

**FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH**  
**Weekly Announcements 1-24-2021**

First Mennonite Church, 101 S. Jackson Street, Bluffton, Ohio 45817  
419-358-5766 | [fmcbluffton.org](http://fmcbluffton.org) | Staff working from home

- Pastor Wanda Stopher – Monday-Thursday, off Friday, 419-551-1079, [wanda@fmcbluffton.org](mailto:wanda@fmcbluffton.org)
- Pastor Jeff Boehr – T, F; 419-236-9150, [jeff@fmcbluffton.org](mailto:jeff@fmcbluffton.org)
- Children and Youth Ministry Director – Carrie Mast, 419-230-1568, [mastc@bluffton.edu](mailto:mastc@bluffton.edu)
- Director of Music – Mark Suderman, 419-230-5368 (cell), [sudermanme@bluffton.edu](mailto:sudermanme@bluffton.edu)
- Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker Steiner, 419-358-5766, [fmc@fmcbluffton.org](mailto:fmc@fmcbluffton.org)

**Happy Birthday!**

Jan. 24 – Ezekiel Coffman

Jeanne Novak

Jan. 25 – Nancy Tripp

Jackson Niekamp

Janine Paul

Jan. 27 – Betsi Werling

Jan. 28 – Linda Miller

**Last March, in response** to guidance from state and local health authorities, we as a congregation moved worship from our sanctuary to a virtual experience recorded and made available by video. Although it is not clear what worship will look like in the future, we long for the day we can return to worshipping in person in the sanctuary.

In addition to the worship video recorded on Wednesday evening and made available on Sunday morning, we have treasured opportunities about once a month to be together as a congregation synchronously, typically by Zoom. These have included Theda's farewell, congregational meetings, All Saints observance, Christmas Eve service, and the recent outdoor prayer event on Church Street. The intention is to continue making this effort once a month.

Bringing these together -- worship and a synchronous gathering of the entire congregation -- a special experience of worship is being planned. On **Wednesday, Feb. 3 at 7 p.m.**, the congregation is invited to Zoom the recording of the video service for Feb. 7. This is meant to provide an opportunity to worship together synchronously and to give an insider's view of what happens at the recording session each Wednesday evening.

In addition, there will be a brief opportunity following the service to both reflect with others on our experience and to dream together about what worship may be like when we are able to return to in-person worship. Join us for worship at <https://zoom.us/j/94268295805> or by phone at +1 646 558 8656.

**Sunday, Jan. 24, 2021**

Children's Zoom, 9 a.m., <https://zoom.us/j/93359681335>

Sojourners, Zoom, 9:15 a.m.,

<https://zoom.us/j/4193583208>

Faithful Living, Zoom, 9:30 a.m.,

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85741872049?pwd=NG1UcWlyOVJ6RUg4TUdHTE5Wa0lKZz09)

[5741872049?pwd=NG1UcWlyOVJ6RUg4TUdHTE5Wa0lKZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85741872049?pwd=NG1UcWlyOVJ6RUg4TUdHTE5Wa0lKZz09)

Race and Ethnicity, Zoom, 9:15 a.m.,

<https://zoom.us/j/92632252996>

SHY, Zoom, 9:30 a.m.

Worship, BAMA unity service, 10:30 a.m.

Virtual fellowship hall conversation, Zoom, 11:30-

12:15, <https://zoom.us/j/93482279238>

Learning circle, Zoom, 6 p.m.,

<https://zoom.us/j/4193585766>

**Jan. 25-30**

Monday, Jan. 25 Racial Justice Ministry, Zoom, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 26 Morning prayers, Zoom, 7 a.m.,

<https://zoom.us/j/93803392337>

Staff meeting, 9 a.m., Zoom

**Sunday, Jan. 31, 2020**

Children's Zoom, 9 a.m.; Sojourners 9:15 a.m.;

Faithful Living, 9:30 a.m.; Race and Ethnicity, 9:15

a.m.; SHY, 9:30 a.m.

Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching, 10:30 a.m.

Virtual FH conversation, 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Learning circle, Zoom, 6 p.m.

## Prayers and gratitude

**Corrinne Boehr has been moved** into nursing care at Hilty Home in Pandora. Prayers for her adjustment to this new setting and for Dick in navigating these changes are welcomed.

**Judy Kingsley moved into Maple Crest** on January 22. Prayers for her transition to this new living arrangement are welcomed.

**A big thank you** for all the wonderful birthday wishes. I am blessed with a great family, friends, church, and community. God sent me a beautiful day to enjoy. Turning 90 isn't all that bad. ~ Mary Amstutz

## Other news

**2020 annual contribution statements** for tax purposes are in your mailboxes.

**The season of Lent** begins with Ash Wednesday on February 17. Watch for a link to join this important service of worship when we remember both the impermanence of our lives and at the same time, the opportunity that each new day brings for self-reflection and repentance and the possibility of reconciliation. Lent brochures are available on the table in fellowship hall.

**The new *Voices Together* hymnals have arrived.** We will be making use of these new hymnals in our worship services (online) even though we will not be gathering together in the sanctuary, due to COVID-19, for the next few months. Because of that, we are encouraging you to BORROW a hymnal during this time. Once we gather for worship again, you will need to return those borrowed hymnals.

**Instructions:** Come to the fellowship hall. On the table close to the pew by the sanctuary, will be a stack of hymnals. Take one and sign your name to the sheet beside the stack, so we know who borrowed the hymnal.

\*If you are unable to get out and pick up a hymnal, contact Mark Suderman ([sudermanme@bluffton.edu](mailto:sudermanme@bluffton.edu)/419-230-5368) or Jeff Boehr ([jeff@fmcbluffton.org](mailto:jeff@fmcbluffton.org)/419-236-9150). They will deliver any hymnals needed.

**Jeff Boehr will be away** from January 22-25. For pastoral care, contact Pastor Wanda.

## Reminders

**As we witness the realities** of brokenness around, among, and within us, we recognize the need to find ways to pray and to seek refuge and peace. One way of carving out this time is something we're calling *Meditations* which will be available, one each week until Lent, a total of five weeks. The pre-recorded *Meditations* will include music, a few words, and silence. You'll find the videos on the left side of the home page on our website at <http://fmcbluffton.org/>. You might return to the weekly *Meditation* at the same time each day or several times a day. *Meditations* are being provided by LuAnn Stuckey and Pastor Wanda. Let us pray together!

**To learn how the Bible** was translated into English, borrow our DVD, *Fires of Faith: The Coming Forth of the King James Bible*. You'll see a reenactment of Bible scribes at work amid the darkness of international politics, subversion, lust, and bloodshed. The DVD is on the desk in the church library. If it is not available, please sign your name so we can contact you when it is returned. (*Made available in conjunction with our Bible Scribe project.*)

**Race and Ethnicity in Ohio: a Brief History** – Led by Perry Bush, this class meets Sundays from 9:15 -10:15 a.m. Perry will outline the history of African Americans and Latinos/Latinas in Ohio, with a focus on their arrival in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Join at <https://zoom.us/j/92632252996> or call +1 646 558 8656. Contact Pastor Wanda at [wanda@fmcbluffton.org](mailto:wanda@fmcbluffton.org) to request access to recordings of the sessions.

**Join the Racial Justice Ministry** Monday, Jan. 25, at 7 p.m. to learn about the injustices of the bail system, how it disproportionately punishes people of color, and statewide and local efforts to bring about reform. The Zoom link is: <https://zoom.us/j/96516134635>.

**St. Mary's Catholic Church** will host Bluffton Community VBS from July 18-22. You can **support VBS by donating your empty shoeboxes**. Drop them off in the fellowship hall at FMC.

### **Our connections**

**Bluffton Ten Thousand Villages** is offering special options for fair trade coffee, tea, and chocolate for Valentine's Day. A form must be completed and submitted with payment by Feb. 6 (forms are available at the store and in our fellowship hall.) Store hours are: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon-Fri, and 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday.

**Join Mennonite Disaster Service** Saturday, Feb. 6, at 2 p.m. to celebrate the work of the many volunteers of 2020 and look ahead to what is in store for 2021. Through the theme of Unexpected Opportunities, Unexpected Blessings, MDS will tell stories of hope and restoration as they helped survivors of natural disasters get back into their homes. Find more information at: <https://mds.mennonite.net/annual-celebration/>.

**The January edition of On the Level** is now available from Mennonite Disaster Service. The issue covers the MDS Annual Celebration, the challenges of scheduling volunteers during a pandemic, and how the Lancaster, PA unit is collaborating with the community to repair fire damage at a house for homeless families. [Click on this link to read more: https://conta.cc/35XumvX](https://conta.cc/35XumvX).