

**Come! Live in the light of God's heart:
God's salvation is at hand.
Christmas Day
December 25, 2016 10:30 a.m.**

— GATHERING —

Processional

Opening Words

Carrie Mast, Worship Leader

Scripture

Luke 2: 1-20

— PRAISING —

***Opening Hymn**

“Twas in the moon of wintertime”

HWB 190

Candle Lighting

Psalm Reading

Special Music

“Away in a Manger”
Youth Choir

arr. Robert Fields

— PROCLAIMING —

Conversation with Children

Hymn

“He came down” – love

Back of hymnal

Conversation

Laurel Neufeld Weaver

Hymn

“He came down” – love

Back of hymnal

Confession of Faith

HWB 714

Hymn

“Beauty for brokenness” (*verses 1 & 5, then refrain*) STS 115

Scripture Reading

John 1:1-14

Sermon

“A Child’s Heart”

Wanda Stopher

— RESPONDING —

***Hymn of Response**

“Hark! the herald angels sing”

HWB 201

Words of Assurance

L: Throughout the tumult of life, God holds you close in love. Rejoice, because God’s heart is our heart – God’s salvation is our strength, Jesus’ life is our example, God’s heart is our hope.

All: We choose to live in the light of God’s salvation. We choose to live in the light of God’s heart. Grant us the courage to do it.

Pastoral Prayer

George O’Reilly

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

“To a Virgin Meek and Mild”

arr. Anna Laura Page

— SENDING —

***Hymn**

“Love came down at Christmas”

HWB 208

***Benediction**

“A Christmas Blessing”

Philip W. J. Stopford

Chancel Choir

***Postlude**

**Please stand (remain seated if that is more comfortable for you)*

HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book STS – Sing the Story

Large-print hymnals and bulletins are available on the cabinet next to the parlor.

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH

101 S. Jackson Street
Bluffton, Ohio 45817
Phone: 419-358-5766

Website: fmcbluffton.org

Office Hours: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

Pastor – Wanda – Monday-Thursday, 9-4, off Friday

Pastoral Associate – George – Tuesday-Friday, 9-4, off Monday

Director of Youth Ministries – Shannon -- Tuesday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Custodian's schedule: 7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.; weekends as needed

GREETERS: LuAnn Stuckey, John Rich

HOST: Julie Mackey

NURSERY WORKERS TODAY: *No nursery coverage*

Worship – No nursery coverage

NURSERY WORKERS NEXT WEEK: *No nursery coverage*

Worship – No nursery coverage

SOUND SYSTEM: Peter Terry

CHANCEL: Anita Lehman

The video of the most recent worship service may be viewed on the church's homepage, www.fmcbluffton.org. Videos normally are posted on the Tuesday following the service. Previously recorded worship service videos may be found at tinyurl.com/fmc-videos

OUR STEWARDSHIP

Worship attendance last Sunday	217
Worship attendance at Maple Crest last Sunday	13
Sunday school attendance last Sunday	88
Spending plan giving Dec. 18, 2016	\$10,626.00
2016 Proposed spending plan	\$418,276.00
The offering Dec. 18 totaled \$12,206.70. Money was received for these special funds: Grades K-5 - \$8.40, Grades 9-12 - \$4.30, Sojourners - \$13, Faith and Life - \$115, Connections - \$2, Faithbuilders - \$5, Connections - \$2, Young Adults - \$25, Deacons Benevolent - \$100, Habitat - \$1201, college scholarships - \$1,000, Kitchen service - \$62, Ron Friesen - \$75, SHYF - \$50, Heifer International - \$1.	

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor – Wanda Stopher – 419-551-1079 (cell) -- fmc.wanda@bluffton.edu
Pastoral Associate – George O'Reilly – 402-619-7099 (cell) – fmc.george@bluffton.edu
Youth Ministry Director – Shannon Thiebeau – fmc.shannon@bluffton.edu
Director of Music – Mark Suderman Organist Coordinator – Lucia Unrau
Custodian – Mick Hardy
Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker - fmc@bluffton.edu

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.



COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MCC comforter knotting at Grace Mennonite will be Thursday, Jan. 5, beginning at 9 a.m. We welcome you to join us and stay for lunch. -- *Carolyn McDaniel*

If you plan to participate in the Women's March on Washington on Saturday, Jan. 21, and would like to walk with other Mennonite women, please join the Facebook group "Mennonites at the Women's March on Washington." We can coordinate our plans and post our location in real time so that we can find each other at the event. All are welcome. -- *Wendy Chappell-Dick*

The Depot MCC Thrift Shops in Goshen, IN, are seeking a full-time general manager. Applicants must have commitment to personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership, excellent organization skills, supervisory skills, communications skills, ability to work with volunteers, and computer skills. Experience in retailing helpful; working knowledge of Excel and QuickBooks is also helpful. Applications will be accepted until January 2, 2017. Send resume and cover letter to: Search Committee, email brshirk69@gmail.com, or C/O Ben Shirk 63341 CR 33, Goshen, IN 46528.

GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS

Happy birthday to Mary Blosser, 86, December 22; Keith Brauen, 88, December 24; Marilyn Kern, 83, December 27; and Ann Shumaker, 82, December 29.

Happy anniversary to Marty and Lowell Hostetler, 53, December 21, and Geneva and Luther Shetler, 76, December 22.

Marilyn Diller was hospitalized last week at St. Rita's Medical Center and is now recuperating at the Mennonite Memorial Home.

Adan Ortiz continues to face health issues and is sometimes in need of transportation to appointments. If you are available as a driver, please call Adan at 419.358-0955.

We received a Christmas greeting/letter from Janie and Neal Blough, our Mennonite Mission Network partners at the Paris (France) Mennonite Center. Please take time to read the letter, which is posted on the Mission, Peace and Service pillar in the fellowship hall.

In this season of Christmas, Mennonite Church USA invites you to remember all those around the world working on behalf of the church for peace and justice to make the light and love of Jesus Christ real for all those seeking hope. -- *MCUSA*

Welcoming Statement

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.

CHRISTMAS DAY

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

THIS WEEK

Monday (12-26) Church office closed
Tuesday (12-27) No morning prayers
No staff meeting
Amstutz family, AR, 5 p.m.
Wednesday (12-28) No choir rehearsals
Thursday (12-29) Moms in Prayer, parlor, 10 a.m.
Saturday (12-30) Hartzler family, AR, 9 a.m.

NEXT WEEK

9:15 a.m. Christmas brunch potluck (no Sunday school)
10:30 a.m. Worship Service, George O'Reilly preaching

Welcome to our worship service today. Please sign and pass the friendship pads in the pews. Wireless hearing aids are available. If you would like your children watched over while you worship, our staff will care for them in the nursery downstairs. Worship activity bags for children are available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to all who led and planned worship during this Advent season. Special thanks to Carrie Mast who coordinated the reader's theatre during Advent; Laurel and Justin Neufeld Weaver who created bulletin covers; and Lent Planners, Mark Suderman, Laurel Neufeld Weaver, Anita Lehman, Lavon Welty, George O'Reilly, and Wanda Stopher.

Pastor George and Pastor Wanda will be out of the office with their families intermittently this week. However, pastoral coverage remains an important priority. If pastoral care is needed, please call either Pastor George (402-619-7099) or Pastor Wanda (419-551-1079.)

The church office will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26 and Monday, Jan. 2. **Morning prayers** have been cancelled for Tuesday, Dec. 27.

Advent season brings the opportunity for scripture, spoken word, song and visuals to help us anticipate the birth of the Christ Child, the light in a dark world. Each Sunday in our call to worship we refer to light breaking into and through the darkness. The fabrics and candles at the front of the sanctuary are the visual interpretation of what we read, sing and say about our hope for the light to break through the darkness of our lives and our world. The dark fabric is pulled back and another candle is lit each week. This is done to represent our increasing assurance that the light of Christ's birth is coming.

-- Anita Lehman

New Year's Brunch: All are invited to attend our annual holiday brunch Sunday, Jan. 1, at 9:15 a.m. in fellowship hall. Please bring food to share: breakfast casseroles, fruit, muffins, or pastries. Coffee and juice will be provided. *Please bring your own table service.* There will be no Sunday school that day. -- Nurture Commission

Our Daily Bread will be closed Monday, Dec. 26, so First Mennonite volunteers are not needed that day.

Spending Plan Update: Allowing for a release of reserves [\$18,386] that was included in the 2016 Spending Plan, we need an offering of \$9,500 today to cover expenses of the

2016 Spending Plan. Hopefully, the offerings will be more so we do not need to use the full amount of reserves. -- Thank you, Stewardship Commission

Winter is back! That means that from time to time functions at the church may need to be cancelled. When needed, cancellations will be posted on the church website, on the Bluffton Icon, Lima FOX-WLIO (Hometown Stations,) The Findlay Courier, WFIN, WKXA and 106.3FOX. Cancellations will also be noted on the church answering machine. Recognizing that members come from many different places and that road conditions vary, everyone is urged to use caution and good judgement in deciding whether or not to attend.

First Mennonite Church has joined other faith communities in Ohio to urge Governor Kasich to not allow the resumption of executions in Ohio. It has been nearly three years since the last execution, but the next one is currently scheduled for January 12, 2017. We know that Ohioans can be safe from dangerous criminals while holding them accountable, without taking their lives. Please call Governor Kasich at 614.466.3555 to leave a message with your name, residence and personal request that he not resume executions. There are additional postcards to send to Gov. Kasich on the table next to the church office. -- Thank you, Mission, Peace, and Service

The Freudige Class is collecting food/paper/cleaning/personal/etc. items for the Bluffton Food Pantry through the end of the year. Donations may be placed in the box outside of the church office and items will be delivered to the food pantry on a regular basis. We would love to have the whole church involved. Thank you for your generosity!

Revised Common Lectionary Readings for 2017 – We will follow Year A of the Revised Common Lectionary in 2017. The Revised Common Lectionary is a lectionary of readings from the Bible for use in Christian worship, making provision for the liturgical year with its pattern of observances of festivals and seasons. You may access it via the internet at <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/index.php#>. *The church office will provide print copies upon request.*

We received the December Central District Conference Focus, which we have e-mailed to all those persons for whom we have e-mail addresses. If you did not receive Focus via e-mail, you'll find paper copies in the literature rack in the fellowship hall.

Plan to attend the CDC regional gathering Saturday, March 11 at First Mennonite Church, Wadsworth. Regional gatherings allow us to hear developments and work in progress and to meet others in the conference. They are intended for all in the conference -- not only leaders in congregations or the conference.