

**Easter Sunday**  
**Easter: God, Humanity & Barriers Rolled Away**  
**April 1, 2018**

**Chimes call us to worship** Deb Niswander

**Welcome and Announcements** Lynn Miller

**Prelude** Fanfare on “Lift High the Cross” setting by Janet Linker

**\*Call to worship**

Leader: To all who weep, and to all who smile, whether with joy or sorrow, welcome. Welcome home to this house of God. Welcome in the embrace of Christ. Hear and believe the good news, for he is risen!

**People: He is risen indeed!**

Leader: Praise the Lord, our Jesus lives!

**People: Yes, praise the Lord! We will worship God together.**

**\*Invocation**

**\*Opening Hymn** “Christ the Lord is risen today” HWB 280

**\*Confession**

God of life, in you, death has no power. Because of you, this life is not our final end. Thank you. It feels good to celebrate new life, yours and ours. It’s spring. We long to throw off the heavy blankets of winter and bask in the sun. We confess that, just as some folks would like to skip winter, there are times when we want to skip the whole crucifixion story and jump straight to the resurrection. And yet there are other times when death feels more real than life. When we see an empty tomb, it is easy to despair, and it seems futile to hope. We hear stories of people who claim to have seen you alive; we want to believe, but struggle. Forgive us for not recognizing you, for doubting our fellow believers, and for trying to hold you back.

**Words of assurance**

The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

**Conversation with Friends**

**Hymn** “Between Me and You” Insert

**Conversation** Amber Shelly

**Hymn** “Between Me and You” Insert

*(Accompaniment by Harnish family)*

**Community Prayer**

Theda Good

**Gospel Reading**

Mark 16:1-8

Kendra Nickel

**Sermon**

“Meet Me in Galilee”

Wanda Stopher

**\*Hymn of Response**

“Christ is alive”

STS 89

**Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings**

**Offertory** Offertory on “Vruechten” setting by Michael Burkhardt

**\*Hymn of Dedication** “Christ is alive! Let Christians sing!” (vs. 1) HWB 278

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**\*Hymn of Sending**

“This joyful Eastertide”

HWB 276

**\*Benediction**

“Hallelujah Chorus”

G. F. Handel

*Chancel Choir and others*

**\*Please stand, or remain seated if that is more comfortable for you.**

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

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

*Large print hymnals are available. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating one.*



**This week at Bluffton University:**

**April 3 Forum:** “100 Years of Conscientious Objection to War: Conscience, Dissent, Resistance, and Civil Liberties from World War I through Today,” Forum by Michael Mears, Jake Short, Bill Galvin, Center for Conscience and War, 11 a.m., Yoder Recital Hall.

**April 3 Forum:** “Nutrition Assessment of Kenneth Butler Memorial Soup Kitchen, Hancock County, Indiana” First Tuesday Forum by Laura Galley '18, 11 a.m., Musselman Library Reading Room.

**April 3 Performance:** “This Evil Thing,” one-person play performed by Michael Mears, actor/playwright, 7 p.m., Yoder Recital Hall.

**April 6 Colloquium:** “Linen, Leather, Linseed oil and Lampblack: A recipe for the 1748 Ephrata ‘Martyrs Mirror,’” Friday Colloquium by Carrie Phillips, archives and special collections librarian, 4 p.m., Stutzman Lecture Hall.

**April 7 Concert:** Jazz Ensemble and Gospel Choir Concert, 6 p.m., Yoder Recital Hall.

**MCC Alumni & Friends International Potluck:** As alumni or interested friends of Mennonite Central Committee, you are invited to attend an MCC Alumni and Friends International Potluck at 6 p.m. on Sunday, April 8, at Central Mennonite Church, 21703 State Route 2, Archbold. Speakers will be Doug Hostetter, current director of the MCC United Nations Office, and Thien Tran, Vietnamese intern in the MCC U.N. office sharing about the past and present work of MCC in Vietnam. Please RSVP by April 4 at 574-534-4133 or to [img@mcc.org](mailto:img@mcc.org)

**PRAYERS AND GRATITUDE**

**John Paquin**, father of Walt Paquin, died March 28 in Boardman, Ohio. Arrangements are incomplete. Walt, Rhonda and Grace appreciate your prayers and support.

**Pray for Sue Park-Hur** as she begins her new role as denominational minister for Leadership Development. She joined the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board staff on March 19. Among her responsibilities in this role, Park-Hur will work to equip conferences and congregations to provide ministries of excellence and relevance in their local context. She will also provide oversight of the calling system for pastors in transition.

~ 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.*

**TODAY, April 1, 2018**

9:15 a.m. Easter breakfast potluck, FH; No SS  
10:30 a.m. Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching  
Noon Easter potluck, all invited, FH

**THIS WEEK**

Monday (4-2) Office closed  
Tuesday (4-3) Morning Prayers, 7 a.m.  
Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor  
Christian Ed., 5 p.m., parlor  
Wednesday (4-4) Cherubs, Adult bells, 6 p.m.  
Jubilate, 6:30 p.m.  
Chancel choir, Youth bells, 7 p.m.  
Thursday (4-5) Worship, 7 p.m., parlor

**NEXT SUNDAY**

8:30 a.m. Youth choir  
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 watched over while you worship, our staff will care for them in the nursery downstairs. Worship activity bags for children are available.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**All are invited** to a potluck after church today in the fellowship hall. Bring your favorite dish(es) to share as we eat and celebrate together.

**The church office will be closed** Monday, April 2. Staff will return to work on Tuesday, April 3. In case of emergencies, please contact Wanda Stopher at 419-551-1079.

**The flowers at the front of the church** were purchased by FMC attenders in honor/memory of family and friends. On the yellow insert, you will find a list of those who purchased flowers and who they are honoring. Please plan to pick up the flower(s) you ordered following worship today. (On the front pew, there is a list of who ordered what type of flowers in case you have forgotten.) Any flowers remaining after worship will be distributed by the church staff.

**Congregational/Pastoral Review:** Staff Relations Committee members and recruited helpers will interview groups as follows during the month of April:

April 8 Sunday school hour: Faithbuilders Class, Community Class, Faith and Life Class

April 15 Sunday school hour: Faithful Living Class

April 22 Sunday school hour: Freudige Class

April 29 Sunday school hour: Sojourners Class

April 22 or 29 Sunday school hour: Senior High, Junior High

TBD: Connections Class

There will also be opportunities for anyone regardless of Sunday school involvement:

April 8 (Sunday), 4-5 p.m. in the assembly room

April 15 (Sunday), 9:15-10:15 a.m. in Room 301 (third floor, classroom closest to the elevator)

April 26 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m., Maple Crest

Please bring with you the green sheet that was in your mailbox on March 25. Extra copies are available on the hearing aid cabinet in the fellowship hall.

~ Ken Shenk for Staff Relations Committee

**Men, women, and children** are invited to join Mennonite Women in the fellowship hall for the April comforter knotting days Monday, April 9, at 7 p.m. and Tuesday, April 10, from 9 a.m.-noon. Most comforter tops are Wanda's for her "60 tops sewn by her 60th birthday -- 60 x 60." No prior experience in knotting is required. Please consider helping with frame loading on Sunday, April 8 at 2 p.m. The devotional focus on Monday will be "Initiate," shared by Louise Matthews. Julie Mackey and Monica Harnish will provide refreshments. Following comforter knotting on Tuesday, all are invited to stay for lunch. If you are able, bring a salad or dessert and table service. Sandwiches and beverages will be provided. We are continuing to collect supplies for Andrew's House in the labeled box found on the fellowship hall bench. Do take time to learn about Andrew's House from our MW pillar. A complete wish list is on the MW pillar.

**You may have noticed** "Pastoral Prayer" is out and "Community Prayer" is in. As Mennonites we believe in the priesthood of all believers. Simply said, we believe that everyone has access to God and we all bear the responsibility to use our gifts in the context of the church and community. Here at First Mennonite Church we have identified "Gifts Expression" as one of our five priorities.

Gifts Expression: We have a deep desire to engage the gifts we hold in service to God and others, in congregational life and in the world. We deliberately seek to discover new gifts, inviting people to lifelong development and expression of the fruit of the Spirit, natural abilities, skills, and training that constitute the gifts of the Spirit.

During our time of transition, we have had the privilege of using the gifts of the deacons and others who have ministry experience to lead us in our "Pastoral Prayer." We can argue that this indeed is a pastoral prayer with others using their pastoral gifts without the title of pastor. We would like to continue to offer this space for prayer to this gifted group of folks. In an effort to avoid confusion, we will be changing the name to "Community Prayers" to recognize that deacons and others are welcome to lead the prayer in addition to our pastors. We believe this is in line with our priorities of expressing the gifts of the congregation. Please note that we continue the practice of only publicly naming prayers of folks who have given us specific permission to name their concern.  
~ Pastors Wanda and Theda

**Electronic Giving is an option for giving** in support of First Mennonite Church. There is a link, "ONLINE GIVING," at the far right of the red navigation bar on the FMC website. All forms of contributions are much appreciated, whether by cash, check or e-giving.