

**Impossible Possibilities: Dare**  
**First Mennonite Church**  
**December 9, 2018**

Bells call us to worship

Welcome and announcements

Rhonda Winstead

Call to worship

\*Hymn

“No wind at the window”  
*Jackie Wyse Rhodes*

STS 11

\*Responsive Reading

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 (NRSV)

L: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

**C: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders;**

L: and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**C: His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom.**

L: He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

**ALL: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.**

Special music

“One Simple Candle”  
*Jubilate*

Text by Kathy Burdette  
 Music by Donna Butler

*(Congregation will join in when directed – see insert)*

Conversation with friends

“Come, light of the world,” sing twice, coming forward  
 “Come, Spirit of God,” sing twice, returning

Wendy Chappell-Dick  
 STS 3

Community prayer

Theda Good

Scripture

Luke 1:5-55

Jan Wiebe, Jonathan Andreas  
 Chris Gott, Ana Neufeld Weaver, Sophia Gott

Special music

“Magnificat Mysticum”

Audrey Snyder

*Translation: My soul magnifies the Lord. And my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.*

*Chancel Choir*

Sermon

“Let it be to us”

Wanda Stopher

\*Hymn

“With Mary Sing Magnificat”

*See insert*

Presenting our tithes and offerings

Offertory

“Come and be light for our eyes”

David Haas

*Youth Choir*

\*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 dare.**

\*Hymn

“My soul proclaims with wonder”

HWB 181

\*Benediction

Postlude

*\*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 15.***

**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:** Cheryl Slotter | **Greeter:** Jacob Biesecker-Mast and Patrick Estell

**Sound:** Kevin Cluts | **Chancel:** Anita Lehman

**Nursery today: SS** – Rachel Diller, Judy Diller

**Worship** – Carrie Mast, Melissa Friesen, Jacob Biesecker Mast

**Nursery next week: SS** – Shelby Cluts, Mary Ina Hooley

**Worship** – Kendra and Ellie Nickel, Wendy Chappell Dick

**OUR STEWARDSHIP**

Worship attendance last Sunday	FMC-188, MC-6
Volunteer hours Nov. 25-Dec. 1, 2018	392.5
Spending plan giving Dec. 2, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$8,650.00
Special fund giving Dec. 2, 2018 (includes e-giving): K-5-\$2.10; Sojourners-\$20; Faith/Life-\$12	
Kitchen service-\$20; Deacons-\$181; Coll scholar-\$44; Mennonite subs-\$370; flooring-\$175	
\$970.10	
Total giving Dec. 2, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$9,624.10
Total spending plan receipts as of October 31, 2018	\$295,445.65
Spending plan expenses as of October 31, 2018	\$326,562.24
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.*

*Impossible Possibilities!*

**D  
R  
E**

**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

**Electronic vs. paper:** If you prefer to receive electronic copies rather than paper copies of documents, please notify the church office at [fmc@bluffton.edu](mailto:fmc@bluffton.edu). Examples of these documents include seasonal brochures such as those about Advent and Lent/Easter, as well as the *Menno-Life* and Central District Conference's *Reporter and Focus*.

**New in the literature racks and on bulletin boards in the fellowship hall:**

- \* The November issue of the Central District *Reporter*
- \* Fall issue of Mennonite Mission Network's *Beyond*
- \* Fall issue of Mennonite Disaster Service's *Behind the Hammer*
- \* Christmas cards delivered to FMC
- \* MEA's Prayers for Faith and Learning

*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, Dec. 9, 2018**

- |            |                                                              |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:15 a.m.  | SS, coffee time                                              |
| 10:30 a.m. | Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching                             |
| 4 p.m.     | Messiah performance, Yoder Recital Hall, Bluffton University |
| 5:30 p.m.  | Learning circle, supper provided, FH                         |

**December 10-15, 2018**

- |                   |                                                                                                 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday (12-11)   | Morning prayers, 7 a.m.<br>Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor<br>Trustees, 7 p.m., parlor            |
| Wednesday (12-12) | Adult bells and cherubs, 6 p.m.<br>Jubilate, 6:30 p.m.<br>Chancel choir and youth bells, 7 p.m. |
| Thursday (12-13)  | Red Cross blood drive, 1-6 p.m., FH                                                             |

**Next Sunday, December 16, 2018**

- |            |                                  |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| 9:15 a.m.  | SS, Coffee time                  |
| 10:30 a.m. | Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching |

*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**

**Thank you to Andy Wetherill** for designing our bulletin covers for Advent this year. Andy, son of Lois and Gary Wetherill, is web and graphic designer for the Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN.

**Advent is traditionally** a time of waiting for the birth of Jesus, the coming of “God with us.” By definition, it is a time to anticipate this world-altering change that is just around the corner. It is therefore, a time of hope, a time to dare, to imagine, to be surprised, to see in a new light, and to welcome this new day. Our Advent theme, *Impossible Possibilities*, captures that moment of waiting when what could be is still only a glimmer, but when it is also just inspiring enough that we want to risk giving ourselves to it. As we explore these *Impossible Possibilities*, we will continue to coordinate our worship each week with the walking book, *We Make the Road by Walking*.

~ 2018 Advent Planning Team:

*Theda Good, Carrie Mast, Mark Suderman, Judy Steiner,  
Lois Wetherill, Rhonda Winstead, and Wanda Stopher*

## **A New Path TOGETHER**

**Governance Task Force** continues to receive reflections and imaginings from various commissions and leadership groups. We’ve established a small bulletin board in the fellowship hall – look for “YOU?” The FMC website now includes a section for GTF where resources and information will be posted (see menu tab at the top of the home page.) Commission members, deacons, and others have attended our meetings and added insight to our conversations. If you are interested in these conversations, please let Elizabeth Kelly know (ekelly.2018@gmail.com.) We encourage interested individuals to join us! **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, Dec. 11, 4:15-5:30 p.m. in the parlor.  
~ *GTF*

**For those interested in the 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.

**Mennonite Disaster Service** is recruiting weekly and long-term volunteers for the new MDS unit in Marianna, FL, where Hurricane Michael devastated the landscape in October. Lynn and Linda Miller will be the project directors in January. While the greatest need is for volunteers from Jan. 6-11, Elizabeth Kelly has registered for the week of Jan. 13-18, and is able to take one or two persons with her for that week. For more details, talk to Lynn or Linda. To see videos of MDS’ work there, see [www.youtube.com/user/MDSMennonite/search?query=marianna](http://www.youtube.com/user/MDSMennonite/search?query=marianna). To register, call Deanna Frey at MDS (1.800.735.3536.) ~ *Lawrence Matthews*

**The Mennonite will continue to be published:** The board of directors of The Mennonite, Inc., decided Nov. 13 to withdraw from exploring a merger with Mennonite World Review, Inc. (MWR). “This action comes following the inability of TMI and Mennonite Church USA representatives to agree on terms related to the proposed merger,” says Barth Hague, TMI board chair. “The TMI board is committed to maintaining a healthy relationship with the MC USA Executive Board and to faithfully serving the members of MC USA.” (Read details at <https://themennonite.org/daily-news/mennonite-inc-board-withdraws-exploration-merger-mwr/>)

## **Reminders**

**A Red Cross blood drive** will be held Thursday, Dec. 13 in the fellowship hall from 1-6 p.m. If you can provide cookies, help with registration, make sandwiches, help serve food, or unload and load the truck with their equipment, add your name to the sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall. **To schedule your blood donation appointment**, call 1-800-RED-CROSS or go to [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org), sponsor code “fmennobl.”

### **December 16 at FMC:**

- \***8:30-9:30 a.m.** -- SHYF pancake breakfast fundraiser in the fellowship hall
- \***9:45 a.m.** -- Children in preschool through fifth grade will retell the nativity story in the sanctuary. (*This event replaces the children’s program previously held in the afternoon or evening.*)
- \***6 p.m.** -- Intergenerational caroling at Mennonite Memorial Home and Maple Crest, returning to the church for snacks and hot beverages