

Third Sunday of Advent
Sensing the Season: TASTE
December 17, 2023

Gathering

Call to Worship Emily Hilty

Prelude *We Three Kings* Hopkins/Fauble
Adult Bells, Ray Raeburn (director)

Centering

*Opening Hymn VT 217 *Hark! the Glad Sound!*

*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: To smell your fragrance,
To meet your embrace

All: To taste your feast

One: 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 Peace, anticipating your embodied presence among us.

The Goings Family (Candle Lighters)

Telling God's Story

Special Music *O Come All Ye Faithful* arr. B. Wayne Bisbee
Jubilate, Laura Hartzler (director), Anne Marie Spelman (piano)

Conversation with Children Carrie Mast & Junia Spelman

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

Special Music *Christmas Lullaby* John Rutter

Chancel Choir, Mark Suderman (conductor), LuAnn Stuckey (piano)

Clear in the darkness a light shines in Bethlehem: Angels are singing, their sound fills the air. Wise men have journeyed to greet their Messiah, But only a mother and baby lie there. Ave Maria, Hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing. Ave Maria, Maiden, and mother of Jesus our King.

Where are his courtiers, and who are his people? Why does he bear neither sceptre nor crown? Shepherds his courtiers, the poor for his people, With peace as his sceptre and love for his crown.

What though your treasures are not gold or incense? Lay them before him with hearts full of love. Praise to the Christ child, and praise to his mother Who bore us a Saviour by grace from above.

Ave Maria...

Scripture Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Chris Gott

Pastoral Prayer Pastor Carrie

Scripture Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Evan Skilliter

Message *Imagine the Taste* Pastor Phil

Living God's Story

*Hymn of Response VT 467 *Taste and See*

Offering

Words of Invitation

Offertory *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came* arr. B. Culli
LuAnn Stuckey

Dedication Prayer

Sending

*Hymn of Sending VT 255 *Love Came Down at Christmas*

*Benediction

*Postlude *From Heaven above to Earth I Come* arr. F.W. Zachau

**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
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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: *Gerald Mast*
Worship: *Mary Edmiston/Walt Paquin*

Nursery Workers Next Week SS: *Jean Miller*
Worship: *Jonathan Spelman*

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



Video: Ray Raeburn	12-03-23 - 12-10-23
Sound: Melissa Friesen	Reported Volunteer hours: 21
Chancel: Mary Ann Suter	Attendance: 171
	Online views - Live: 27 Recorded: 27 Total Viewing Hrs: 45

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.

First Mennonite Church

December 17, 2023

Sensing The Season



Advent 3

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deep thanks to so many in the congregation who gave so much support during Diana's unexpected hospitalization in Toledo and Findlay, and after her death, through visits, calls, cards, advice, and various types of personal assistance. ~Jan Emmert

TODAY: An **elective SS class** will be offered for youth and adults during the SS hour in the **sanctuary on Death Penalty Reform**. The topic will include reflections of those who attended the legislative hearing in Columbus in November.

If you plan to volunteer at **Our Daily Bread** this **Tuesday**, contact John or Carolyn Rich at 419.358.5405. We leave at 10:45 a.m.

On **Tuesday**, Dec. 19, hundreds of Mennonites across the US and Canada will hold peaceful demonstrations at their representatives' offices calling for a **ceasefire in Gaza**. **Mennonite Action** is organizing Mennonites from across Ohio (including those from FMC). We will be meeting at Columbus Mennonite at 11 a.m. and heading downtown as a group from there. If you would like to carpool from Bluffton, contact Pastor Phil. We will plan on meeting at FMC at 9:15 a.m. and returning mid-afternoon.

Interested in **Mennonite Action**?

Check out their website: <https://www.mennoniteaction.org/>

This **Wednesday** will include MANY festivities!

- 3 p.m. Jubilate will skip the rehearsal and go to the Twisted Whisk instead after school with Laura Hartzler.
- 4:30-6 p.m. Noodle Night Christmas Jam Session: Come bring your instrument or your voice and jam out to Christmas tunes during Noodle Night! Music will be provided.
- 6ish p.m. Caroling at the Mennonite Home and Maple Crest: All are welcome to join caroling!
- NOTE: Bell choirs will NOT be meeting this week.

Next Sunday, Dec. 24, we will host our **Christmas Brunch** in the Fellowship Hall at 9:15 a.m. Following brunch, we will gather for worship for the 4th Sunday of Advent. At 6:30 p.m. we will gather again for the Candlelight Christmas Eve service with featured Nativity story readers **Mark & Elaine Suderman**.

New Members Class: Have you been attending FMC and are interested in becoming a member? There will be a New Members Sunday School class meeting for 5 weeks starting in February (We already have 4 folks and would love to have more). Let Pastor Phil know if you have interest.

Trusty Schumacher's family leave is extended to Jan. 15. Over the next 5 weeks, office coverage will be spotty. Contact the office (419.358.5766) before stopping in to make sure someone will be available to help you.



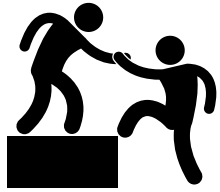
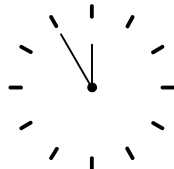
Music Survey and QR Code: Thank you for your participation in the cinnamon roll potluck and conversation about the future of FMC music. We really appreciate your feedback. We are reviewing the surveys and organizing the data. If you were not able to be there, you can either use this QR code to the left, find the link on the church website front page, or get a paper copy from the office. The Survey will close next Saturday.

On Saturday, **Jan. 27**, FMC & Grace Mennonite will be hosting an all new **Winter Bible School** from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. **Dr. Ryan Schellenberg**, a Mennonite scholar of the apostle Paul from Methodist Theological Seminary of Ohio, will be sharing his expertise on Paul's experience in prisons and how that may relate to issues of mass incarceration today. Saturday will feature a meal, music, discussion, and **children's programming at The Lion & Lamb**, as well. Sunday will include an elective Sunday School class, and a sermon from Ryan. You can register at FMC's website or by scanning this QR Code:



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.

Ministry Minute!



Church is about so much more than Sunday morning worship. Church is also about community, a faith family who can lean on one another when things feel hard and who can remind each other we're not alone in those rough patches. Those moments of support might include dropping off a meal; picking children up after school; visiting in the hospital, during rehab, or at home; dropping a card in the mail, sending a text, or picking up the phone for a chat. We all like our independence, so it's hard to look beyond ourselves or our family members to seek the extra support, and yet, as followers of Christ, receiving some grace is part of our calling. How can our faith family help? Do you need some respite from caring for a loved one or your kids? Would a support circle for caregivers be helpful? Do you need some extra support getting groceries or running errands? Would you like some visits? Would it help just sharing your rough time with a pastor? Reach out to the church; we're here. Do you know of someone who could use a hand or a talk? Let the church know! If you are someone who is able to drive someone to an appointment, run an errand, pick up some groceries, stay with someone, visit, etc., and are unsure how to plug in, let the church office know so we can connect you with someone.

Happy Birthday

17 - Ray Person
21 - Bobbie Chappell
22 - Gene Long

23 - Terry Chappell
Sally Roth

December



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



Today, Sunday, December 17, 2023

~~CANCELED: Youth Choir, 8:30—9:15 a.m. Children's Choir Room~~
Coffee Time, 9 a.m.
Sunday School for all ages, 9:15 a.m.
Elective SS Class, 9:15 a.m. Sanctuary
Third Sunday of Advent ~ Sensing the Season: TASTE
Worship: Phil Yoder, preaching 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary
Freudige SS Class Potluck, noon Fellowship Hall
Sermon Discussion Circle, meal, 5:30 p.m.; discussion 6-7 p.m.

This Week

Monday, December 18

Staff meeting, 9:30 a.m. Parlor

Tuesday, December 19

Morning prayers, 7 a.m. Sanctuary

Our Daily Bread, leave church at 10:45 a.m.

Wednesday, December 20

Jubilate 3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Children's Choir Room

Noodle Night, come and go 4:45-6 p.m. Fellowship Hall

~~CANCELED: 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 24

Third Sunday of Advent ~ Sensing the Season: EMOTION

Christmas Eve Brunch, 9:15 a.m.

Worship: Phil Yoder, preaching

Christmas Eve Service, 6:30 p.m.

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

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.