

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: Jane Steinmetz, Monica and Steve Harnish, Kevin Cluts

HOST: Joan Diller

NURSERY WORKERS TODAY: *No SS* – Greg and Laura Hartzler

Worship – John and Julie Mackey, Elizabeth and Annalise Nisly

NURSERY WORKERS NEXT WEEK: *SS* – Kevin and Alison King

Worship – Kevin and Alison King

SOUND SYSTEM: Don Pannabecker

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	215
Worship attendance at Maple Crest last Sunday (FMC DVD)	11
Sunday school attendance last Sunday	N/A
Spending plan giving Dec. 28, 2015	\$12,166.33
Spending plan receipts for 2015	\$393,447.22
Spending plan expenses for 2015	\$390,967.44
2015 Proposed spending plan	\$419,469.00

The offering Dec. 27 totaled \$13,956.33. Money was received for these special funds: Sojourners - \$125, Capital Campaign - \$120, Deacons - \$450, Rejoice subscriptions - \$27.80, Sister church - \$50.

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:



Inclusion

Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers needed Feb. 1-5, 2016: Volunteers for cleanup and repair work are needed in Detroit. Meaningful work, comfortable overnight accommodations, and awesome meals are provided. Contact Lawrence Matthews if you are able to serve the week of February 1-5. Visit First Mennonite online for more information on the Detroit project: <http://fmcbluffton.org/service-to-others/>

-- Lawrence Matthews: 419-303-8056 detroit@mds.mennonite.net

You are invited to Grace Mennonite's comforter knotting day on Thursday, Jan. 7 at 9 a.m. Lunch will be provided. Hope to see you. -- Carolyn McDaniel

Mennonite Arts Weekend 2016 is scheduled for February 5-7 at Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati. Organized and supported by members of [Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship](#), the event 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. More details are available at <http://www.mennoniteartsweekend.org/>.

GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

Happy birthday to Margaret Weaver, 94, January 8.

Christina Detwiler, 90, passed away at Betty House on Christmas morning. A memorial service for Tina will be held at Betty House on Tuesday, Jan. 5 at 2 p.m. Funeral services and burial will be in Columbiana, Ohio, later in the month. Please offer prayers for Tina's sister and brother-in-law, Joyce and Don Hostetler, as well as their other family members.

Please remember Bob and Alice Ruth Ramseyer and their family in your thoughts and prayers. Their son-in-law, Bob Konicek, Bloomington, Ind., died Monday in Sturgis, MI. Visitation is today at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, and the funeral service is Monday at St. Paul. Bob is survived by his wife, Sue Ramseyer, their children, Tim, Elizabeth and Matthew, as well as Sue's siblings, Mark (Norma Wyse) Ramseyer, Joy (John) Betts, and Jeanne (Tom) Stenson.

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, Jan. 3, 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, Steven Yoder preaching

THIS WEEK

Tuesday (1/5)	Morning prayers, 7 a.m., sanctuary Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor Trustees, 7 p.m.
Wednesday (1/6)	Adult bells, 6 p.m. Chancel choir, 7 p.m.
Thursday (1/7)	Community meal, FMC providing, 6 p.m., Senior center Worship, 7 p.m., parlor

NEXT WEEK

9:00 a.m.	Coffee time, FH
9:15 a.m.	Christian Education; Adult Fellowship, FH
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service, Janine Bertsche Johnson preaching Scripture: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Welcome Statement Process Dates to Remember

Today, Jan. 3

Jan. 12, 2015

Written responses due -- must be placed either box – one located in the fellowship hall, one near Church Street entrance
Conversation led by team of (1) Council member and (1) Deacon for anyone who will be unable to attend a Sunday morning discussion group.

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 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. The light Jesus brings into the world challenges and illuminates. Just as the light drew the wise men, who overcame barriers and brought their gifts to the baby Jesus, let us also be empowered to bring new freedom into the church and the world with our unique gifts.

Please prayerfully consider the materials and timeline for processing a congregational decision regarding a proposed Welcoming Statement and Policy Statement. **Your signed, written responses are due today** and may be placed in the box located in the Fellowship Hall or at the back of the sanctuary at the Church Street entrance. These responses will be summarized (without names) for further discussion later in January. Please contact Darryl Nester with any questions.

Spending Plan update: Great news. Because of generous giving we covered our expenses for 2015 ending with a positive surplus (Receipts 393,447.22, Expenses 390,967.44.) This will allow an additional minimum \$3,500 outreach distribution. (Some additional giving for 2015, not included in the receipt total, has been received since Dec. 27.) Thank you for helping reach our goals for the year.

-- Stewardship Commission

Have you saved the date? **Monday, January 11 at 7 p.m.** in the fellowship hall brings "Make it Yourself, Monday" for all women. You are invited to bring something that you have created, collected or enjoy putting together, to share with other women. A form will be provided for you to fill in the name of your hobby and a brief description of how it was created. Tables will surround the fellowship hall on which to place each of the displays. Nothing is too small or too big, too unusual or too common. There will be informal time for enjoying each other's displays, after which Monica Harnish will lead our devotions, "Creativity is Best Measured in Faithfulness and Joy." Refreshments will be prepared by Heidrun Awad and Alice Ruth Ramseyer.

-- Mary Ina Hooley

Bluffton Community Meal: First Mennonite is responsible for the community meal at the Bluffton Senior Center on January 7, 2016. Helpers are needed to serve and work during the meal beginning at 5:30 p.m. **Please contact John Rich if you can help.**

Good news! First Night returns in February\March. For five weeks beginning Wednesday, Feb. 17 through March 16, we will once again have a First Night meal and program to follow. There will be no 5:30 p.m. program, and the meal will begin at 6:15 p.m. After the meal we will have a 30-minute program from 6:40 until 7:10. If you are interested in presenting a 30-minute program please contact Pastors Wanda or Steve. More information will be coming soon.

-- Nurture Commission

We are forming two new adult Sunday school classes which will begin on January 24, 2016. A class of young parents will begin a seven- week book study and discussion on "Seven Things Children Need" by John Drescher. Greg Ring will teach the class. The class coordinators are Alison King and Jenny Benroth. A second class designed more as intergenerational class but with an emphasis on young adult issues is being organized and led by Kaye Phillips. Please share your interest by talking with Alison, Jenny, Kaye or Steven Yoder.

Parables, an eight-student worship ensemble from Goshen College, will perform at FMC at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 30. Lucas Harnish is a member of Parables, which combines music, original drama and personal stories to create an engaging worship experience designed to inspire, comfort and challenge. Watch for additional details to be announced in an upcoming bulletin.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

From Neil and Janie Blough, our mission partners in France: "Dear friends and family, Last year's greeting was sent in January 2015, soon after the "Charlie Hebdo" shootings in Paris. This year's letter comes after the even more tragic events of November 13. It's been a complicated year in Paris, as well as in many other parts of the world. Isaiah's words and the Christmas celebration of the coming of the Prince of peace remind us of the promise that history is moving in another direction, even though daily events seem to proclaim the opposite..." **(Please read the full letter, which is posted on the MDS pillar in the fellowship hall.)**