

**Impossible Possibilities: Surprise
First Mennonite Church
December 23, 2018**

Bells call us to worship Ray Raeburn
Welcome and announcements Rhonda Winstead
Call to worship
*Hymn “Hark! The glad sound!” HWB 184
LuAnn Stuckey
*Responsive Reading Isaiah 11:1-4a (NRSV)
L: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
C: The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
L: the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
C: His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
L: or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness, he shall judge the poor,
ALL: and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.
Special music “Sing, Angels, Kings, and Folk” Ben Allaway
Chancel Choir
Conversation with friends Judy Steiner
“Come, light of the world,” sing twice, coming forward STS 3
“Come, gift to the world,” sing twice, returning
Special Music “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” arr. Trevor Manor
Jubilate

Community prayer Wanda Stopher
Scripture Psalm 34:1-18 Kevin Nickel
Matthew 1:1-17 Bret and Wanda Stopher
Luke 2:8-20 Darryl Nester
Sermon “Surprisingly ordinary” Theda Good
*Hymn “Helpless and hungry” STS 26
(During verse 3, Chancel Choir will sing a countermelody, “What child is this.”)
Presenting our tithes and offerings
Offertory “Advent Joy” arr. Brian Childers
Adult Bells
*Hymn of dedication “Gloria” HWB 204
(Sing once in unison and then 2 times in a round: choir, organ side, piano side, balcony)
*Offering words *(read responsively)*
L: We give these gifts, O God, believing the impossible is possible.
C: May our gifts empower others near and far to be surprised.
*Hymn “It came upon a midnight clear” (vv 1, 3-5) HWB 195
*Benediction
Postlude “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come” arr. D.N. Johnson
LuAnn Stuckey

**Please rise in body or in spirit.
HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book; STJ – Sing the Journey; STS – Sing the Story
Please ask an usher for assistance in locating large print hymnals.*

Please note that today’s worship coordinates with We Make the Road by Walking, Chapter 16.

First Mennonite Church, 101 S. Jackson Street, Bluffton, Ohio 45817
419-358-5766 | fmcbluffton.org | Office open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

Church Staff

- Pastor Wanda Stopher -- Monday-Thursday, 9-4, off Friday; 419-551-1079 (cell); fmc.wanda@bluffton.edu
- Pastor Theda Good -- Tuesday-Friday, 9-4, off Monday; 419-549-2417 (cell); fmc.theda@bluffton.edu
- Interim Children and Youth Ministry Director – Carrie Mast, M-F, 8-10 a.m., mastc@bluffton.edu
- Director of Music – Mark Suderman, 419-230-5368 (cell); sudermanme@bluffton.edu
- Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker Steiner, M-F, 9-4, fmc@bluffton.edu
- Custodian – Mick Hardy, 7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., weekends as needed

Host: Tig Intagliata | **Greeter:** Grace Paquin and Ana Neufeld Weaver

Sound: Chris Gott | **Chancel:** Anita Lehman

Nursery today: Julie Mackey

Worship – John & Julie Mackey, Ben Hartzler, Theo Andreas

Nursery next week: No Sunday school

Worship – Kevin Cluts, Annette Heslep, Ana Neufeld Weaver

OUR STEWARDSHIP

Worship attendance last Sunday	FMC-199, MC-5
Volunteer hours Dec. 9-15	132.5
Spending plan giving Dec. 16, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$7,815.00
Special fund giving Dec. 16, 2018 (includes e-giving): Freudige-\$100; Faithful Living-\$12 SHYF-\$485; Kitchen service-\$14.50; Habitat-\$20; MDS-\$100; Mennonite subs-\$407	\$1,417.22
Flooring-\$224.22; Facility use-\$55	
Total giving Dec. 9, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$9,232.72
Total spending plan receipts as of November 30, 2018	\$324,996.31
Spending plan expenses as of November 30, 2018	\$359,425.17
2018 spending plan	\$427,441.00

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.



All are invited to attend the annual holiday brunch at 9:15 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 30, in the fellowship hall. Please bring food to share: breakfast casseroles, fruit, breads, coffee cakes, muffins, cookies, etc. Coffee, tea, and juice will be provided. **Please bring your own table service.** There will be no Sunday school that morning.

-- *Nurture Commission*

Have you sent a card to Keith Brauen yet? Keith will celebrate his 90th birthday on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, and his family has organized a card shower. Please send cards to him at 5900 Pevee Road, Bluffton, OH 4581.

For those interested in Jeff Boehr's workshop series, "Meaningful Presence: Support for Late Life Reorientation," a sign-up sheet is available on a table in the fellowship hall. The dates are January 11, 15 and 22. Brochures are available in the office. For more information call Jeff Boehr at 419.236.9150.

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.

CALENDAR

Today, December 23, 2018

Sunday (12-23) SS, coffee time, 9:15 a.m.
Worship, Theda Good preaching, 10:30 a.m.
Learning circle, supper provided, FH, 5:30 p.m.

December 24, 2018-January 1, 2019

Monday (12-24) Candlelight Christmas Eve service, sanctuary, 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday (12-25) Christmas Day, office closed
No morning prayers
Wednesday (12-26) No choir rehearsals
Sunday (12-30) Holiday brunch, 9:15 a.m., FH; **No Sunday school**
Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching, 10:30 a.m.
Learning circle, supper provided, FH, 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday (1-1) New Year's Day, office closed
No morning prayers

Welcome to our worship service today. If you are a visitor, please sign one of our guest books located at the entrances to the sanctuary. Wireless hearing aids are available. If you would like your children cared for while you worship, our nursery is downstairs in the church. Worship activity bags for children are available.

New announcements

Pastor Theda will be taking some vacation time from December 25–31, returning to the office on Tuesday, January 2. Please call Pastor Wanda at 419-551-1079 for pastoral care needs.

Stewardship Commission will not collect pledge cards for the upcoming year. Due to a lack of full participation by regular givers in recent years, we have found it impractical to use the pledges to create the spending plan.

A congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, Jan. 6, immediately following worship. The agenda for this meeting will be focused on approving the 2019 spending plan and on reporting from the Governance Task Force. Reports will be in boxes prior to the meeting. If you prefer an electronic report, contact Mary Pannabecker Steiner at fmc@bluffton.edu.



Governance Task Force asks you to save these dates: January 20, February 10 and April 7. We will meet from 4-7 p.m., with food and childcare provided.

The family of Luther Shetler held a burial service at Maple Grove Cemetery on December 18. They are planning a memorial service to be held at a later date.

First Mennonite Church has established a scholarship fund to assist students who choose to attend a Mennonite college, university or seminary. It supports students, families and Mennonite higher education. Scholarships of \$500 are provided each

semester per student, which is matched dollar-for-dollar by the colleges. Seven students received FMC scholarships for 2018-19: Isaac Andreas, Cassidy Bush, Douglas Nester, Elizabeth Nisly, Christopher Harnish, Nthati Phetlhu and Therisanyo Phetlhu, as well as JP Schumacher for fall semester. To be included in the scholarship program, students should contact Louise Matthews, chair of Church College Relations, at matthewsa@bluffton.edu before January 1. The congregation is encouraged to support students by designating financial contributions to the scholarship fund. Your involvement is appreciated!

Save the date: Bryan Moyer Suderman, singer, songwriter and speaker, will perform a concert Friday, Jan. 11 at 7 p.m. at First Mennonite Church. On Saturday, Jan. 12, he'll lead a workshop at 9 a.m. at Grace Mennonite Church, Pandora. On Sunday, Jan. 13, he'll teach a Sunday school class and preach during worship at Grace. Additional details to come.

WCE needs you: Volunteers are needed to walk children from the elementary school to FMC to participate in Weekday Christian Education on **Friday, Jan. 4, 2019** (open shifts below in yellow.) Responsibilities include: picking up the students from class; walking them to the church; staying during the class time, assisting the teacher as needed; and walking students back to class. If you are interested/available to help, please contact Andrea Goings at 419-303-6870 or ajgoings@mercy.com. Thanks!

Friday, Jan. 4	8:50- 9:20	9:25- 9:55	11:50- 12:20	12:25- 12:55	1:00- 1:30	1:40- 2:10	2:25- 2:55
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New in the literature rack:

Mennonite Mission Network's January Prayer Vine.

Reminders

Friends and family are invited to attend our Christmas Eve service, Monday, Dec. 24, at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. The service will include a dramatization of the nativity story, carol singing and candle lighting. The offering that evening will benefit the Deacons Benevolent fund.