

**Christmas Sunday**  
**Sensing the Season: SOUND**  
December 31, 2023

**Gathering**

Call to Worship Carrie Mast  
Prelude *In Dulci Jubilo* arr. D.N. Johnson  
LuAnn Stuckey  
Invocation  
\*Opening Hymn VT 212 *Comfort, Comfort, O My People*

\*Responsive Reading - selections from Psalm ??

One: Christmas is here, and we still wonder, we still wander,

**All: We wonder and wander as a community, together.**

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

**All: How do we know it is you?**

One: Help us to perceive your presence: To smell your fragrance,  
To meet your embrace, To taste your feast, To feel your love

**All: To hear your song**

One: To see your beauty,

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

One: We light the Christ Candle, anticipating your embodied presence among us.  
Andrew and Beth Raeburn (Candle Lighters)

**Telling God's Story**

Conversation with Children Anna Hartzler & Carrie Mast  
Hymn VT 237 *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper*  
(v. 1 coming forward & v. 2 going back to seats)

Offering  
Words of Invitation and Dedication Prayer  
Offertory *What Child Is This* arr. J. Young  
Dramatic Reading (The Message) Isaiah 61:10-62:3 Chris Gott  
Pastoral Prayer Pastor Carrie  
Scripture Luke 2:22-40 Claire Phillips  
Message *Sleeping and Wailing* Pastor Phil

**Living God's Story**

\*Hymn of Response VT 265 *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

Service of Communion

**Sending**

\*Hymn of Sending VT 249 *Angels We Have Heard on High*

\*Benediction

\*Postlude *Joy to the World* arr. H. Gehrke

*\*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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419-358-5766 | [fmcbluffton.org](http://fmcbluffton.org)

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**Custodian** Shawna Yoder  
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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:**

**Worship:** *Monica Harnish*

**Nursery Workers Next Week SS:** *Cheri Slotter*

**Worship:** *Pat Sheidler/Bruce or Amy Steingass*

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



<b>Video:</b> Ray Raeburn	12/17/23 - 12/24/23
<b>Sound:</b> Kevin Cluts	Reported Volunteer hours: 24
<b>Chancel:</b> Mary Ann Suter	Attendance: 172
	Online views - Live: 26 Recorded: 22 Total Viewing Hrs: 30

*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 31, 2023**

# Sensing The Season



*Christmas Sunday*

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**TODAY:** We will be partaking in **Communion**. An opportunity to give alms to support the **Mutual Aid Fund** will be available. Baskets for this offering will be located at the entrances to the sanctuary. The Mutual Aid Fund provides assistance for individual needs in our church and community. In the last months, this fund has provided housing and groceries to many people. Thank you for your ongoing support.

TODAY: This Sunday is the last week for **combined SS for the children and youth**. We will gather at 9:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall to enjoy hot chocolate and do some activities together. Adults participating in Coffee Time are welcome to join in!

**OFFICE HOURS:** The church office will be closed Monday.

Next Sunday, **Epiphany**, we will present our **White Gifts** during the offering in worship. Information regarding SS class offering balances and suggested recipients of our White Gift offerings will be in the mailboxes of SS class representatives.

**SHY Winter Camp, Jan. 5-7:** Members of the Senior High Youth group will be departing for Camp Friedenswald Friday at 4 p.m. from the church parking lot. Prayers for safe travels and meaningful experiences in the peaceful woods for: **Theo Andreas, Ethan Blount, Kaleigh Coffman, Rebecca Estell, Ellie Hartzler, Ethan Nickel, Claire Phillips, Tate Steinmetz** & a friend, as well as special guests **Kate & Mia Pannabecker!**

**JHY Winter Camp** at Friedenswald is **Jan. 12-14**. Campers attending include **Ryan Blount, Micah DeMarco, Jori Mast, Atticus Prothro, Kendyl Shadbolt, and Carter Steinmetz**. Sponsors are **Joel Steinmetz, Ryan DeMarco, and Carrie Mast**.

Join the fun of **Family Winter Camp at Friedenswald Feb. 16-18**. Cost: Adult \$150, Child (ages 4-17) \$115, Child (0-3) Free, Family Max \$540. Scholarships are available. Register online: <https://friedenswald.campbrainregistration.com/>.

**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 April (We already have 8 folks and would love to have more). Let Pastor Phil know if you have interest.

**Mark your calendar!** On Sunday, **Feb. 11**, we will be hosting a day of worship and activities focused on learning about the history of the Israel/Palestine conflict and the experience of 2 Palestinians: **Lydia Brenneman**, retired chaplain and Lima Mennonite member, will be our guest speaker during worship, and **Tareq Abuhlima**, graduate assistant working in the Lion & Lamb Peace Arts Center at Bluffton University, will share in the afternoon. Look for more information coming soon!

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. Register at FMC's website or by scanning this QR code:



### *Prayer for Peace*

Holy one, how can our hearts hold this?

Our candles remind us of the darkness.

Our warmth reminds us of the cold.

Our gathering reminds us of empty chairs.

Will these long nights ever see daylight?

Will peace prevail on earth?

Lord, let us be compelled to act.

Let our heartbreak be followed by action.

Let our numbness be followed by courage.

Let our helplessness move us to our feet.

Let our actions be a prayer for peace.

~ Pastor Krista Showalter Ehst, Shalom Mennonite, Harrisonburg, VA

# Ministry Minute!

## MUSIC SURVEY RESULTS



- Music is VERY important to the spirituality of FMC.
- Many want FMC to continue the variety it does now, and continue to try out the new and exciting things we are doing already. However, not too drastic from what we do now.
- Four part harmony is an important part of our tradition.
- It's important that there are many different people sharing their gifts (including kids).
- We have an appreciation for ensembles and groups of musicians.
- A great love for piano, organ, and strings is part of us.
- Choir is important to this community -many commented on their appreciation for the recent combined choir.

I believe the feedback points to an appreciation of what is already happening at FMC, and an openness to explore a variety of musical expression. As we start the work towards finding a new Minister of Music, this feedback will guide the process. Thank you for taking part in it!



1 - Jim Weaver  
5 - Larry Diller  
Rhonda Winstead

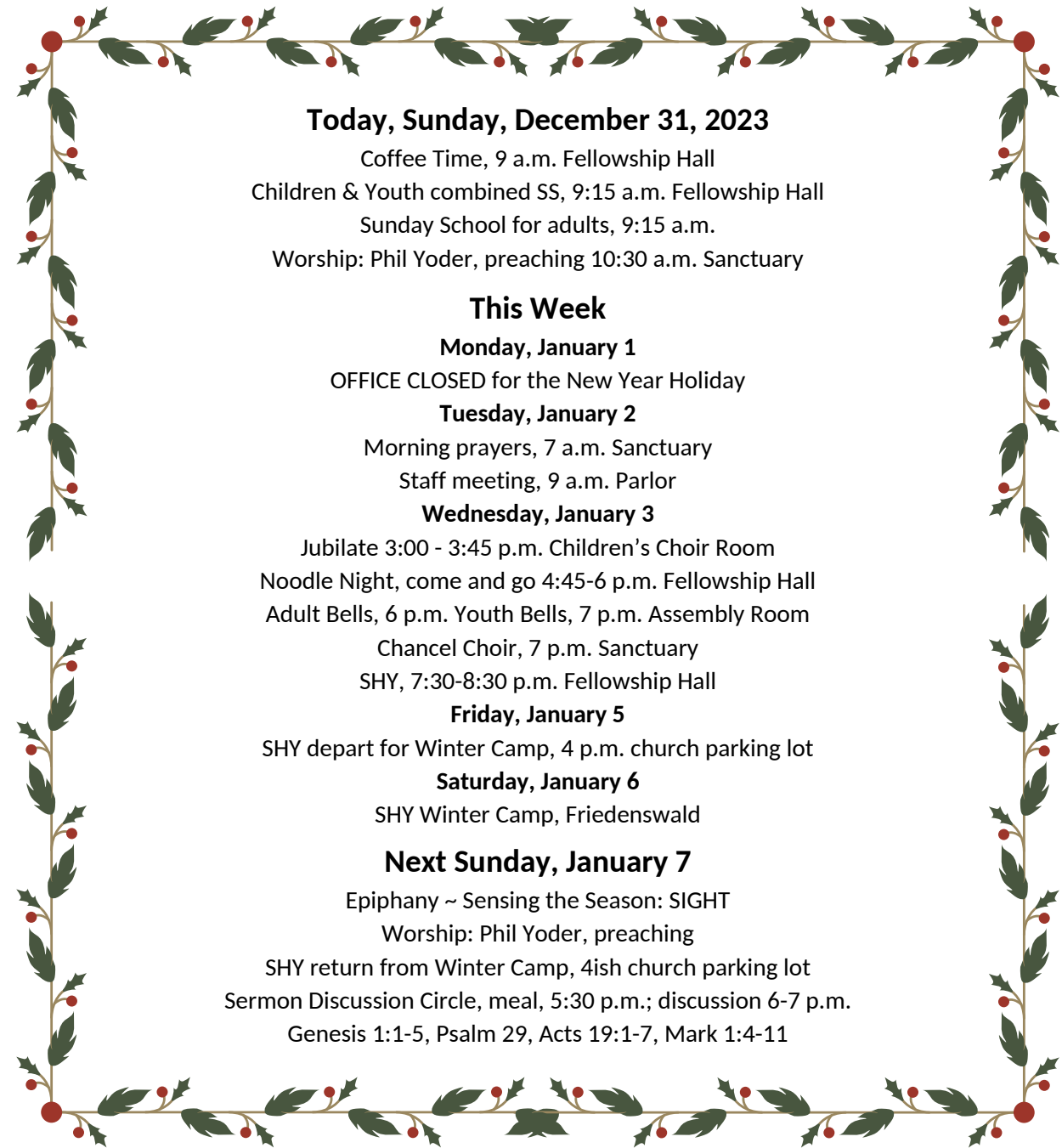


6 - Jim Benner

*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 31, 2023

Coffee Time, 9 a.m. Fellowship Hall  
Children & Youth combined SS, 9:15 a.m. Fellowship Hall  
Sunday School for adults, 9:15 a.m.  
Worship: Phil Yoder, preaching 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary

### This Week

#### Monday, January 1

OFFICE CLOSED for the New Year Holiday

#### Tuesday, January 2

Morning prayers, 7 a.m. Sanctuary  
Staff meeting, 9 a.m. Parlor

#### Wednesday, January 3

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

#### Friday, January 5

SHY depart for Winter Camp, 4 p.m. church parking lot

#### Saturday, January 6

SHY Winter Camp, Friedenswald

#### Next Sunday, January 7

Epiphany ~ Sensing the Season: SIGHT  
Worship: Phil Yoder, preaching  
SHY return from Winter Camp, 4ish church parking lot  
Sermon Discussion Circle, meal, 5:30 p.m.; discussion 6-7 p.m.  
Genesis 1:1-5, Psalm 29, Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11

**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.