

**Come! Live in the light of God's heart:  
God's Light is at hand  
Epiphany  
January 1, 2017 10:30 a.m.**

**— GATHERING —**

**Chimes call us to worship** Lucia Unrau  
**Opening Words** Lavon Welty, Worship Leader  
**Prelude** "Joy to the World!" arr. Don Hustad

**\*Call to Worship**

L: We gather today in the awareness that salvation has come in the birth of the baby in Bethlehem bringing salvation to a world that desperately needs peace, justice, healing, and restoration. Because of the salvation offered through the babe in Bethlehem we can live as a hopeful people

**C: We too often live as if in a fog filled with hopelessness, doubt and despair. But the Light has broken through to illumine our living!**

L: The Christ child born in Bethlehem calls us to rejoice! The light has come! God's heart has been revealed to us.

**All: As we worship today may we be strengthened in our commitment to live in the light of God's heart.**

**— PRAISING —**

**\*Opening Hymn** "Christ, whose glory fills the skies" HWB 216

**Candle Lighting**

**Psalm Reading**

**Special Music** "Winter Lullaby" Beth Nam  
*Anna Biesecker-Mast, piano; Ana Neufeld Weaver, violin, Grace Paquin, cello*

**— PROCLAIMING —**

**Conversation with Children**  
**Hymn** "He came down" – joy Back of hymnal  
**Conversation** Laurel Neufeld Weaver  
**Hymn** "He came down" – joy Back of hymnal

**Confession of Faith** HWB 716

**Hymn** "Beauty for brokenness" (*all verses as written*) STS 115

**Scripture Reading** Matthew 2:1-12

**Sermon** "Opening the Hidden Gift" George O'Reilly

**— RESPONDING —**

**\*Hymn of Response** "As with gladness men of old" (verses 1-3) HWB 218

**Words of Assurance**

L: Throughout the tumult of life, God holds you close in love. Rejoice, because the Light has dawned; the darkness has given way to it. God's heart is our heart -- God's heart is our hope.

**All: We choose to live in the God's light. Grant us the courage to do it.**

**Pastoral Prayer** Wanda Stopher

**Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings**

Offertory "Watchman, Tell of us the Night" arr. James Mansfield

**— SENDING —**

**\*Hymn** "Oh, beautiful star of Bethlehem" STS 32

**\*Benediction**

**\*Postlude**

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

*HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book STS – Sing the Story*

*Large-print hymnals and bulletins are available on the cabinet next to the parlor.*

## FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH

101 S. Jackson Street

Bluffton, Ohio 45817

Phone: 419-358-5766

Website: [fmclubluffton.org](http://fmclubluffton.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.-3 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

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

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**GREETERS:** Liana Gott, LuAnn Stuckey

**HOST:** Mary Amstutz

**NURSERY WORKERS TODAY:** *No nursery coverage*

*Worship – No nursery coverage*

**NURSERY WORKERS NEXT WEEK:** SS -- Pat Sheidler, Shelby Cluts, Cheri Slotter

*Worship – Jen and Darby Benroth, Betty Sommer*

**SOUND SYSTEM:** Chris Moser

**CHANCEL:** Anita Lehman

*The video of the most recent worship service may be viewed on the church's homepage, [www.fmclubluffton.org](http://www.fmclubluffton.org). Videos normally are posted on the Tuesday following the service. Previously recorded worship service videos may be found at [tinyurl.com/fmc-videos](http://tinyurl.com/fmc-videos)*

### OUR STEWARDSHIP

Worship attendance last Sunday 222

Worship attendance at Maple Crest last Sunday 7

Sunday school attendance last Sunday NA

Spending plan giving Dec. 25, 2016 \$12,496.00

2016 Proposed spending plan \$418,276.00

The offering Dec. 25 totaled \$14,834.50.70. Money was received for these special funds: Sojourners - \$253, Freudige - \$50, Faith and Life - \$195, Community - \$102, Deacons Benevolent - \$260, Kitchen service - \$6.50, MCC - \$250, MDS - \$500, SHYF - \$25, Camp Friedenswald - \$250, Capital campaign - \$600, White Gift - \$25, Anna Balmer memorial - \$50.

The Dec. 24 offering totaled \$818.11 (Deacons Benevolent.)

### CHURCH STAFF

Pastor – Wanda Stopher – 419-551-1079 (cell) -- [fmc.wanda@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc.wanda@bluffton.edu)  
Pastoral Associate – George O'Reilly – 402-619-7099 (cell) – [fmc.george@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc.george@bluffton.edu)  
Youth Ministry Director – Shannon Thiebeau – [fmc.shannon@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc.shannon@bluffton.edu)  
Director of Music – Mark Suderman      Organist Coordinator – Lucia Unrau  
Custodian – Mick Hardy  
Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker - [fmc@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc@bluffton.edu)

*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.*



**Registration for “Beyond Buried Treasure: Turning Hidden Resources into Assets”** is now open. This second joint MHS Mennonite Health Assembly and Mennonite Education Agency Education Leaders Gathering takes place March 9-12 in Jacksonville, FL. For more information or to register, visit [mhaelconference.wordpress.com](http://mhaelconference.wordpress.com).

## GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

**Happy birthday to** Margaret Weaver, 95, Jan. 8; Glennys Henry, 92, Jan. 11; Paul Dyck, 91, Jan. 14.

**Marilyn Diller continues to recuperate** following hospitalization at St. Rita’s Medical Center. Cards may be sent to her c/o Larry Diller, 11575 Bentley Road, Bluffton.

**Adan Ortiz continues to face health issues** and is sometimes in need of transportation to appointments. If you are available as a driver, please call Adan at 419.358-0955.

**In this time of war**, churches in Syria continue to minister to those who are least able to buy food, water, heating fuel or housing. In Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan, MCC's partners also help displaced people with basic needs, trauma healing and vocational training. MCC suggests that those who want to help may donate money, collect relief kits and hygiene kits, urge your legislators to work to end the war in Syria and to support more humanitarian aid, and pray for peace in Syria and Iraq and for all those who have been affected or displaced by the conflict. -- *MCC*

**Pray for our mission partners, Janie and Neal Blough**, who serve on the staff of the Paris Mennonite Center in France. They also share the Anabaptist vision through teaching in seminaries and community English classes, and as resource people in congregations. -- *MMN*

## 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.*

## EPIPHANY

9:15 a.m.	New Year’s Day brunch potluck (no Sunday school)
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service, George O’Reilly preaching
Noon	Connections potluck, FH

## THIS WEEK

Monday (1-2)	Church office closed
Tuesday (1-3)	Morning prayers, 7 a.m. Staff meeting, 9 a.m. MPS, 7 p.m., parlor
Wednesday (1-4)	Chancel Choir, 7 p.m.
Thursday (1-5)	Community meal, 6 p.m., Senior Center Worship, 7 p.m., parlor
Saturday (1-6)	Schrock family, 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m., FH

## NEXT WEEK

9:15 a.m.	Sunday school; coffee time
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service, Wanda Stopher preaching

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

**The church office will be closed** on Monday, Jan. 2.

**Thank you to all who led and planned worship during this Advent season.** Special thanks to Carrie Mast who coordinated the reader's theatre during Advent; Laurel and Justin Neufeld Weaver who created bulletin covers; and Lent Planners, Mark Suderman, Laurel Neufeld Weaver, Anita Lehman, Lavon Welty, George O'Reilly, and Wanda Stopher.

### **SHYF January schedule:**

**Sunday, January 8:** Christmas tear down and pizza, noon. Bring a few dollars to cover the cost of pizza.

**January 27-29:** Winter Retreat at Camp Friedenswald; more information to come soon.

**Sunday, January 29:** Soup Fundraiser (tentative), more details to come.

### **JHYF January schedule:**

**Sunday, January 8:** Christmas tear down and pizza, noon. Bring a few dollars to cover the cost of pizza.

**January 13-15:** Winter Retreat at Camp Friedenswald; more information to come soon.

**Winter is back!** That means that from time to time functions at the church may need to be cancelled. When needed, cancellations will be posted on the church website, on the Bluffton Icon, Lima FOX-WLIO (Hometown Stations,) The Findlay Courier, WFIN, WKXA and 106.3FOX. Cancellations will also be noted on the church answering machine. Recognizing that members come from many different places and that road conditions vary, everyone is urged to use caution and good judgment in deciding whether or not to attend.

**“Mentoring Others”** will be the theme for Mennonite Women, Monday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Ruth Naylor, an experienced spiritual director, will be the presenter. Laurel Neufeld Weaver will lead devotions. Judy Diller and Jane Weaver will provide refreshments. Remember to check the pillar by the kitchen for all that is happening with Mennonite Women.

**A breakfast for mentors** is planned for Sunday, Jan. 15 from 8:30-9:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall. This is a resourcing time for those who serve as mentors to youth at FMC.  
-- Carol Welty, mentor coordinator

**FIRST Night returns Tuesday, Jan. 24**, so put it on your calendars now. Dinner begins at 6 p.m., followed by a short program. More details to come soon.

**First Mennonite Church** has joined other faith communities in Ohio to urge Governor Kasich to not allow the resumption of executions in Ohio. It has been nearly three years since the last execution, but the next one is currently scheduled for January 12, 2017. We know that Ohioans can be safe from dangerous criminals while holding them accountable, without taking their lives. Please call Governor Kasich at 614.466.3555 to leave a message with your name, residence and personal request that he not resume executions. There are additional postcards to send to Gov. Kasich on the table next to the church office.  
-- Thank you, Mission, Peace, and Service

**Revised Common Lectionary Readings for 2017** – We will follow Year A of the Revised Common Lectionary in 2017. The Revised Common Lectionary is a lectionary of readings from the Bible for use in Christian worship, making provision for the liturgical year with its pattern of observances of festivals and seasons. You may access it via the internet at <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/index.php#>. *The church office will provide print copies upon request.*

**Plan to attend the CDC regional gathering** Saturday, March 11 at First Mennonite Church, Wadsworth. Regional gatherings allow us to hear developments and work in progress and to meet others in the conference. They are intended for all in the conference -- not only leaders in congregations or the conference.

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The next community meal** will be held Thursday, Jan. 5 at the Bluffton Senior Citizens Center. Each meal is free - donations of canned goods or cash accepted for The Bluffton Food Pantry. Meals are open to the public at 6 p.m. at the Center, 132 N. Main St.

**If you plan to participate** in the Women's March on Washington on Saturday, Jan. 21, and would like to walk with other Mennonite women, please join the Facebook group “Mennonites at the Women's March on Washington.” We can coordinate our plans and post our location in real time so that we can find each other at the event. All are welcome.  
-- Wendy Chappell-Dick