

First Mennonite Church

Middlebury, Indiana

(574) 825-5135 www.firstmennonite.net

Worship 10:00 a.m.

Transitional Lead Pastor: Gary Martin

Elders: Dean R. Miller (596-1995), Maribeth Rhodes (825-9672),
Merle Mullet (596-7362), Chris Blough (520-6732),
Ron Rhinheimer (596-0660)

“Welcoming the Unexpected”

December 25, 2011

“Celebrating the Savior”

God showed up in our world in the least expected way, in the form of an infant. This is how God comes, what God’s awesome deeds look like—a small shoot springing up and changing everything. Christ has come, and the world is being transformed. So let’s celebrate!

Worship Leader: Sonya Miller

Song Leader: Dale Schlabach

Opening Songs: #212 O Come, All Ye Faithful
#199 The First Noel

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship:

Leader: Rejoice in the Lord! The fullness of time has come

People: As the earth brings forth its shoots,

Leader: so God sent the Son, born into the human condition,

People: to set us free to live as beloved children.

All: The unexpected has happened. We belong to God.

Christmas Songs: #191 O Little Town of Bethlehem
#189 To us a Child of Hope is Born
#193 Silent Night, Holy Night

Special Music: Taya Keeler

Tithes and Offering: Recorder Quartet

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:22-40; Galatians 4:4-7
Megan and Benjamin Miller

Message: “The Gift We Needed” – Gary Martin

Hymn of Response: #213 Let All Together Praise Our God

Sharing Time and Prayer: Dean Miller

Blessing:

Leader: Lord, now dismiss your servants in peace,

People: for our eyes have seen your salvation,

Leader: which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples—

People: a light for your revelation and glory to all we meet.

All: Amen.

Sending Song: #198 Let Our Gladness Have No End (verse 1)



Welcome Visitors!

Welcome to all of you who are visiting us today!

Children’s bulletins are available on the ledge just outside the sanctuary. May you have a meaningful time of worship and fellowship.

Nursery Helpers

Today: Church – Kelly Kurtz and Michelle Mullet
Sunday School – No Sunday School

Next Sunday: Church – Kelly Kurtz and Michelle Mullet
Sunday School – No Sunday School

Sermon Notes

1. Into which world was Jesus born?
2. Which Jesus do we want put back in Christmas?
3. Can I find the manger today by myself?

This Week At First Mennonite

Wednesday 5:45-6:30 p.m. **Meal: Fundraiser for Missionyear**
6:45 p.m. **Ben Miller: Missionyear Sharing**
6:00-7:30 p.m. **MYF work at Food Pantry**
4:00-7:00 p.m. **JYF work at Food Pantry and Meal**
Thursday 6:00 a.m. **Men's Prayer Breakfast** at Essenhaus
6:00 p.m. **Elders & Transitional Task Group Meeting**

Upcoming Events at FMC

FMC Holiday Worship Schedule:

January 1 – 10:00 a.m. Worship, No Sunday School

FMC Holiday Office Schedule: The church office will be closed Monday, December 26, and Monday, January 2 in observance of the holidays and so Angela can recover! ☺

Plans have changed!!! On Wednesday, December 28, there will be a Wednesday Evening Meal! This is a special fundraiser meal for Missionyear, the organization Ben Miller is involved with this year. At 6:45 pm, Ben will be sharing about his Missionyear experience thus far. All proceeds will go to Missionyear.

Ladies Night In: January 6, 2011 will be our next evening together. Ladies, if you have never joined us, there is no time like the present! You can come any time after 5:00 pm, bring snacks, and a project to work on. T-shirt designs will be presented!

A congregational meeting is scheduled for January 8, at 10:20 a.m. to present and respond to a proposal for transitional congregational priorities through Easter. Adult S.S. classes will not meet. The Elders and a Transitional Task Group (Merle Mullet, Jared Beasley, Bernie Miller, and Dennis Rheinheimer) are preparing the proposal.

On January 15 Jon Dorman, the associate pastor candidate will be preaching. Following Sunday school there will be a carry in meal. Please plan to attend, eat, and meet Jon.

News and Announcements

A new small group is forming for individuals who are both looking for support for any life situation and are also willing to be supportive to others. The group will begin by telling life stories, and will also help each other discern passion, spiritual gift and calling. If you are interested or have questions, contact Gary Martin (825-5135 or 533-0926 or gary@firstmennonite.net) as soon as possible since “seats are limited!” When enough have inquired, an exploratory meeting will be scheduled at a time which works for all. The group will likely meet twice a month, evaluate group life every three months, and end when the group decides to end.

A message from Gary Martin: If you need to reach me, please call the church at 825-5135 or my home at 533-0926. E-mail can often be just as quick: gary@firstmennonite.net.

MYF: Your new space is almost finished. Be prepared to hear from Pam about painting this week!

The FMW project for December is to pack MCC Health Kits. Each kit requires 1 toothbrush (adult size, leave in wrapper), 1 squeeze-tube toothpaste (minimum 6oz, leave in box), 1 large bar bath soap, 1 fingernail clipper, and 1 hand towel (larger than fingertip, dark color). Please place all donations outside the church office.

Thank you to everyone that contributed to the special Angel Tree offering last week. In total \$166.00 were collected which have already been used to purchase gifts. Thank you for blessing these families in their time of need.

Our basement renovations are nearing completion! Our MYF should be able to move into their new space on Wednesday, January 4!!! We have some very special men in our congregation that have put in many hours the past couple of weeks, tearing down, repairing, and rebuilding the space. Please give a special thanks to Glenn Miller, Glenn Weaver, Al Miller, Dale Schlabach, Paul Yoder, Weldon Friesen, and Jason Riegsecker.

Please check hallway bulletin board for additional announcements!

Stewardship Report for December 18

Attendance: 182 Sunday School: 147
Offering: \$4779.00 ~ Designated: \$325.00 ~ Total: \$5104.00

Looking Ahead to Next Week

Epiphany Sunday , 10:00 a.m. January 1, 2012

Focus: God comes into the world to bring life to all humankind. When the Light of God shines through us, people *will* be drawn—from all sorts of backgrounds and places. How do we prepare to welcome and embrace a “body” that is wider than we’d dared to imagine?

Texts: Psalm 72:1-14; Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12; Ephesians 3:1-12

Message: Through the church

Reflection questions:

1. Are we looking/listening for God’s opportunities for us to love all?
2. Are there “shades” to be lifted in congregational life so the Light of Christ is visible to all?
3. What is Paul’s point in Eph. 3:10? *Through the church, the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.*

Milepost 41

“A New Day Is Dawning”

Jerusalem, stand up! Shine! Your new day is dawning. The glory of the Lord shines brightly on you. The earth and its people are covered with darkness, but the glory of the Lord is shining upon you. Nations and kings will come to the light of your dawning day.

Open your eyes! Look around! Crowds are coming. Your sons are on their way from distant lands, your daughters are being carried like little children.... Treasures from across the sea and the wealth of nations will be brought to you....

Seagoing ships lead the way to bring them home with their silver and gold. I, the holy Lord God of Israel, do this to honor your people, so they will honor me.

Isaiah 60:1-5, 8-9

It was *down time* for Israel: Jerusalem lay in ruins; the economy was in shambles; many were still far away in captivity. But the prophet Isaiah called Israel to envision a bright tomorrow: “It’s time to stop fumbling around in the dark. The light has come. Look around you and see what is happening. Your ship is coming in!”

“When my ship comes in” usually brings to mind winning the lottery or receiving an inheritance. Could Isaiah be the source of this cliché? The ships in his prophecy were loaded with material wealth...but not for personal gain. This windfall of wealth was to honor the name of the Lord!

In the church year, the twelve day Christmas Season ends with Epiphany (Jan. 6). Light is a significant theme in the scripture readings for Epiphany, which literally means, “a showing.” Light is needed to see things! Epiphany celebrates the showing of the child Jesus to the wise men, a symbol of Jesus becoming Light not only to Israel, but also to Gentiles (the entire world). Our focus during the Season of Epiphany, which continues until Ash Wednesday (Feb. 22) will explore what it means for First Mennonite to be a light to the nations.

The answer to Israel’s predicament was right there in their midst, but most failed to notice Jesus’ birth. Often the answers we search for in life are also in our midst. The same is true for congregations. We need the Light to be able to “see” these answers in what is taking place right around us. If you are personally experiencing down time these days, “*Open your eyes! Look around! The glory of the Lord shines brightly on you.*”

I pray that many of us will have an epiphany during the Season of Epiphany: a sudden “showing” of God’s presence that brings hope, healing, freedom, a clear calling, reconciliation, or a deeper understanding of spiritual realities. “Christ, be our Light, shine in our hearts, shine through the darkness...shine in your church.” May this Epiphany Season be an epiphany for First Mennonite Church.