

God, Humanity & Darkness in View

Lent Four

March 11, 2018

Chimes call us to worship Jackie Wyse-Rhodes

Welcome and Announcements Lynn Miller

Prelude Jackie Wyse-Rhodes

Call to worship

L: Who comes in the name of God? Step into the light and be known.

C: We are coming, through darkness and fear. We come into the light by the power of God.

L: People of God, God has heard your cries and is opening a way for you.

C: We are here, through darkness and fear. We come into the light of this day by the power of God.

L: You are here, and God is here. What will you do?

C: Together we will worship our God.

Invocation

***Opening Hymn** "If you but trust in God?" HWB 576

*Confession

God of compassion and consequence, some days it's hard to face who we are. We like to be in control, to know where we are going. Relying on someone else, even you, is hard. We get impatient and find things to criticize. Some of us even like to complain. Glossing over past hardships is easier than admitting that we needed your help, and still do. We don't want to see how our attitudes and actions make things worse. We are sorry. Forgive our ingratitude. Grant us the courage to face the truth.

*Words of assurance

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.

Old Testament Reading Numbers 21:4-9 Lynn Miller

Conversation with Friends

Hymn "Between Me and You" Insert

Conversation Amber Shelly

Hymn "Between Me and You" Insert

Pastoral Prayer Theda Good

***Hymn** "Of the Father's love begotten" HWB 104

Gospel Reading John 3:14-21 Victoria Woods-Yee

Sermon "Heavy lifting" Wanda Stopher

***Hymn of Response** "What wondrous love is this" HWB 530

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Jackie Wyse-Rhodes

***Hymn of Dedication** "We give thee but thine own" (vs. 1&5) HWB 384

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Hymn of Sending** "This little light of mine" HWB 401

*Benediction

Postlude Jackie Wyse-Rhodes

***Please stand, or remain seated if that is more comfortable for you.**

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

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

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: fmclubffton.org

Office Hours: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

Pastor – Wanda – Monday-Thursday, 9-4, off Friday

Pastor – Theda – 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

NURSERY TODAY: SS – Judy Diller, Lori Nester

Worship – Mary Ina Hooley, Sabrina and Kurt Longworth

NURSERY NEXT WEEK: SS – Anita and George Lehman

Worship – Amy Blount, Kendra and Ellie Nickel

SOUND SYSTEM: Melissa Friesen

CHANCEL: Amber Shelly

The video of the most recent worship service may be viewed on the church’s homepage, www.fmclubffton.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-245, MC-6
Spending plan giving March 4, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$8,070.39
Special fund giving March 4, 2018 (includes e-giving): K-5-\$5.21, 6-8-\$3; SHYF-\$200	<u>\$2,222.46</u>
<i>Sojourners-\$34; Freudige-\$130; Faith and Life-\$7; Faithful Living-\$2; Community-\$10</i>	
<i>Kitchen-\$10; Deacons-\$50; Health kits-\$50; Coll scholar-\$60; Capital campaign-\$785</i>	
<i>Easter flowers-\$206.25; Relief kits-\$150; International student asst. -\$500; Habitat-\$20;</i>	
Total giving March 4, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$10,292.85
Total spending plan receipts as of January 31, 2017	\$42,545.67
Spending plan expenses as of January 31, 2017	\$26,805.89
2018 spending plan	\$427,441.00

CHURCH STAFF

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

Pastor Theda Good – 419-549-2417 (cell) -- fmc.theda@bluffton.edu

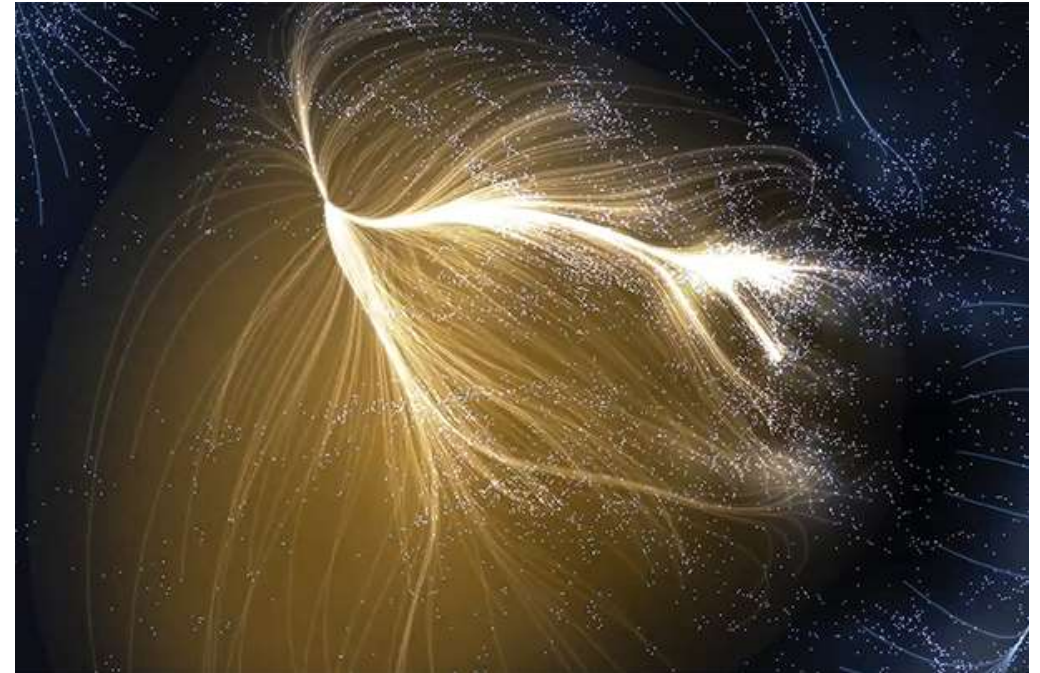
Youth Ministry Director – Shannon Thiebeau – fmc.shannon@bluffton.edu

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.



Dr. Alex Sider, professor of religion at Bluffton University, will present the colloquium, “‘Face to Face:’ Disability in Four Difficult Biblical Texts,” at 4 p.m. Friday, March 16 in Centennial Hall. Sider says that for many Christians, the Bible promotes the radical inclusion of marginalized people in community. However, during this colloquium, Sider will explain how “biblical texts were written in contexts -- racism, ethnocentrism, classism and sexism -- that created and reinforced marginalization.”

Rally Point is an afterschool ministry for youth in Lima, sponsored by the area Mennonite churches. FMC provides afterschool snacks 2-3 times per month as an extension of our support. Another way to support the ministry is for you to purchase tickets to attend the BBQ chicken dinner after church on Sunday, March 25, from 11:15 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at St. John Mennonite Church, 15988 Road 4, Pandora. Tickets cost \$8 per meal with the options to dine in or carry out. Contact Louise Matthews to purchase tickets.

Sexualized violence and the church: Mennonite Central Committee is offering three webinars this spring for churches who want to learn more about how to address sexualized violence within the congregation and how to encourage healthy sexuality and healthy masculinity among members. The webinars will be led by church leaders and others with expertise in the topics. Learn more and register for the webinars at mcc.org/wwwso.

“Holding it (,) Together,” a new podcast from The Mennonite Inc. and Mennonite Church USA’s Women in Leadership, launches Monday, March 12. The podcast features stories of authentic people exploring a need to collectively hold together all that we carry in our journey of becoming ... because most days we’re just holding it together. Episodes will be available on The Mennonite website, Apple podcasts and Stitcher.

MCC is seeking individuals to teach English under Mennonite Partners in China, formerly known as China Educational Exchange, in universities and teachers colleges in various locations within the People's Republic of China. This position is supervised by the MCC NE Asia Representative(s).

PRAYERS AND GRATITUDE

Dorothy Hoffman of Findlay, died March 8. She will be cremated and the family is not planning a service. Your prayers are appreciated.

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, March 11, 2018

8 a.m.-9 a.m.	Pancake breakfast fundraiser
9:15 a.m.	SS, Coffee time
10:30 a.m.	Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching
Noon	Freudige/Sojourners potlucks

THIS WEEK

Monday (3-12)	Mennonite Women, 7 p.m., FH
Tuesday (3-13)	Morning Prayers, 7 a.m. Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor Trustees, 7 p.m., parlor
Wednesday (3-14)	Cherubs, Adult bells, 6 p.m. Jubilate, 6:30 p.m. Chancel choir, Youth bells, 7 p.m. Stewardship, 6:30 p.m.
Thursday (3-15)	MPS, 8 a.m., AR Adriel executive team, 9-11 a.m., parlor Adriel board, noon-6 p.m., FH Council, 7 p.m.

NEXT SUNDAY

8:30 a.m.	Youth choir
9:15 a.m.	SS, Coffee time
10:30 a.m.	Worship, Theda Good 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

“Affirm” is the theme for Mennonite Women on Monday, March 12 at 7 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Participants will learn how women are being helped with addictions, trafficking and similar problems, through agencies in Lima. Guests will be Lydia Breneman, of Lima Mennonite Church, and Kelly Baeza, housemother of Andrew’s house, a home for women overcoming opioid addictions. Andrew House has a “wish list” to which all are encouraged to contribute; it includes cleaning supplies, toiletries, feminine hygiene products, adult coloring books/colored pencils, gift cards to grocery, retail stores, gas stations and restaurants. See the MW pillar for a complete list. A box will be provided at the meeting for contributions. Laurel Neufeld Weaver will lead devotions and Kay Huber and Betsi Werling will provide refreshments.

Pastors’ Office Hours and contact information:

Wanda -- Monday-Thursday, 9-4, off Friday; fmc.wanda@bluffton.edu; 419-551-1079
Theda – Tuesday-Friday, 9-4, off Monday; fmc.theda@bluffton.edu; 419-549-2417
Please contact a pastor by e-mail or phone to schedule an appointment. Calling ahead is strongly encouraged. **Wanda** takes Friday as a Sabbath rest from work – including emails. She responds only in emergencies on Friday. **Theda** takes Monday as a Sabbath rest from work – including emails. She responds only in emergencies on Monday.

Unsigned notes: Periodically the church office and/or a staff member receives unsigned notes commenting on a concern or problem here at First Mennonite. When we don’t know who’s delivering a message, we are unable to ask questions or to follow up. Therefore, please understand that we will not act on anonymous notes. We do appreciate your concerns in writing with your signature or shared in person. -- FMC Staff

On Easter Sunday, April 1, the Chancel Choir will sing Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus.” We invite anyone to join us in singing on that Sunday. So, if interested, just come to rehearsal on Wednesday, March 28, at 7:15 p.m. in the sanctuary. We will have music for you or bring your own copy. -- Mark Suderman

Congratulations to Neil Kehler, who was recently named one of eight recipients of the 2018 Jefferson Awards for Public Service by the United Way of Greater Lima. Neil has worked with the Mennonite Home Communities of Ohio, where he has volunteered for the last eight years and delivered mobile meals to area families. Neil also spent an estimated 194 personal hours helping to refurbish 30 plus teak benches at Maple Crest, where he resides.

The 2018 Mennonite youth choir festival winds up today with the festival concert at 2 p.m. in Sauder Music Hall at Goshen (IN) College. FMC youth participating in the weekend festival are Ben and Ellie Hartzler, Ellie and Ethan Nickel, Kayleigh Coffman, Rebecca Estell, Theo Andreas, John-Paul Yoder and Ethan Blount.

The Young Adult Sunday school class has renamed itself “Faithful Living” and invites any interested persons to join them at their 9:15 a.m. class. They are studying Lynn Miller’s book, “The Power of Enough.” The class meets in the room across from the nursery downstairs. Greg Ring is the class contact and may be reached at 567-204-7283 or by email at gregring@roadrunner.com.

Hygiene Kits - MCC is in need of hygiene kits and relief kits, so we will be collecting kits for a few months. Please limit your generosity to the items listed. Note that MCC has recently added a comb to the hygiene kit list. Bags and content lists are on the table and bulletin board near the church library. We also need bag fabric and people to sew bags. Sewing directions are on the kit card in the kit collection area of fellowship hall. Some precut bags and cords are also there. ***Relief Kits:** *These kits are larger and more expensive to complete, but are also desperately needed. Relief kit lists are also on the bulletin board. Just pack all items into a box, label it “Relief Kit,” and place in the quilt room. We will send these to MCC where the items will be placed into a new plastic pail with a lid.*

We regularly post letters, invitations and notices from various organizations on the “Here and Now” pillar in the fellowship hall. Please take time to review these items.

Bluffton University Chorale and Camerata Singers will perform “March Madrigal Madness,” a concert at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, March 18, in Yoder Recital Hall. This concert of secular music will trace the history of the madrigal and will feature compositions by Hans Leo Hassler, Thomas Morley, Orlando di Lasso and John Dowland.