader: Yes! Let your mystery be declared.

Lighting of Advent candle

Prelude

Jackie Wyse-Rhodes

Welcome

***Opening Hymn**

“Arise, your light is come”

HWB 30

Conversation with Friends

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

STS 2

Conversation

Carrie Mast

Hymn “Maranatha, come” (*refrain, vs. 7, refrain*)

STS 2

Wisdom and Wonder

Kevin and Ellie Nickel

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

Jackie Wyse-Rhodes

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

Scripture

Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12

LOGOS

Sermon

“Led to worship”

Wanda Stopher

***Hymn**

“O worship the Lord”

HWB 124

Confession

O God, your light has come, your glory risen, and your brightness dawned, illuminating not only the way of the magi, but all our paths. From your fullness we have received grace upon grace as your mystery has been revealed and your presence made known. Now we too are called to arise, shine, and return by another road. Yet we confess that instead of lifting our eyes and searching diligently, instead of walking with boldness and confidence, instead of revealing and proclaiming your presence, we cling to what we have and know, and we continue on our old, familiar ways home. We are frightened by the unknown, and by the darkness that covers the earth. Forgive us.
(pause for silence)

Words of assurance

Pastoral Prayer

Gloria Hernandez Bucher

***Hymn**

“God is working his purpose out”

HWB 638

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: Ken Shenk

HOST: Elizabeth Kelly

NURSERY WORKERS TODAY: SS – Laura and Greg Hartzler

Worship – Julie and John Mackey, Sunita Hooley

NURSERY NEXT WEEK: SS – Shelby Cluts, Kathy Traucht

Worship – Alison and Kevin King, Andrea Goings

SOUND SYSTEM: Chris Gott

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

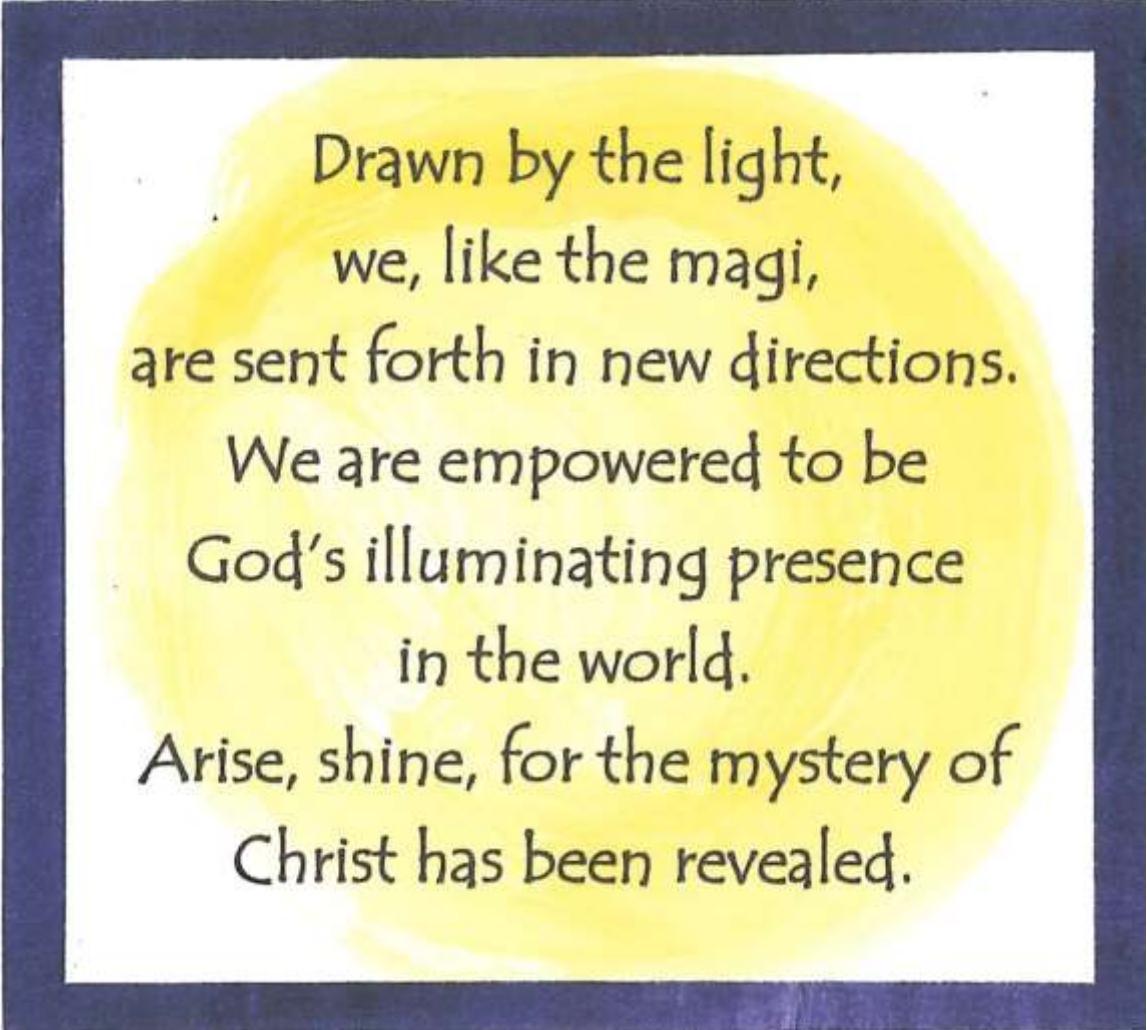
OUR STEWARDSHIP

Worship attendance last Sunday	FMC-183, MC-12
Spending plan giving Dec. 31, 2017 (includes e-giving)	\$14,105.00
Special fund giving Dec. 31, 2017 (includes e-giving): <i>Freudige-\$160; Sojourners-\$10</i>	<u>\$6,655.27</u>
<i>MDS-\$260; MW-\$130, Habitat-\$130, Deacons-\$150, K-5-\$3.27, College scholar-\$90</i>	
<i>Syrian student-\$1,000, CC flooring-\$3,610, Community-\$10, JHYF-\$50, SHYF-\$50, Misc.-\$1,000</i>	
Total giving Dec. 31, 2017 (includes e-giving)	\$20,760.27
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.

Bluffton University invites you to view the art exhibit, "Unconfirmed," by John Dickinson. The exhibit opens January 10 and runs through January 26 in the Grace Albrecht Gallery of Sauder Visual Art Center. The public is invited to the exhibit free of charge. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekly and 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

Consider attending the 2018 Mennonite Arts Weekend February 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. 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/>.

GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

Thank you, church family, for your kindness and care during my recent illness. I appreciate all the cards and visits and words of encouragement. We are blessed to have such a loving church family.
-- Mary Amstutz

At Mennonite Church USA, we're embarking on our Journey Forward in this new year. We invite prayers that we may seek the beauty and hope of God's spirit drawing us into this community of faith. Let us continue joining our voices in song, in prayer, in fellowship -- that even the mountains and the hills may join.

Pray for all students within MEA's network. May their passion for learning grow. May they follow their curiosity and expand their imaginations. May they use their gifts and their skills to love God and others.
-- 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, JANUARY 7, 2018

8:30 a.m. Youth choir
9:15 a.m. SS, Coffee time
10:30 a.m. Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching

THIS WEEK

Tuesday (1-9) Morning Prayers
Staff meeting, parlor
Trustees, 7 p.m., parlor
Wednesday (1-10) No Cherubs; Jubilate rescheduled to 1-11-17
Adult bells, 6 p.m.
Chancel choir, Youth bells, 7 p.m.
Stewardship, 6:30 p.m.
Thursday (1-11) Senior Concerns, 2 p.m., AR
Jubilate, 3 p.m.
Nurture, 7 p.m., parlor

NEXT SUNDAY

8:30 a.m. Youth choir
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

Deadline reminder: Please remember that the deadline for submitting items for the Sunday bulletin is noon on the Thursday preceding the Sunday bulletin for which it is intended. Note that in the case of holidays or vacations of the church staff, this deadline may be adjusted.

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.

Save the dates:

January 28 -- Congregational meeting following a meal provided by SHYF
February 11 -- Theda Good’s Installation

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

Change to Mennonite Women program: “Retreat” is the theme for Mennonite Women, on Monday, Jan. 8, at 7 p.m. fellowship hall. There has been a change to the program. The nutrition interns who were to present are not available, so the BU dietetics internship coordinator, Jennifer Little, will present instead. She will focus on how to make sensible eating New Year’s resolutions, avoid food fads and provide information about area healthy eating guides, and will have some food to sample. Elfrieda Ramseyer will share devotions and Joyce Hostetler and Heidrun Awad will be the kitchen crew.

Help Needed: On Tuesday, Jan. 23, Theda and Dawn’s moving truck will be here and will need to be unloaded. We are looking for individuals able to help with this endeavor. We will meet at the church and begin at approximately 12:30 p.m. If you are available to help, please contact Bret Stopher, 419-445-1568.

Sharing your gifts of hospitality, welcome, and storytelling with the congregation are vital to our mission of being a welcoming congregation. Greeters and hosts offer a warm welcome as guests and regular attenders arrive. Worship leaders guide the congregation through meaningful worship experiences. Children’s storytellers share the Gospel message to young minds and hearts. If you have ever considered serving in one of these ministries but haven’t been asked, consider this your invitation. Guidance and resources are available from the worship commission or church staff for each of these areas. Fran Core (coref@wcoil.com) coordinates greeters and hosts. Doug Luginbill (dluginbill@roadrunner.com) coordinates worship leaders. Kathy Dickson (dicksonKathy1@gmail.com) coordinates Time with Children. We look forward to affirming your gifts.
–Worship Commission

Electronic Giving is an option for giving in support of First Mennonite Church. There is a link, “ONLINE GIVING,” at the far right of the red navigation bar on the FMC website. To register, you will need your bank routing and checking account numbers. You’ll choose a starting date, as well as frequency. **All forms of monetary contributions are much appreciated, whether by cash, check or e-giving.**

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.

A Community Chili Cook-off is planned for Tuesday, Feb. 20, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Bluffton Middle School cafeteria. Bluffton churches and individuals are invited to participate by providing and serving a favorite chili, sandwiches and/or desserts, or helping with set up and tear down. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Bluffton Community Assistance Program. Anyone interested in participating should contact the Bluffton Presbyterian Church mission committee through Lynda Best, 419.296.2790, or Carol Enneking, jcenne@gmail.com or 419.348.7691.