

“Restore us, O God! We see”
March 26, 2017
10:30 a.m.

— GATHERING —

Chimes call us to worship

Welcome, Announcements Victoria Woods-Yee, Worship Leader

*** Call to Worship (based on Psalm 23)**

L: Shepherd, I am safe in Your arms. Swaddled and cuddled as though a tiny babe.

C: Your very own lamb, held near to You. Warm and protected.

L: Nothing to fear even when I am walking through the valley with death all around me.

C: You are there, always giving me exactly what I need in that moment.

L: More than I need, my cup overflows. My path is frequently rocky, but You guide me...

All: Stilling my fears removing the thorns from my skin. Your Love is a balm...

Stillness fills me. I am in Your care.

Special Music “The Lord is My Shepherd” John Rutter
Jerry Szabo, oboe; Chancel Choir

Invocation

— PRAISING —

***Opening Hymn** “I’ll praise my Maker” HWB 166

***Confession and Reconciling**

***Confession (based on John 9:1-41):**

L: Weariness and desolation fill me.

Women: My eyes are sealed shut, I cannot see what is before me.

Men: Wayward am I. Sinful from the day of my birth.

L: Desperately, I fall to my knees in repentance.

***Reconciling:**

Women: Mud-smearred eyes made way for a miracle.

Men: Submerged, I arose from the water seeing all around me for the first time.

All: Illumination! Now we see. The Light of the world is before us...The Son of God has come.

***Confessing Response** “Save us, O Lord” (*refrain/v.2/refrain*) STS 6

Pastoral Prayer George O’Reilly

— PROCLAIMING —

Special Music “Zacchaeus Was a Wee Little Man” Traditional
Cherub Choir

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 9:1-41*

Sermon “Strange New Sight” Wanda Stopher

— RESPONDING —

***Hymn** “Alleluia, the Great Storm is over” STJ 71 (*see insert*)

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory “Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah” Lloyd Larson
Adult Bells

***Hymn of Dedication** “Take my life” (*vs. 4*) HWB 389

— SENDING —

***Hymn** “Lead us, O Father” HWB 359
(*use “O Shepherd” rather than “O Father” on each verse*)

***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: Senior High Sunday school

HOST: Senior High Sunday school

NURSERY WORKERS TODAY: SS – John and Julie Mackey, Pat Sheidler

Worship – Kristen Niekamp, Kevin Cluts, Mary Ina Hooley

NURSERY WORKERS NEXT WEEK: SS – George and Anita Lehman, Pat Sheidler

Worship – Jen and Darby Benroth, Betty Sommer

SOUND SYSTEM: Art Shelly

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	213
Worship attendance at Maple Crest last Sunday	4
Sunday school attendance last Sunday	85
Spending plan giving March 19, 2017	\$5,129.00
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 19 totaled \$6,049.77. Money was received for these special funds, K-5th - \$18.94, Faith and Life - \$10, Young Adults - \$12.78, Deacons Benevolent - \$20, Kitchen service - \$9.50, FIRST Night - \$8, MCC - \$100, Hygiene Kits - \$20, Rejoice - \$96, SHYF - \$150, Memorials - \$300, Easter flowers - \$175.55.

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

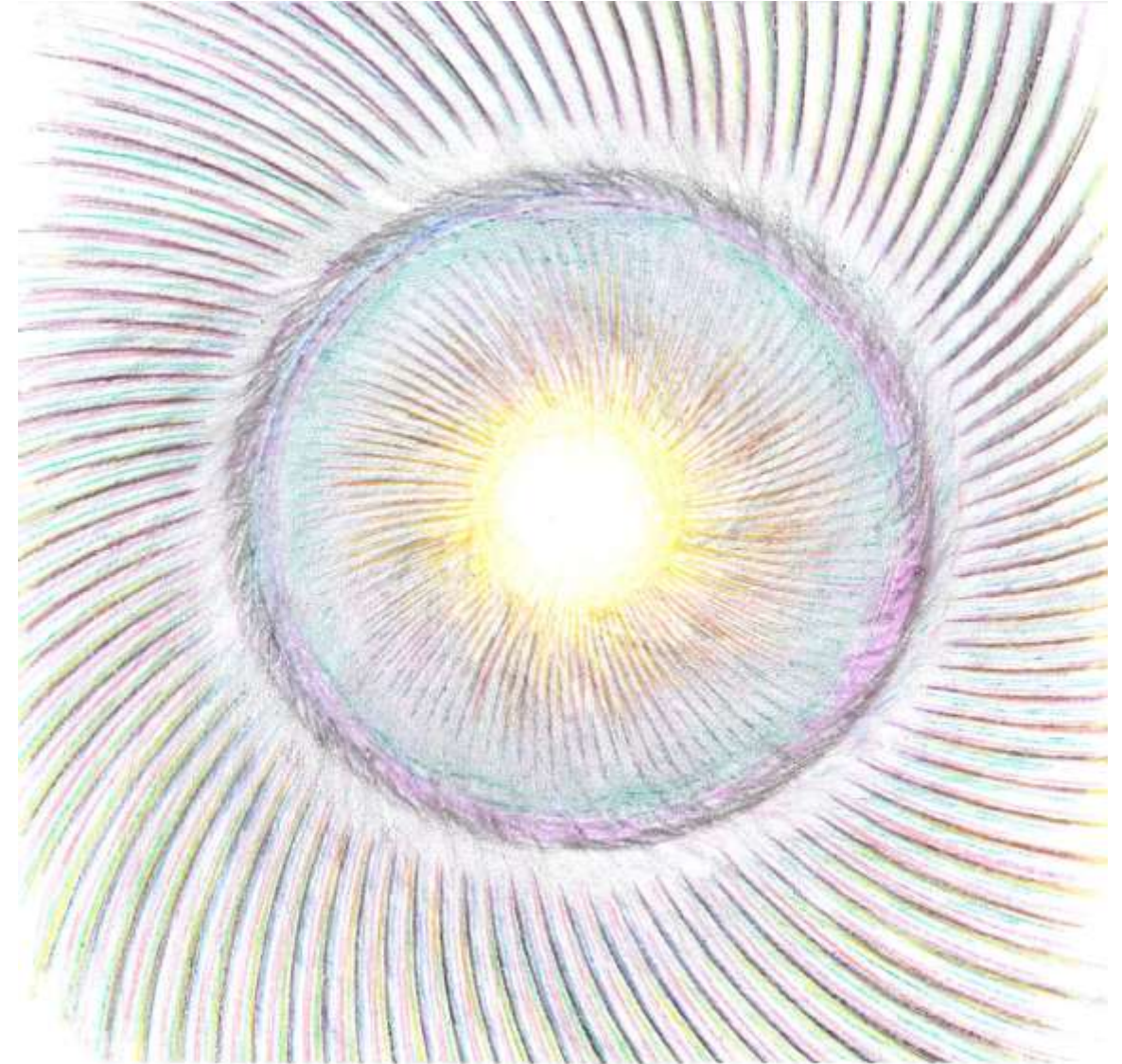
Youth Ministry Director – Shannon Thiebeau – fmc.shannon@bluffton.edu

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.



Mennonite pastor Paula Snyder Belousek will present “John’s Dilemma: A Mennonite Bishop Wrestles with Suffering in a Time of War,” during Bluffton University’s Spiritual Life Week Forum on Tuesday, April 4, at 11 a.m. in Yoder Recital Hall. Snyder Belousek will discuss Bishop John M. Brenneman’s draft petition written to President Abraham Lincoln requesting conscientious objector status for Mennonites during the Civil War. She discovered this letter while sorting through archives of Salem Mennonite Church. Snyder Belousek, lead pastor at Salem, is a graduate of AMBS.

The final Artist Series performance of the season will be “The Other Mozart,” a one-act play that tells the story of Nannerl Mozart, the sister of Wolfgang Amadeus. The performance begins at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 6 in Bluffton University’s Yoder Recital Hall. Reserved seats are \$25 for adults, \$20 for senior citizens and non-Bluffton students and \$10 for children ages 6-13. Children ages 5 and under are admitted free. Tickets are available at <http://tickets.bluffton.edu> or in person at the Marbeck Center information desk.

GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

Happy anniversary to Linda and Lynn Miller, 52, April 2.

My deepest thanks to all those who sent cards, visited me in hospital or at Mennonite Home, or remembered me in prayer during my time of illness! Sincerely, Ernie Porzelius

Please keep Louise Wideman and her family in your thoughts and prayers. Louise’s father, Murray, died March 21 at Innisfree House, Kitchener. A memorial service was held March 25 Breslau (Ontario) Mennonite Church.

Congratulations to Bret and Wanda Stopher on the birth of their second grandchild, Ellis Drew Leatherman, on March 22. Ellis weighed 7 lbs. and 9 oz. and is 21¾ inches long. Parents, Perry and Erin, and big brother Ora are doing well. Your prayers and support have been deeply 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 26, 2017

8:30 a.m.	Youth Choir
9:15 a.m.	Sunday school, coffee time
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service, Wanda Stopher preaching
Noon	Community class potluck
	Catechism
6:30 p.m.	SHYF/JH FY games with Maple Crest residents, patio room

THIS WEEK

Monday (3-27)	Volunteers leave for Our Daily Bread, 9:45 a.m. Lent Practice, 7 p.m., FH, childcare will be provided
Tuesday (3-28)	Morning prayers, 7 a.m. Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor FIRST Night, 6 p.m., FH
Wednesday (3-29)	Cherub Choir, Adult Bells, 6 p.m. Jubilate, 6:45 p.m. Youth Bells, Chancel Choir, 7 p.m.
Thursday (3-30)	Congregational Discernment Team, 5 p.m., parlor
Friday (4-1)	April Fools!

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
Noon	Catechism

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

Thanks to Carolyn Rich, who created today's bulletin cover, and says "Like the thrill of seeing lighter whites and more vivid colors after cataract surgery, we need to open our eyes and hearts to seeing and believing truths that have always existed but been dulled by our unawareness or complacency."

Lent Practice: All are invited to join in a creative venture called Lent Practice. Each Monday through April 3, we'll gather and share something we've each created in response to the prompt each week. The prompts for Monday, March 20 are: "Restore us, O God! We hope." Psalm 31:9-16; Matthew 26:14-27:66. 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 changes each week in conjunction with the scriptures and theme of worship.

FIRST Night will be held Tuesday, March 28 at 6 p.m. Carol Welty and participants in the mentor program will provide pizza, tossed salad, chips, cookies/bars and soft drinks. Those attending should bring their own table service. The evening's program will be Joke Night. If you have a joke, riddle or funny story to share, please contact Darryl Nester at 410.358.9650 or nesterd@bluffton.edu or, if time permits, stand up and share it during the program. A registration table will be set up in the fellowship hall today.

Registrations must be paid by noon Monday March 27.

Easter Sunday brunch will be held Sunday, April 16, at 9:15 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Please bring food to share: breakfast casseroles, fruit, muffins, or pastries. Coffee and juice will be provided. To save on use of paper products, please bring your own table service. There will be no Sunday school that morning.

Photo op! A pictorial directory can greatly enhance fellowship by helping us know each other. We need 2-3 volunteers to help with a greatly simplified process to produce an updated directory. If curious, please call or text Pastor George at 402-619-7099.

Youth Auction: SHYF will hold 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. Examples of items 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.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Service Group of the Mennonite Home Communities of Ohio will hold its annual Easter bake sale on Saturday, April 8 from 9-11:30 a.m. in the Mennonite Memorial Home lobby. The bake sale will include a variety of baked goods including cinnamon rolls, cakes, cookies and breads.

The Musselman Library at Bluffton University will host a presentation of the recently published study guide *Human Sexuality in Biblical Perspective* in the Reading Room at 4 p.m. Thursday, March 30. Among the speakers will be former CDC conference minister Lois Johns Kaufmann, editors Carrie and Gerald Mast, human sexuality task group member Alex Sider, and book designer Alison King. Copies of the book will be available for sale.

Bluffton University's Gospel Choir will present a concert at 6 p.m. Saturday, April 1, in Yoder Recital Hall. The concert will feature favorites of conductor, Dr. Crystal Sellers Battle, associate professor of music. Soloists will include Kathy Grady of Findlay, and Marta Michalska-Uras, originally from the Czech Republic. Dr. Sellers Battle will also be featured as a soloist on one of the pieces.

Twelve people representing diversity across the denomination came together in Orlando, FL, in January to design a process for Mennonite Church USA to forge a path into the future. Under the guidance of consultant Catherine Barnes of Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, the Design Team set plans in motion for a generative, open space for denomination-wide conversation -- the Future Church Summit -- to dream together, reset priorities and engage one another in answering the question: *How will we follow Jesus as Anabaptists in the 21st century?* Learn more at <http://convention.mennoniteusa.org/future-church-summit/>.