

“Restore us, O God! We thirst”

March 12, 2017

10:30 a.m.

— **GATHERING** —

Chimes call us to worship

Lucia Unrau

Welcome, Announcements

Victoria Woods-Yee, Worship Leader

***Call to Worship (based on Psalm 121)**

L: My eyes are raised to the mountains, I long for help.

C: The winds of change are blowing, threatening to tear me apart.

L: I am slipping. I cannot climb any higher. Then You say to me:

C: “Do not be afraid.” You refuse to sleep, watching over me day and night.

L: Lord, You are the shade at my right hand, the sun does not harm me by day, nor the moon by night.

All: You keep me free from harm. All my life is before your eyes. I am forever in Your care.

***Invocation**

— **PRAISING** —

Readers Theater

Psalm 121

Elfrieda Ramseyer

Melissa Friesen

***Opening Hymn**

“Immortal, invisible, God only wise”

HWB 70

***Confession and Reconciling**

Confession (based on John 3:1-17):

L: Water pours down on me, endlessly raining.

Women: Soaked to the bone by the Spirit Who saturates my soul.

Men: I hope to enter the kingdom of God. I feel the winds blowing...

L: Going wherever they please. I follow, wondering about all I hear and see.

Women: What can they mean, all these signs and parables?

Men: I observe and listen, but from where do they come?

Reconciling:

All: I simply embrace the glow within...traveling through the wilderness -- whatever it takes to be born again. The waters pour down on me, endlessly.

Confessing Response

“Save us, O Lord” (*refrain/v. 2/refrain*)

STS 6

Pastoral Prayer

George O’Reilly

Special Music

“Would I Have Answered When You Called”

Roy Hopp

Chancel Choir

— **PROCLAIMING** —

Time with Children

Hymn

“Come to me, come to us” (*vs. 1 for coming forward*) STS 60

Conversation

Shelby and Kevin Cluts

Hymn

“Come to me, come to us” (*vs. 3 for returning*) STS 60

Gospel Reading

John 3:1-17

Justin Neufeld-Weaver

Sermon

“Caution: High Wind!”

Shannon Thiebeau

— **RESPONDING** —

***Hymn**

“I know not why God's wondrous”

HWB 338

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

“Take My Life, That I May Be”

arr. Kristina Langlois

***Hymn of Dedication**

“Take my life” (*vs. 1*)

HWB 389

— **SENDING** —

***Hymn**

“Calm me, Lord”

STS 45

***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: 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.-3 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

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

GREETERS:

HOST:

NURSERY WORKERS TODAY: SS – Hannah Combs, Lu Derstine, Judy Diller

Worship – Kevin and Alison King, Seth Andreas

NURSERY WORKERS NEXT WEEK: SS – Shelby Cluts, Kathy Traucht, Mary Pannabecker Steiner

Worship – Bruce Steingass, Amy Freeman, Sunita Hooley

SOUND SYSTEM: Peter Terry

CHANCEL: Amy Freeman

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	198
Worship attendance at Maple Crest last Sunday	7
Sunday school attendance last Sunday	90
Spending plan giving March 5, 2017	\$7,531.00
Spending plan receipts as of February 28	\$67,481.59
Spending plan expenses as of February 28	\$65,777.69
2017 spending plan	\$421,146.00

The offering March 5 totaled \$10,340.87. Money was received for these special funds, K-5th - \$14.37, Grades 6-8 - \$2, Grades 9-12 - \$3, Sojourners - \$7, Freudige - \$75, Faith and Life - \$16, Young Adults - \$20, SHYF - \$40, Deacons Benevolent - \$30, Kitchen service - \$212.50, FIRST Night - \$8, Habitat - \$260, MDS - \$50, Rejoice - \$387, SHYF Fundraiser - \$1,140, Memorials - \$545.

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 Organist Coordinator – Lucia Unrau

Custodian – Mick Hardy

Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker - 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.



Landour, Northern India, photo by Mary Ina Hooley

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

An exhibit titled “Viewer Discretion Advised,” featuring works by senior art students at Bluffton University will be on display through March 24 in Sauder Visual Arts Center. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekly and 1-5 p.m. weekends. The artists will be available to discuss their work during a reception from 1-3 p.m. on Sunday, March 19. The display includes digital prints, sculpture, painting, drawing and photography. **Justin Neufeld-Weaver, a member of FMC, is one of the artists with work in the display.** The others include Tracy Cook, Defiance; Anna Hairston, Mansfield; Mackenzie Hoeckley, Santa Barbara, Calif.; Courtney Rettig, Bluffton; Aaron Ward, Toledo.

The Sunflower Trio, comprised of Hesston College music faculty Matthew Schloneger, tenor; Rebecca Schloneger, violin, and Ken Rodgers, piano, will present a program about Mennonite composer J. Harold Moyer during Forum at 11 a.m. March 14 in Yoder Recital Hall. The trio will also perform a concert of Moyer’s works at 7:30 p.m. that evening in Yoder Recital Hall. The program will feature sacred choral music from the Renaissance period through the present, including music from a variety of styles and genres: gospel music, choruses from major works, and spirituals.

In 2016, the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee began developing a new collection to succeed *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (1992), and supplements *Sing the Journey* (2005), and *Sing the Story* (2007). One aspect of building a collection is the call for new and original work. The committee calls on authors of worship resources and hymn texts, songwriters who compose words and music as a unit, and composers of hymn tunes to submit original work intended to enhance congregational worship in Anabaptist-Mennonite faith communities. We are excited to welcome submissions for consideration in this new collection, scheduled for release in 2020. We expect the submissions portal at www.MennoniteWorshipAndSongCollection.org to be active throughout 2017.

GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

Shelby (Saxton) Cluts’ mother, Marjorie A. Saxton, 81, passed away on March 7. A funeral service was held March 11 at Middle Creek United Methodist Church, Grover Hill. Shelby and Kevin and their family appreciate your prayers.

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 12, 2017

8:30 a.m.	Youth Choir
9:15 a.m.	Sunday school, coffee time
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service, Shannon Thiebeau preaching
Noon	Freudige/Sojourners class potlucks
	Catechism
2 p.m.	Mennonite Youth Choir concert, Goshen College

THIS WEEK

Monday (3-13)	Lent Practice, 7 p.m., FH, childcare will be provided
Tuesday (3-14)	Morning prayers, 7 a.m. Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor Trustees, 7 p.m., parlor
Wednesday (3-15)	Cherub Choir, Adult Bells, 6 p.m. Jubilate, 6:45 p.m. Youth Bells, Chancel Choir, 7 p.m.
Thursday (3-16)	Adriel board, FH, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Congregational Discernment Team, 5 p.m., parlor Community dinner, 6 p.m., Senior Center Council, 7 p.m.

NEXT WEEK

8:30 a.m.	Youth choir
9:15 a.m.	Sunday school, coffee time
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service, George O’Reilly 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

Sometimes we think of giving up something for Lent. At other times we add a practice to help us focus on the themes of the season. This year, you are invited to join others in a creative venture called Lent Practice. Each Monday through April 3, everyone is invited to gather and share something you've created in response to the prompt each week. The prompts for Monday March 13 are: "Restore us, O God! We thirst," Psalm 95 and John 4:5-42. All creations are welcome. Entering this space of awe and beauty with us is an act of creativity in itself. Come to one or come to all! Get creative! (Please come even if you do not have something to share.)

- Write a song, piece of music, story or poem
- Draw, sculpt, whittle, paint, sew, knit, crochet or weld
- Use wood, yarn, cloth, clay, marbles, metal, paper or string

See the display case in the entrance stairway for some of the creative work of Lent Practice 2017! This display will change each week in conjunction with the scriptures and theme of worship. Thank you to Victoria Woods-Yee for Words for Worship today, and to Wanda Stopher for the arrangement of Psalm 121.

Mennonite Women March 13 meeting: Instead of the regular meeting, you are invited to join the Lent Practice scheduled for all members. Don't feel limited to attend Lent Practice only on March 13. You are invited to attend as many as you wish.

Members of Jubilate and the Youth Choir will participate in the Mennonite Youth Choir Festival today at Goshen College. Hal Hess will direct the choir in concert at 2 p.m. in Sauder Recital Hall. All are invited to attend.

Mystery Supper: The SHYF is holding a Harry Potter-themed Mystery Supper fundraiser on Sunday, March 19 to help offset expenses for the 2017 Youth Convention in Orlando, FL. We will gather at 4:30 p.m. and begin the meal at 5. Even if you are not a fan of the magical book and movie series, it is still a fun experience to enjoy. Perhaps you will get to eat your dessert first or to watch your friend attempt to eat soup with a knife. Please indicate if you plan to attend on the sign-up sheet located on the table next to the office in the fellowship hall. Bring friends!

Youth Auction: The SHYF is hosting an auction in late April to raise funds for the 2017 Orlando Youth Convention. We are asking you to donate goods, services, or experiences to be auctioned off. If you are unsure of what you might like to donate, some examples from past youth auctions have included instrument lessons, a home-cooked gourmet meal, an afternoon of yard work, baked goods, custom art work and an airplane ride. More details about the auction to come soon.

Easter flower orders: We will again order potted flowers for Easter from K&J Greenhouses, Inc. If you wish to order flowers in memory or honor of a loved one, please complete the order insert and submit to the church office with your payment. **Note that the deadline to submit your order is Monday, March 20.**

The young adult Sunday school class invites anyone to join them for a series of weekly challenges during the Lent season. They will discuss the following during class:

- being more deliberate in faith
- being more positive
- being less dependent on technology/social media
- consuming less/tithing more
- taking care of self
- focusing on fellowship/relationships
- challenging each other to be more mindful throughout the week

Contact Jen Benroth @ jesommer2000@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

Hygiene Kits -- MCC has made an urgent call for hygiene kits! We presently have 44 kits. Can we get 200 kits? (We are planning on ending this drive by the end of April.)

Hygiene Kit Contents - NEW items, in original packaging

- 1 adult-size toothbrush (individually wrapped)
- 1 large bar bath soap
- 1 fingernail clipper (good quality)
- 1 hand towel (dark color)

Content lists, bags, and fabric and directions for sewing bags are presently on the table and bulletin board by the library.

FIRST Night will be held Tuesday, March 28 at 6 p.m. Carol Welty and participants in the mentor program will have a pizza meal. Those attending should bring their own table service. A registration table will be set up in the fellowship hall March 19 and 26. **Registrations must be paid by noon Monday March 27.** This meal will be the final one for this church year.