

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH

Weekly Announcements 12-20-2020

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

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

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

Deadline changes for announcements for next two weeks:

Dec. 27 – deadline is noon Wednesday, Dec. 23

Jan. 3 -- deadline is noon Wednesday, Dec. 30

Sunday, Dec. 20, 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/8](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85741872049?pwd=NG1UcWlyOVJ6RUg4TUdHTE5Wa0lKZz09)

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

SHY, Zoom, 9:30 a.m.

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

Virtual fellowship hall conversation, Zoom, 11:30-12:15,

<https://zoom.us/j/93482279238>

Messiah, Bluffton U. livestream, 4 p.m., details on next page

Learning circle, Zoom, 6 p.m., <https://zoom.us/j/4193585766>

Dec. 21-26

Tuesday (Dec. 22) Morning prayers, Zoom, 7 a.m.,

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

Staff meeting, 9 a.m., Zoom

Wednesday (Dec. 23) Bulletin deadline, noon

Thursday (Dec. 24) Christmas Eve service, Zoom, 6:30 p.m.,
see details on next page)

Friday (Dec. 25) Merry Christmas!

Sunday, Dec. 27, 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, Wintercount, 10:30 a.m.

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

Learning circle, Zoom, 6 p.m.

Happy Birthday!

Dec. 21 – Bobbie Chappell

Dec. 22 – Gene Long

Dec. 23 – Terry Chappell

Sally Roth

Dec. 24 – Keith Brauen

Dec. 27 – Micah Hartzler

Linda Houshower

The Reopening Task Force met recently to assess our current situation. We will continue to act in accordance with our present guidelines until further notice. These guidelines are available on the church website in a narrative description and in a brief outline reference form. Copies are also available in the literature rack. Currently, Allen County is in a state of red alert. Under this level our guidelines suggest that our building is closed to in-person gatherings. Worship is recorded with 10 or fewer persons in attendance and then made available by video. Meetings, ministry, and fellowship happen virtually or outside, wearing masks and distancing with caution. See Rita Dietrich for more information.

The tunes and texts of today's organ/piano selections have far-reaching roots in the Advent and Christmas celebrations of the Christian church. The text of *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came* (based on HWB 180) essentially retells Mary's encounter with Gabriel. The organ setting by Wilbur Held includes a trumpet fanfare announcing each stanza of the Basque carol. Interestingly, composer Held was the organ teacher of Steve Jacoby, former Director of Music here at FMC. The text of the offertory, *Lo, How a Rose Is Growing* (based on HWB 211) references Isaiah 11:1-2 and various Gospels texts. In his two piano settings, Mennonite composer Lee Dengler (Goshen, IN) captures the mystery of the Savior's birth. The tune of today's postlude, *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come* (based on HWB 205) is attributed to Martin Luther, who likely adapted it from a German folksong. Luther's original German text consisted of 15 stanzas. The organ setting by composer F.W. Zachau (1663-1712) uses imitative style in the upper voices over a clear statement of the hymn tune in the bass part. (Notes from the *Hymnal Companion* and hymnary.org.) ~ LuAnn Stuckey

This photo on today's bulletin cover was taken at the top of a very steep and curved asphalt driveway to a home in a hilly region of Costa Rica. As one drives up from the bottom, the house isn't fully revealed until one reaches the top, and the same is true for the descent back to the main road. Much like Mary receiving God's revelation via the angel, Gabriel, we must sometimes be very patient and stay the course, however hilly and curvy and uncertain the path may be at times, to see God's promise revealed.

Prayer concerns

JP Schumacher had surgery Dec. 15 to remove a rectal tumor. The surgery was successful and they are optimistic about the prognosis. JP and Tim greatly appreciate your support and prayers.

Bruce Steingass returned home from the hospital early this week. Bruce was involved in an accident while splitting wood at home. He was struck in the face, incurring multiple fractures and a concussion. He had reconstructive surgery and has begun the healing process at home. Your prayers and support for Bruce and Amy are welcomed. A humorous story or a good pun is welcome.

Reminders

Please join us for a virtual Christmas Eve service at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 24. 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. **We will distribute bulletins for the service electronically on Tuesday and print copies will be available in the fellowship hall by Wednesday.**

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."*

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. The video production features reflections from past conductors, including Dr. Steven Jacoby and Dr. Mark Suderman, and 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 December edition of On the Level is now available from Mennonite Disaster Service. This issue includes a prayer for 2020, *A Prayer Amidst Disaster*, written by an MDS staff member; an article about how volunteers are improving the space for homeless in Idaho; and details about the virtual MDS Annual Celebration. Click on this link to read more: <https://conta.cc/3oS0PL6>.