LIFE @ FIRST

Our mission is to extend grace, build peace, and share love within and beyond our faith community.

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 46 NOVEMBER 29, 2017

ON THE JOURNEY

The Season of Advent

And the waiting begins… If you are like me, I'm not very patient. The norm is to see everyone (and I mean everyone!) hurrying to get places with blinders on so they aren't very aware, or even interested, in what is happening around them. It's all about "me" and "my" schedule/plans. How in the world did Elizabeth and Zechariah wait that long for their child!? And how was Mary able to totally trust the angel Gabriel with the unbelievable news that she, a betrothed virgin, would bear a son who would be given the throne of David and reign over Jacob's descendants forever with a kingdom that will never end!?? Isn't it enough to just have a baby in a normal way? There was a lot of awareness in their waiting and trusting!

As we begin to prepare ourselves this Christmas season, may we stop the hurrying, and place ourselves in and around Bethlehem. Let us re-focus. (Close your eyes and take a deep breath.) Even though we know this story, may our eyes be opened anew, and our hearts be ever ready to cross paths here, in our local community, with the "innkeepers," the "shepherds," the "lepers," the "shopkeepers," the "Magi" and the newborn baby Jesus who loves us and redeems us.

Submitted by Robin Tahara Miller

CALENDAR

Wed 11/29	9:00 am	Moms In Touch
	5:30 pm	Outreach Commission
		No Wed. Evening Meal
Fri 12/1	6:00 pm	Ladies Night In
Sun 12/3	9:30 am	Kent Preaching
	1:00 pm	Fellowship Hall Reserved
	6:00 pm	MYF
Mon 12/4	6:00 pm	Worship Commission
	7:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
Tues 12/5	6:30 pm	Discipling Commission
	7:00 pm	Music Practice
Wed 12/6	9:00 am	Moms In Touch
	5:45 pm	Wednesday Evening Meal
	6:00 pm	POPS Advisory Board
	6:30 pm	Food Pantry Advisory Board
Thurs 12/7	6:30 pm	Board
Sun 12/10	9:30 am	Phil Yoder Preaching
	12:00 pm	Fellowship Hall Reserved
	6:00 pm	MYF
Mon 12/11		Health Department
	7:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
Tues 12/12	7:00 pm	Music Practice
Wed 12/13	9:00 am	Moms In Touch
	5:45 pm	Wednesday Evening Meal

Administrative Assistant Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday 9:00am-2:00pm
(Kent's daily schedule varies; you may want to call ahead.)
Closed Friday

- **All newsletter submissions need to be in to Maribeth by noon on Tuesday.**

December Birthdays
Jerry Beasley – 2
Tim Blough – 3
Carlee Christner – 8
Sara Weaver – 8
Theo Outman – 8
Rich Yoder – 11
Levi Mast – 13
Lloyd Troyer – 14
Terry Rheinheimer – 15
Carah Christner – 16
Gary Miller – 16
Betty Birky – 17
Curt Troyer – 19
Bobbie J. Werker - 21
Jay Christner – 23
Loretta Troyer – 23
Fannie Hochstetler – 24
Wilbur Schlabach – 24
Nate Wyse – 25
Kim Christner – 26
Brandon Graber - 29

WORSHIP

Focus statement: We awaken to God's purpose, which begins in darkness—whether seed in the ground, child in the womb, or new self in the soul. We are shaking, fearful, and resistant, yet we call upon God to tear open the heavens and be present with us in our uncertainty.
Background scriptures: Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Luke 1; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

Coffee Prep Volunteers
This Sunday: Dave Graber
Next Sunday: Jill Miller

Welcome Center
This Sunday: Shari Graber
Next Sunday: Carolyn Miller

ADMINISTRATION

Stewardship Report for November 26:
Money Given to Budget $3,995.00
Amount Needed Weekly for Budget $5,860.76
Year-to-date Money Given to Budget $71,012.20
Amount Needed Year-to-Date for Budget $76,189.88

COMMUNITY LIFE

We all want a livable planet with clean air, water and soil for all. So how do we work with people who are different from us for the good of our shared planet? Join Northern Indiana members of Mennonite Creation Care Network for a discussion of barriers, bridges and doorways that can help us move forward in hope. Meet Wednesday, December 6 at 7 p.m. at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, 2509 Berkey Avenue, Goshen, IN. RSVP to mccn@goshen.edu appreciated.

Emma Mennonite Church's Men's Chorus will present their 6th annual Christmas program - "Let the Whole World Know" - Sunday, December 17, at their home church in Emma Town (1900 S 600 W, Topeka). The program will include several other musical treats as well. Finger food will be served following the 6:30 program. For directions or for more information, go to www.emmamc.org or call 260-593-2036.

DISCIPLING

Tickets are now on sale for Goshen College's14th annual musical celebration of Christmas, "A Festival of Carols," on Friday, Dec. 1 and Saturday, Dec. 2 at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 3 at 4 p.m. in the Music Center's Sauder Concert Hall. This special celebration of the holiday season is patterned on a traditional English worship service, and features Christmas carols, spirituals, scripture readings and sacred works of music for the holiday season.

Shop Ten Thousand Villages in Goshen (206 S. Main St.) Dec. 4-9 and support Bethany Christian Schools. Tell the cashier that you are shopping for Bethany and 20 percent of sales will be donated to Bethany. Your loved ones will enjoy the creative handcrafted gifts you purchase and artisans will receive vital, fair income as you support Bethany.

Bethany Christian Schools will hold a Christmas instrumental concert for grades 4-8 on Tuesday, December 5, in the school's chapel. Beginning and Intermediate instrumental groups will perform at 6:30 p.m.; the middle school band and orchestra will perform at 7:30 in the school's chapel. The concerts are open to the public; there is no admission charge.

Tuesday, Dec. 12. 2017 1:00 p.m.
Sauder Concert Hall, Music Center
A Musical Feast Featuring GC Music Faculty
Debra Detwiler Brubaker, GC professor of music
Matthew Hill, GC professor of music
Scott Hochstetler, GC associate professor of music
Jose Rocha, GC associate professor of music
Solomia Soroka, GC professor of music
Join us for this rare opportunity to hear Goshen College's talented faculty perform some of their favorite selections. These faculty members are not only great teachers, but exceptional individual performers.
This community program is free. If you have questions please call 574-535-7564 or email aftsabb@goshen.edu.

OUTREACH

First Mennonite Women's project for December is putting together fruit plates for the shut-ins and supporting Goldenrod. They are also collecting items for hygiene kits along with POPS families. Items include: 1 squeeze tube toothpaste (6 oz. or larger), 1 large bar bath soap, 1 good quality finger nail clipper, 1 dark hand towel.

This holiday season as you pick out gifts for loved ones, why not add a few supplies for MCC kits to your list? As families around the world face disaster and crisis, MCC kits and comforters remind them that their needs are not forgotten. There is a new, easy way for you to get involved! MCC Great Lakes has put together a list of most needed items on Amazon.com. Simply purchase the pre-selected items on the wish list and the items will ship directly to the material resource center in Goshen. (Due to space limitations at MCC Connections in Kidron, all items are being shipped to Goshen.) Thank you for joining MCC in sharing God's love and compassion in this tangible way this Christmas.
Direct link to Amazon Wish List:
https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2Q8X1M1HPMQ92/ref=cm_go_nav_hz or search "MCC Great Lakes" in Amazon Wish Lists.

Get to Know: Lloyd & Katie Hochstedler
Lloyd and Katie have been attending FMC since January of this year. They enjoy putting puzzles together and playing sports and Yahtzee on the WII. Katie also enjoys reading and sewing. Good sermons and FMW are what they enjoy most about FMC!