

**Awe and Wonder
First Mennonite Church
September 2, 2018**

Gathering (Bluffton Middle School sidewalk) Elizabeth Kelly and Theda Good
Procession to sanctuary via all entrances

Welcome and Invocation HWB 679

*Opening Hymn “Here in this place” HWB 6

*Responsive Reading Psalm 19:1-14 (Book of Common Prayer)

L: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork.

C: One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another.

L: Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard,

C: Their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world.

L: In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun; it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber; it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

All: It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again; nothing is hidden from its burning heat.

Conversation with Friends Kathy Dickson
Song “We walk by faith” (v. 1 for coming forward, v. 2 for returning to seats) HWB 570
Conversation

*Litany of Dedication

Pastor: We gather today with joy and gratitude and wonder. The Mysterious Spirit has been our guide many years as we have waited and explored, waited and moved, renovated and waited.

Church Council: Today we celebrate the faithfulness of many people, and of God, as we dedicate this sanctuary and the body of Christ that worships here.

Worship Commission: For the ministry of the word, for beauty and the rituals of the church, for confession and forgiveness, for proclaiming the whole grace of God.

All: We dedicate this sanctuary.

Deacons: For comfort to those who mourn, for strength to those who struggle, for celebration with those who are joyful, for giving and receiving grace.

All: We dedicate this sanctuary.

Trustees: Wood and carpet, paint and refurbishing, bodies and brains, wise stewardship and generous givers.

All: We dedicate this church.

Pastor: God, you choose to dwell in us and build us up as your holy temple. Cleanse us. Forgive us. Live in us and empower us. Guide us and let us serve you as a Christ centered community committed to your justice and peace, your beauty and hospitality.

All: We dedicate ourselves, this church, this sanctuary. Thanks be to God.

(Based on dedication of Hyattsville Mennonite Church, 2013 Cynthia Lapp)

Community Prayer Theda Good

Scripture Genesis 1:1-2:3 John, Melinda and Rebecca Estell
Matthew 6:25-34 Ernie Porzelius

Sermon “Creator Creating Creation” Wanda Stopher

*Hymn of Response “Earth and all stars” HWB 47

Presenting our Tithes and Offerings
Offertory “I Want Jesus to Walk with Me” setting, Sara Glick
LuAnn Stuckey

*Hymn of Dedication “Praise God from whom” HWB 118

Commissioning Don, Mary Ina, and Sunita Hooley

*Hymn of Sending “Move in our midst” HWB 418

*Benediction

Postlude “Christ, the Sure Foundation” setting, Timothy Shaw

***Please rise in body or in spirit.**

HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book; STJ – Sing the Journey; STS – Sing the Story

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, 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: Fran Core

Greeter: Jenny Moser

Nursery this week: SS – Anita and George Lehman

Worship – John & Julie Mackey, Sunita Hooley

Nursery next week: SS – Wendy Chappell-Dick, Bobbie Chappell, Alice Ruth Ramseyer

Worship – Carrie Mast, Annette Heslep, Jacob Biesecker-Mast

Sound: Melissa Friesen

Chancel: Bret and Wanda Stopher

OUR STEWARDSHIP

Worship attendance last Sunday	FMC-180, MC-7
Spending plan giving August 26, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$2,956.12
Special fund giving August 26, 2018 (includes e-giving): K-5-\$8; JHYF-\$10; SHYF-\$10;	
Deacons' benevolent-\$20; Flooring-\$150; MMN-\$40; Syrian student-\$20	\$258.00
Total giving August 26, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$3,214.12
Total spending plan receipts as of June 30, 2018	\$189,473.39
Spending plan expenses as of June 30, 2018	\$198,232.79
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.



Mennonite Women will hold a kick-off birthday party on Monday, Sept. 10 at 7 p.m. All are invited to attend for a look back at groups and activities that met over the past 100 years, see historical items and to enjoy birthday cake as MW begins its year, celebrating the centennial of study, service, and fellowship that has taken place at FMC.

FMC members are needed to walk elementary students from school to Weekday Christian Education, which takes place at our church. WCE encourages the spiritual growth and development of students who choose to attend in grades K-8. WCE is supported by 19 area churches. Walkers may help anywhere from one shift (about 30 minutes) to all day. Thank you to those who have helped! If you are interested, please contact Andrea Goings via email at ajgoings@mercy.com or phone/text at 419-303-6870.

Music ensembles begin this week and next. We encourage you to join one!

- Chancel Choir (**adults of all ages**) begins Sept. 12, 7 p.m., sanctuary
- Adult (**adults of all ages**) and Youth (**Grades 7-12**) Bells - begin Sept. 5 at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. respectively, assembly room
- Cherub Choir (**3 yr. old-1st grade**) begins Sept. 12, 6 p.m., children's choir room
- Jubilate (**2nd-5th grade**) begins Sept., 5, 6:30 p.m., children's choir room
- Youth Choir (**7th grade and up**) begins Sept. 16, 8:30 a.m., children's choir room

Thanks to everyone for the many expressions of kindness and prayers for my son, Joel Steinmetz, his wife, Teri, and their sons, Tate and Carter. They were in a car accident last Sunday afternoon in which Teri, Tate and Carter all received concussions, scrapes and abrasions. The boys are recovering by leaps and bounds, and Teri is slowly recuperating at home, instead of teaching 1st grade, where she wants to be. Joel was unharmed, and son, Jack, was not in the car.

~ Jane Steinmetz

Jackie and Beth Wells' 10-month-old son, Greyden, was recently diagnosed with retinoblastoma (cancer of the retina) in both eyes. The right eye is completely cancerous and may have to be removed. The left may be saved and may have some vision. Greyden will need at least 6 months of chemo. The family is overwhelmed and asks that contact be limited to cards. Their address is in the "Living Elsewhere" section of the November 2017 church directory. Please hold them in your prayers during this time of uncertainty.

Congratulations to Jennifer Steinmetz, daughter of Jane Steinmetz, and David Graber, of Goshen, IN. They were married August 18 to 8th St. Mennonite Church in Goshen, where Jane's parents were married on Sept. 1, 1940. Jennifer and David will continue to live in Portland, OR at this address: Jennifer and David Graber, 2515 SE 51st Ave., Apt. 18, Portland, OR 97206

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.

CALENDAR

Today, September 2, 2018

9:15 a.m. SS, coffee time
10:30 a.m. Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching (back in FMC sanctuary!)
Noon Connections potluck, noon

September 3-7, 2018

Monday (9-3) Church office closed
Tuesday (9-4) Morning prayers, 7 a.m. (meeting in sanctuary again)
Staff meeting, 9 a.m.
Wednesday (9-5) CDC Pastor/Peer Group, 9 a.m.-noon, parlor,
Worship planning circle, 5 p.m., parlor
Thursday (9-6) BAMA, 8:15 a.m., parlor
Saturday (9-8) Commissions' retreat, 9 a.m., Grace Mennonite Church

Next Sunday, September 9, 2018

9:15 a.m. SS, Coffee time
10:30 a.m. Worship, Theda Good preaching, communion
11:30 a.m. Youth fundraiser, FH
12:30 p.m. Congregational meeting, FH

The congregational meeting will be held Sunday, Sept. 9 at 12:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall, following the youth fundraiser meal. Annual reports are in mailboxes today. The agenda includes a ballot vote calling Wanda to renew her term. If you are unable to attend the congregational meeting, but would like to vote on this item, absentee ballots will be available by the following methods: (1) call the church office and cast your vote with Mary Pannabecker Steiner, who will place your vote in a confidential locked box, (2) you may email the church office at fmc@bluffton.edu with your vote and Mary will place your vote in the locked box, or (3) stop at the church office during office hours September 4-7 and place your vote in the locked box.

~ Kendra Nickel

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today we begin our year of walking, using *We Make the Road by Walking* in individual and corporate worship. When we come together in corporate worship we, by the grace of God, become more than the sum of our individual journeys. Symbolizing this shared journey, the bulletin board previously used for the FMC photo gallery has been repurposed this year to help us think about how we are “making the road by walking” together. There will be images and text and also opportunities for participation by all who worship with us. Please see Anita Lehman or Pastor Wanda with questions.

Worship/offering invitation: Today during the conversation with friends, all will be asked a question which we are all invited to answer. There are pieces of paper at the ends of the pews; please share them with each other in the pews and answer: “*What is something in creation that helps you connect to God?*” Place your answers in the offering plates during the offering time, anonymously or with names. We will later share these responses in the fellowship hall. Stay tuned...and thanks!

Pastor Wanda will be out of the office this week Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 3- 4. She will return on Wednesday, Sept. 5. Please contact Pastor Theda for pastoral care.

THANK YOU! After 2 ½ months of being in a different worship space and at least 2 years of planning, meetings and dreaming, we are back in our sanctuary. There are so many people to thank. We have had people carry pews and many other items, take off and put on hymnal racks, clean all kinds of surfaces, serve on planning committees, talk with vendors, take out and put back hymnals, put in new lights, restore organ benches, and much, much more. We are also grateful for the professionals who have offered their services to the sanctuary: Tom Holycross and the Lima Pipe Organ Company, Mark Niese and Heritage Floors, Mike Diller and Diller’s Flooring and Interiors, Dave Hoffer of Quality Construction, and Albert Klausung of Klausung Painting. We hope our “new” sanctuary will offer continued strong and creative worship experiences to further Christ’s kingdom both inside and outside this space. ~ Mark Suderman

Communion 09-09-18: As is our practice, on the day of our congregational meeting Sunday, Sept. 9, we will observe communion in our worship service. Please take time this week in preparation, reviewing and considering your relationship with God and with your

sisters and brothers, the body of Christ. In this way, we tend both to our relationships and to the unity within Christ’s body. Another practice we observe associated with communion is the giving of alms. We do this at FMC by giving to the Deacons Benevolent Fund. Almsgiving is a way of demonstrating how our life together is energized by the life and ministry of Jesus when he healed the sick, fed the hungry and brought relief to the poor. We seek to live faithfully by using our Deacons Benevolent Fund to assist those in the church and community who have need.

We will commission Carrie Mast in her new role as interim children and youth ministry director during worship on Sunday, Sept. 23.

We encourage all to attend the commissions’ workshop on Saturday, Sept. 8 in the assembly room of Grace Mennonite Church, 502 Main St., Pandora. Share in the process of education, thoughtful conversation, creative organizing/planning, and laughter as we discern a new path together. Early birds may gather as early as 8 a.m., but the workshop is from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (lunch will be served.) Please RSVP via the FMC Facebook page or leave a note in Elizabeth Kelly’s mailbox. Childcare will be provided (notify Elizabeth.) ~ Governance Task Force

As we begin our year of “We Make the Road by Walking,” by Brian McLaren, there are several opportunities to join a Sunday school class or learning circle. All are welcome at any of these options. **You may still order a copy of the book through the church office.**

Three Adult Sunday School opportunities:

- Faith and Life Class -- parlor
- Freudige Class – 3rd floor, room 303
- Faithful Living – basement, room 104/105

Learning Circle Opportunities:

- Sunday evenings in the fellowship hall, beginning today at 5:20 p.m. with a light supper and book discussion at 6:05 p.m. Hosted by Walt Paquin.
- Sunday evenings, first and third of the month beginning Sept. 16 at Maple Crest in the family room, 6:30-7:45 p.m. Hosted by Rich and Gloria Bucher.
- Sunday evenings, first and third of the month starting Oct. 7 at 4:30-6 p.m. for the first meeting. Group may decide to change the time. RSVP appreciated but not necessary. Contact Theda or church office for address. Hosted by Theda Good in her home.
- Worship planning circle meets on Wednesdays from 5-6 p.m. Focus is on preparation and planning for worship two weeks in advance. Hosted by Pastor Wanda.