

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH
Weekly Announcements 12-13-2020

First Mennonite Church, 101 S. Jackson Street, Bluffton, Ohio 45817

419-358-5766 | fmcbuffton.org | Staff working from home

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

The definition of Advent is literally *arrival*. Our theme for this Advent season is “On the road...” also conveying a sense of movement, of traveling from one point to another. As we travel this season together we celebrate the arrival of the child known as Immanuel, “God with us.” Each step brings us closer to God and to one another. Wherever we find ourselves on the road, this Advent theme reminds us that we are not alone. We travel in good company with others who seek the life that Jesus brings and together we are transformed.

Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020

Children’s Zoom, 9 a.m., <https://zoom.us/j/93359681335>
Taste and See, Zoom, 9:15 a.m., <https://zoom.us/j/342273765>
Sojourners, Zoom, 9:15 a.m., <https://zoom.us/j/4193583208>
Faithful Living, Zoom, 9:30 a.m., <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85741872049?pwd=NG1UcWlyOVJ6RUG4TUdHTE5Wa0IKZz09>
SHY, Zoom, 9:30 a.m.
Worship, Louise Matthews preaching, 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>

Dec. 14-19

Monday (Dec. 14) Racial Justice Ministry open discussion,
Zoom, 7:30 p.m. (**see page 2**)

Tuesday (Dec. 15) Morning prayers, Zoom, 7 a.m.,
<https://zoom.us/j/93803392337>
Staff meeting, 9 a.m., Zoom

Sunday, Dec. 20, 2020

Children’s Zoom, 9 a.m.; Sojourners & Taste and See, 9:15 a.m.; Faithful Living, 9:30 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.

Happy Birthday!

Dec. 14 Diane Reichenbach
Dec. 17 Ray Person

You’re invited and welcome to join our church family for a virtual Christmas Eve service at 6:30 p.m. on December 24. As in years gone by we will hear the story, see the images, sing together and light candles to celebrate the birth of Jesus, Prince of Peace. In preparation, please have a candle available and some method of lighting it. As is our tradition, our offering will go to the benevolent fund for mutual aid in the congregation and in the community. You may make this contribution by mailing it to FMC, by placing it in an envelope marked “Deacons Benevolent” and sliding it under the office door, or by giving electronically and designating your gift to the Deacons Benevolent fund. You will find the service at <https://zoom.us/j/99225890523> or by phone at +1 646 558 8656.

Today's bulletin cover

At the forefront of the cover picture, the railway actually crosses a pretty significant ravine. As I walked across, I remembered the verse from Isaiah 40:4, "Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain." It seems like these tracks go on infinitely, but I wonder how far it actually is to the vanishing point. This is such a straight path! I, of course, love that the trees lift their branches on both sides of the path, enveloping the path with life, even in the cold.

~ Wanda Stopher (photographer)

More new news

A brief congregational meeting will be held via Zoom on Sunday, Jan. 10, at 1 p.m. to approve the following motion to amend the constitution: *Amend Bylaw IA1 to allow Associate Members to serve in Leadership Circle and as delegates to conference and denominational meetings as follows. In Bylaw I, section A, number 2, strike the following clause from the second sentence: "except they may not become members of Leadership Circle nor represent the church as delegates to Central District Conference or Mennonite Church USA."*

The Racial Justice Ministry will hold an open conversation Monday, Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m. to discuss how housing rules and regulations relate to the relative lack of diversity in our community. Mitch Kingsley, Stan Clemens, Walt Paquin and Andy Chappell-Dick will participate in this informal conversation. All are welcome. The meeting link is <https://zoom.us/j/96516134635>. If you have questions about how to access the meeting, call George Lehman at 419-230-0952 or Jan Wiebe at 419-909-0826. For those without computer video access, phone access is available.

Reminders

Delivery of our order of the new *Voices Together Hymnal* has been delayed by Covid-related temporary shutdowns at the publishing facilities. MennoMedia has not yet provided a delivery date, but when our hymnals arrive, we will notify those who ordered personal copies through First Mennonite.

Our connections

Bluffton University will present the 125th college/community performance of Handel's Messiah at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 20, via livestream at www.bluffton.edu/music. Instead of a traditional concert, the music department teamed up with Modo Media, a Lima-based video and design agency, to develop a retrospective. Co-owners Chad Stearns and Cody Ridenour both participated in Messiah as Bluffton students. The video production features reflections from past conductors, including Dr. Steven Jacoby and Dr. Mark Suderman, and archival footage, photographs and recordings from past performances. Dr. Bo Young Kang, director of choral activities, will conduct select portions featuring current students, soloists and a string quartet.

The *Voices Together* hymnal dedication launch celebration will be held today (Dec. 13) via Zoom from 5-7 p.m. ET. It will include a time to worship with new songs and resources from *Voices Together*. After worship there will be an overview of the process of creating *Voices Together* and a time for questions. This event is free but registration is required to receive the Zoom link. Register at http://voicestogetherhymnal.org/digital-launch-registration/?fbclid=IwAR2vtbraAbCDQa9kRAEHHt6HMmVeJ1hQFcF8a6361euxcJA7oA9_H56TBuk.