

**First Sunday of Advent
November 29, 2015
10:30 a.m.**

— GATHERING —

Call to Worship “Pilgrim” Lawton/Silva

(See insert – sing as directed)

Welcome Greg Ring, Worship Leader

Responsive Reading *(based on Psalm 25:1-10, Luke 21:25-36)*

Leader: We live in troubled times, waiting for God’s burst of light into our dark world.

People: Lift up your eyes! God’s justice is on the way.

Leader: Liberating God, sustain us and help us to walk in your ways.

People: Free us from the chains of prejudice and the shackles of sin.

Leader: This is the moment to wake from sleep. Be ready, Jesus is coming to set us free.

All: Let us worship God, whose mercy promises us new life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Invocation

— PRAISING —

***Opening Hymn** “O come, O come, Immanuel” HWB 172

(Sing verses 1-3 & 6)

Prophetic Scripture Reading Jeremiah 33:14-16

Time with Children

Hymn “Holy Child within the manger” STS 28

(Sing v. 1)

Conversation Chris Gott

Hymn “Holy Child within the manger” STS 28

(Sing v. 2)

Lighting of Advent Candle

Paula and Doug Luginbill

Prayer of confession – Assurance of pardon

L: In the presence of God and each other, let us confess our sin.

All: Almighty God: You love us, but we have not loved You; You call, but we have not listened. We have built walls around ourselves and walked away from neighbors in need, wrapped up in our own concerns. We live in a paradise of gadgets, and have ignored the prejudice, warfare, and greed surrounding us. Lord God, help us to tear down the walls we have built around us and face up to ourselves, so that as You move toward us in mercy, we may turn to You and receive forgiveness.

L: As the walls surrounding us are being broken down, let us silently confess our sin.
(Silent confession)

L: Together, let us accept God’s forgiveness.

All: This is the confidence we have in God: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Special Music “Climb To The Top Of The Highest Mountain” Carolyn Jennings
Chancel Choir

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory “Sing We Now of Christmas” arr. Douglas E. Wagner
Lucia Unrau, organ

— PROCLAIMING —

Gospel Reading Luke 21:25-36

Sermon “Heads up” Wanda Stopher

***Hymn of Response** “Hark! The glad sound!” HWB 184

Pastoral Prayer Steven Yoder

— SENDING —

***Hymn** “Bless'd be the God of Israel” HWB 174

***Benediction**

***Postlude**

**Please stand, or remain seated if that is more comfortable for you.
HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book STJ – Sing the Journey*

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH

101 S. Jackson Street

Bluffton, Ohio 45817

Phone: 419-358-5766

Website: fmclubluffton.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: Willis and Betty Sommer, Rich and Gloria Bucher,

HOST: Jo Clemens

NURSERY WORKERS TODAY: SS – Lori Nester, Jen Benroth

Worship – Andrea and Tyson Goings, Seth Andreas, Douglas Nester

NURSERY WORKERS NEXT WEEK: SS – Kevin and Alison King

Worship – Kevin and Alison King, Ellie Nickel

SOUND SYSTEM: Don Pannabecker

CHANCEL: Lois Wetherill

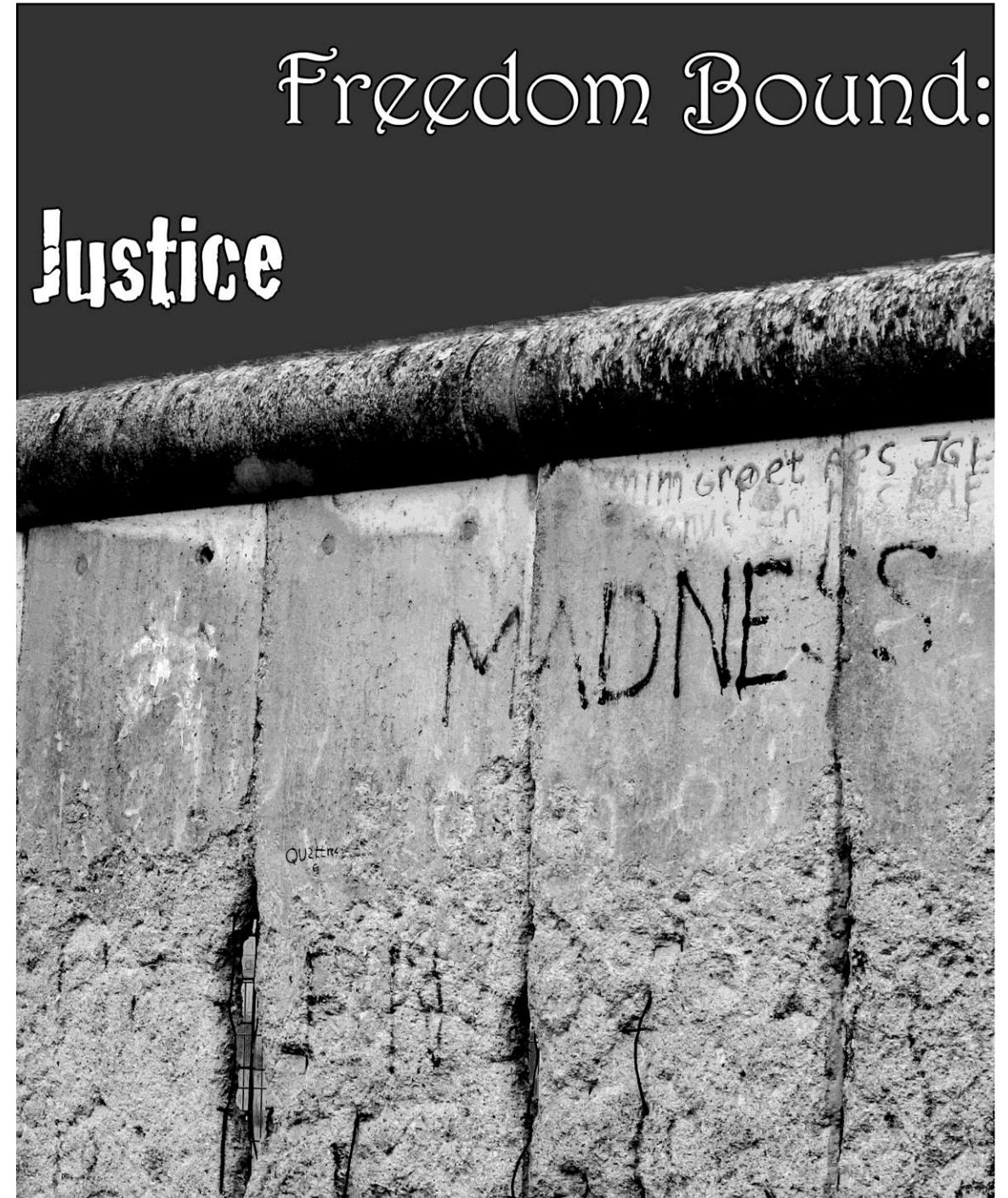
The video of the most recent worship service may be viewed on the church's homepage, www.fmclubluffton.org. Videos normally are posted on the Tuesday following the service. Previously recorded worship service videos may be found at tinyurl.com/fmc-videos

OUR STEWARDSHIP

Worship attendance last Sunday	226
Worship attendance at Maple Crest last Sunday (FMC DVD)	NA
Sunday school attendance last Sunday	86
Spending plan giving November 22, 2015	\$4,366.00
2015 Proposed spending plan	\$419,469.00
The offering Nov. 22 totaled \$7,393.19. Money was received for these special funds: SS - \$84.29, Capital Campaign - \$120, MPS - \$400, Facility use - \$50, College Scholarships – 50, Kitchen service – 24.48, Deacons' Benevolent - \$383, Colonial Lopez - \$50, Stan Naylor memorial (Deacons' Benevolent) – \$535, Funeral meal - \$204, Mary Lou Vercler memorial - \$1,033.42, Betty Cookson memorial - \$15.	

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



“A Festival of Lessons and Carols,” Bluffton University’s Christmas choral concert, is set for 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13, in Yoder Recital Hall. Tickets, \$8 for adults and \$6 for senior citizens, are available online at <http://tickets.bluffton.edu> or at the Marbeck Center information desk.

Apply for 2016 Everence college scholarships: If your family uses Everence faith-based services, you are eligible to apply for college scholarships for the 2016-2017 school year. Submit your application by Feb. 29, 2016. Learn more at everence.com/scholarships or see Willis Sommer, Everence advocate, for a copy of the application.

GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

Happy birthday to Shirley Kirk, 88, Dec. 1.

Please keep the family of Christine Purves – Jean and Dave Lehman, Greta and Tim Holt, and Mary and Ed Liechty, and their extended family members – in your prayers. Christine died November 25 at Willow Ridge. A memorial service is planned for 2 p.m. Monday, Dec. 28 at First Mennonite.

Thank God for protecting Mission Network personnel based in Paris, France, on November 13 when bombings occurred in the city. Pray for wisdom as French Mennonites discern how to respond to these tragedies. -- *Mennonite Mission Network*

Give thanks for the Thanksgiving weekend and time spent with loved ones. Pray for safe travel for students and their families returning to school or home today. -- *Mennonite Education Agency*

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, Nov. 29, 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, Wanda Stopher preaching

THIS WEEK

Tuesday (12/1)	Morning prayers, 7 a.m., sanctuary Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor
Wednesday (12/2)	Cherub choir and Adult bells, 6 p.m.; Jubilate, 6:45 p.m.; Chancel choir and Youth bells, 7 p.m.
Thursday (12/3)	Red Cross Blood Drive, noon-6 p.m., FH Worship, 7 p.m.

NEXT WEEK

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, Wanda Stopher preaching

Scripture: Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

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 available downstairs. Worship activity bags for children are available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Spending Plan update: Our spending plan offerings will need to average \$11,324 for the remaining five Sundays of 2015 to cover our anticipated Spending Plan expenses.

-- Stewardship Commission

This year's Christmas program will be held Sunday, Dec. 13 at 6:30 p.m. We are still in need of people to share their gifts of music, poetry, drama or other talents. Please pick up a form from the Fellowship Hall if you, your family or friends would like to participate. (Forms can be turned in to Mary Ina Hooley.) You are also invited to bring cookies or healthy snacks to share afterwards. -- Christian Education Commission

Please help care for the church: When using items such as mugs, plates and silverware from the First Mennonite kitchen and/or during coffee time, please always return them to the kitchen rather than leaving them in classrooms, the sanctuary, and other locations in the church. **Also**, if you or your child is playing the electronic keyboard in the VIP room, please turn it off when you leave the room.

The Red Cross Blood Drive will be held Thursday, Dec. 3, from noon-6 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Please call 1-800-RED-CROSS or go to redcrossblood.org, sponsor code "fmennbl" to schedule your blood donation appointment. On the day of the blood drive, be prepared to show a donor card, driver's license, or other form(s) of ID. *Sign-up sheets for various volunteer jobs throughout the day are on a table in the fellowship hall.

SHYF meets on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month from 7-8 p.m. in the youth room except where noted otherwise below.

- Sunday, December 6: Caroling, 6:30-? p.m. We will sing Christmas songs through the Mennonite nursing homes and return to the fellowship hall from some refreshments. This is a JHYF and SHYF combined event...friends and family are welcome!
- Sunday, December 13: Christmas Program, 6:30 p.m.

- Sunday, December 20: Sanctuary decorating, after church. An SHYF tradition. This year, the JHYF is also invited to help decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. There will be PIZZA!

JHYF: In addition to the above activities with the senior high youth, JHYF will meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month from 2:30-3:30 p.m. in the junior high room.

Our sister church in Honduras is celebrating their 35th year this weekend. Earlier they requested funds to help them paint their church. If you would like to see these photos go to Facebook.com and look up the church's Facebook page listed under IGLESIA EVANGELICA MENONITA FUENTE DE AGUA VIVA. There are pictures of various church members painting the church.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

PrimeTimers Fellowship will hold its annual Christmas party at noon Tuesday, Dec. 1 at St. John Mennonite Church, 15988 Road 4, Pandora. PrimeTimers is a ministry of St. John Mennonite and Mennonite Home Communities of Ohio. PrimeTimers is a monthly lunch gathering open to adults 55 and over, and is a non-denominational time of fellowship and entertainment. This month's menu will include stuffed chicken Marsala, roasted red potatoes, green bean almandine, cranberry walnut bread, cheesecake with raspberry sauce and coffee. The meal is free to those who attend, but donations are accepted.

Manager for Ten Thousand Villages: The Etcetera Board, Inc. is seeking qualified applicants for the vacancy of store manager of the Ten Thousand Villages Store in Bluffton. This person will oversee daily operation of the store, including supervising the volunteers, handling ordering of products and overall finances. Candidates must understand and embrace the mission of Ten Thousand Villages to support artisans in developing countries. Business and retail background is a plus. The job is about 30 hours per week. Interested applicants should send cover letter and resume to Linda Suter at suterlr@bluffton.edu or 122 Grove St., Bluffton. Applications will be received until January 1, after which interviewing will begin immediately and a recommendation will be made to the board and the filled position announced.

Bluffton University will present its 120th performance of Handel's "Messiah" at 4 p.m. next Sunday, Dec. 6, in Founders Hall. The event is free and open to the public.