

First Sunday of Advent
Sensing the Season: SMELL
December 3, 2023

Gathering

Call to Worship

Emily Hilty

Prelude

O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide
LuAnn Stuckey

arr. J. Blersch

Centering

*Opening Hymn

HWB 175 *O Savior, Rend the Heavens*

*Responsive Reading & Candle Lighting

One: Advent is a time to lean into our questions: We wonder, we wander,

All: We wait together

One: For the Messiah, the Christ Child, the light.

All: How will we know it is you?

One: Help us to perceive your presence:

All: To smell your fragrance,

One: To meet your embrace, To taste your feast, To feel your love,
To hear your song, To see your beauty,

All: To prepare a way for you in a chaotic world.

One: We light this candle of Hope, anticipating your embodied presence among us.

Amy Shadbolt & Evan Blount (candle lighters)

Telling God's Story

Conversation with Children

Junia Spelman & Carrie Mast

Hymn

VT 237 *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper*
(v. 1 coming forward & v. 2 going back to seats)

Special Music

The Wexford Carol arr. Douglas E. Wagner
Chancel Choir, Mark Suderman (conductor), LuAnn Stuckey (piano)

Good people all, this Christmastime, consider well and bear in mind what our good God for us has done, in sending his beloved Son. With Mary holy we should pray to God with love on Christmas Day; in Bethlehem upon that morn there was a blessed Messiah born.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep; to whom God's angels did appear, which put the shepherds in great fear. "Prepare and go," the angels said, "To Bethlehem, be not afraid; for there you'll find this happy morn, a princely babe, sweet Jesus born."

With thankful heart and joyful mind, the shepherds went the babe to find, and as God's angel had foretold, they did our Savior Christ behold.

Pastoral Prayer

Pastor Carrie

Scripture

Isaiah 64:1-9

Chris Gott

Message

The Aroma of Hope

Pastor Phil

Living God's Story

*Hymn of Response

VT 223 *Bless'd Be the God of Israel*

Offering

Words of Invitation

Offertor

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

arr. K. Koesche

Dedication Prayer

Sending

*Hymn of Sending

VT 218 *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

*Benediction

*Postlude

O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide

arr. K. Koesche

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

~ VT - Voices Together (Purple Bound Book)

To parents of young children: If you're feeling anxious about having them in church, God put the wiggle in children. Don't feel like you have to suppress those wiggles. Consider sitting closer to the front, where it's easier for your little ones to engage. Quietly explain the parts of worship and actions of the worship leader, musicians, pastor, and others who are involved in the service. Sing the hymns, pray, and voice the responses. Children learn their behavior by mimicking you. If you have to leave the sanctuary with your child, please feel free to do so, but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the children come to me."

First Mennonite Church
101 S. Jackson St, Bluffton OH
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First Mennonite Church

December 3, 2023

Lead Pastor Phil Yoder, 717-869-7624
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Technology Coordinator Ray Raeburn, 419-230-2769
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Custodian Shawna Yoder
shawna@fmcbluffton.org

First Mennonite Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.

~ Phil's day off - Friday ~ Carrie's day off - Thursday

Nursery Workers Today SS: Pat Sheidler
Worship: Mary Ina Hooley/Victoria Woods-Yee

Nursery Workers Next Week SS: Judy Diller
Worship: Sunita Hooley/Tess Eger

Nursery sign-up here: <http://fmcbluffton.org/nursery-volunteers>



Video: Ray Raeburn 11/19/23 - 11/26/23
Sound: Chris Moser Reported Volunteer hours: 23
Chancel: Mary Ann Suter Attendance: 137
Online views - Live: 28 Recorded: 18 Total Viewing Hrs: 34.5

Sensing The Season



Advent 1

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peter DeMeo's health is improving, and he has moved to Birchaven in Findlay for rehab.

Ken Shenk continues to recuperate from surgery to remove as much cancer as possible. Prayers are requested for Ken and Natalie as they navigate Ken's cancer treatment.

I am so thankful for this congregation. Your prayers, visits, cards, and personal notes, books, and flowers have been so encouraging and sustaining for me. I am especially grateful to my sister, Fran. My broken leg has healed well and I am getting stronger every day. Thank you all.

~ Ruth Early

We appreciate all of the volunteers who helped with the Red Cross **Blood Drive** and provided cookies and supplies. A special **thank you** to **Heidrun Awad** who leads this ministry for FMC.

TODAY, following worship in the Fellowship Hall:

- **Trunk Sale!** All are invited to stay after the service to browse through beautiful arts and crafts from 16 countries, brought to you by **Ten Thousand Villages**. All items are for sale, and we can take checks, credit cards, cash, or IOU.
- Come join the **Cinnamon Roll Potluck and FMC Music Discussion**. After the service, come get some cinnamon rolls in the Fellowship Hall and browse the Ten Thousand Villages items in the Trunk Sale. About 15 minutes later, Pastor Phil and Pastor Carrie will be hosting a time in the Fellowship Hall for folks to share their thoughts and dreams for music at FMC. As we all know, Mark Suderman will be retiring in the next year. As we begin the process of finding new music leadership, we would like to receive feedback from the congregation on what has been meaningful to them about FMC worship, and what they would love to have happen at FMC in the future. *You do not need to bring cinnamon rolls to be part of the discussion!*

Two concerts at Bluffton University will feature holiday music and Christmas medleys.

The **Holiday Collage Concert** will take place at **2:30 p.m. this Sunday**, Dec. 3 in Yoder Recital Hall. University Chorale, Camerata Singers and Concert Band will perform. The choirs will sing Christmas favorites like "Silent Night," "In Dulci Jubilo" and "Do You Hear What I Hear." The band will present several medleys of both favorites and lesser-known music. The concert will conclude with an audience sing-along. The **Christmas Festival Forum** will be held at **11 a.m. on Tuesday**, Dec. 5 in Yoder Recital Hall. Student brass and flute ensembles will perform familiar music of the season. Both events are free and open to the public.

CORRECTION: The **Swiss Community Historical Society Christmas Open House** is **Saturday** and **Sunday, Dec. 2-3** instead of what is listed in your Advent brochure.

The **Children & Youth Christmas program** is slated for **next Sunday**, Dec. 10! New for this year: the program will be shared during our worship service.

NEXT SUNDAY: The twelfth and final Sunday of our **Social Justice Series**, *What Then Shall We Do?* is next week, Dec. 10, when **Laurel Neufeld Weaver** will open discussion on justice for children during the sermon. All are invited to a potluck lunch following worship to continue the conversation around tables. Bring your own table service. Paper products will be available.

As a part of our **College Church Relations Ministry**, FMC is hosting **Pie Night next Sunday**, Dec. 10, beginning at **8 p.m.** We invite you to come and spend time getting to know and supporting Bluffton University students at this event. Final exams begin the next day. We also encourage you to make/bring a pie. Pies can be dropped off next Sunday morning or that evening. Questions can be directed to **Walt Paquin**: paquinw@bluffton.edu or

Bluffton University will present its **129th performance of Handel's "Messiah" at 4 p.m. next Sunday**, Dec. 10, in Yoder Recital Hall. While tickets are free, space needs to be reserved at www.bluffton.edu/tickets. Dr. Bo Young Kang, director of choral activities, will conduct the oratorio. Soloists along with the Bluffton Choral Society including students, faculty, staff and community members will be accompanied by an orchestra. A free-will offering will be taken for music scholarships.

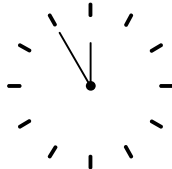
Death Penalty Reform Reporting: On Dec. 17, an **elective SS class** will be offered for youth and adults. The topic will include reflections of those who attended the legislative hearing in Columbus in November.

Due to the way Sundays and holidays fall on the calendar this year, **Dec. 24** is the **last giving Sunday** to give to the 2023 Spending Plan in the offering plate and online. If you give after this date, and you wish your contribution to appear on your 2023 contribution statement, you will need to notify the church office.

Over 850 people from over 250 Mennonite churches and institutions joined together as one community during our first ever **Mennonite Action Mass Meeting** last Monday evening as a movement of Mennonites taking bold, public action to stop war and end the occupation of Palestine. Mennonite Action will hold a public action training on Zoom called *Peace School* **next Thursday, Dec. 7 at 8:15 p.m.** This training is for anyone that wants to participate in public action as a Mennonite. The 2nd Mennonite Action Mass Meeting will be held on **Dec. 12 at 8 p.m. on Zoom**. For more info: <https://www.mennoniteaction.org/>.



Ministry Minute!



Thank you to the **Advent Worship Planning Committee** for their work in organizing this year's season of Advent. The Advent Planning Committee for this year includes **Emily Hilty, Chris Gott, Mary Ann Suter, Junia Spelman, Carrie Mast, Mark Suderman, Phil Yoder, and Trusty Schumacher**. This committee created the theme, planned the chancel display, organized the music, wrote the words, and had a lot of fun along the way. If you would enjoy helping to plan other seasons such as Lent or the Summer Series, feel free to let Pastor Phil know.






DECEMBER Happy Birthday

3 - Carrie Phillips	8 - Susie Gratz
Sarah Phillips	Chaska Yoder
6 - Doug Luginbill	10 - Carolyn Rich
Natalie Shenk	

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.

follow us


 @fmcbluffton
  Bluffton First Mennonite Church

Today, Sunday, December 3, 2023

Youth Choir, 8:30 - 9:15 a.m. Children's Choir Room
 Coffee Time, 9 a.m. & Sunday School for adults, 9:15 a.m.
 Children & Youth Christmas Program Rehearsal, 9:15 a.m. ViP & JHY Rooms
 Cherubs, 9:15 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. Children's Choir Room
 Worship: Phil Yoder preaching, 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary
 Ten Thousand Villages Trunk Sale & Cinnamon Roll Potluck & Music Discussion, after worship in Fellowship Hall
 Bluffton University Holiday Collage Concert, 2:30 p.m. Yoder Recital Hall
 Sermon Discussion Circle, meal, 5:30 p.m.; discussion 6-7 p.m.

This Week

Monday, December 4
 Staff meeting, 9:30 a.m. Parlor

Tuesday, December 5
 Morning prayers, 7 a.m. Sanctuary

Wednesday, December 6
 CDC Pastor Peer Group, 10-11:30 a.m. Zoom
 Jubilate 3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Children's Choir Room
 Noodle Night, come and go 4:45-6 p.m. Fellowship Hall
 Adult Bells, 6 p.m. Youth Bells, 7 p.m. Assembly Room
 Chancel Choir, 7 p.m. Sanctuary
 SHY, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Fellowship Hall

Next Sunday, December 10
 Social Justice Sunday #12: What Then Shall We Do? Justice for Children
 Children's Christmas Program
 Worship: Laurel Neufeld Weaver preaching
 Social Justice Potluck, noon Fellowship Hall
 The Messiah, 4 p.m. Yoder Recital Hall
 Pie Night, 8 p.m. Fellowship Hall
 Lectionary: Judges 4:1-7; Psalm 123; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30

Welcome to our worship service today.
 Visitors are invited to sign one of our guest sheets located at the entrances to the sanctuary. Wireless hearing aids are available. Worship bags for children can be found hanging on wooden pegs at each sanctuary entrance. Child care is available during Sunday School and worship for young children in the nursery located in the basement.