

ON THE JOURNEY

God is With Us!

This week we celebrated Christmas, the coming of Jesus into the world. Christmas in our culture, and in much of the world is celebrated like this, we gather together with our families, we feast, and we give each other gifts. We become enamored with the new gadgets and toys that entertain us. And for many, that is what Christmas is all about.

The real meaning of Christmas is not nearly as much about our PRESENTS, as it is about His PRESENCE. The true meaning of Christmas is that God has come to us, that He enters our world, and goes through life with us. God's presence is with us in the good times and in the bad times, through our joys and through our sorrows, through our laughter and through our tears, through our successes and through our failures, through our hellos, and through our goodbyes. God is with us if we win the lottery or if we lose the farm. God is with us when we feel His presence, and God is with us when we don't feel Him with us at all. God is with us!

There is a story in the Gospel of Luke, in chapter 24. On Easter Sunday, two of Jesus' disciples were going to their home in Emmaus after the Passover celebration. They were heartbroken, they wished so much that Jesus would have become their long-awaited King and Messiah. Their heads were hung down, they were feeling weary and defeated, profoundly disappointed that life didn't turn out as they wished it did. That evening, as they shared their bread and their home with a stranger, their eyes were opened, and they made this profound discovery, Jesus is alive, and he is with us on our journey, even when we don't realize He was there!

The good news of Christmas – God has come to us, and He is with us on our journey!

Submitted by Philip Yoder

CALENDAR		
Wed 12/26	5:30 pm	Outreach Commission
	7:00 pm	Music Practice
Sat 12/29	8:00 am	Fellowship Hall Reserved
Sun 12/30	9:00 am	Phil Preaching/Communion
	6:00 pm	MYF
Mon 12/31		Office Closed
Tues 1/1		Office Closed
Wed 1/2	6:00 pm	Discovery Bible Study
	6:45 pm	Food Pantry Advisory Board
	7:00 pm	Music Practice
Thur 1/3	6:30 pm	Board
Fri 1/4	6:00 pm	Ladies Night In
Sun 1/6	9:00 am	Phil Preaching
	6:00 pm	MYF
Mon 1/7	5:00 pm	POPS Advisory Board
	6:00 pm	Worship Commission
	6:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
Tues 1/8	6:30 pm	Discipling Commission
Wed 1/9	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	6:00 pm	Discovery Bible Study
	7:00 pm	Music Practice

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

December Birthdays

Kim Christner - 26

WORSHIP

Focus statement: Christmas is a wonderful time of Joy, is it not? We sing "Joy to the World" and "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" and feel so positive about our faith. But Christmas is not a time of great joy for everyone. That First Christmas was not a fountain of bubbling joy for everyone either. Soon after Jesus was born, King Herod had all the boy babies around Bethlehem killed in an effort to kill the young Jesus. The heartache of the mothers and fathers who had their infant children ripped from their arms and from their hearts seemed to be unbearable. The Prophet Jeremiah had prophesied about this heinous event many years earlier.

Background scriptures: Matthew 2:1-18, Jeremiah 31:15

Administrative Assistant Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday 9:00 am-2:00 pm
Closed Friday

Coffee Prep Volunteers

This Sunday: Navigator Class

Next Sunday: Dave Graber

Welcome Center

This Sunday: Carol Johnson

Next Sunday: Shari Graber

ADMINISTRATION

Stewardship Report for December 23:

Money Given to Budget \$5,584.00

Amount Needed Weekly for Budget \$5,565.25

Year-to-date Money Given to Budget \$100,098.90

Amount Needed Year-to-Date for Budget \$94,609.25

The office will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1. The newsletter will go out on Thursday, Jan. 3.

COMMUNITY LIFE

The 8th Annual Elkhart County Rally and Prayer Walk for Life is on Saturday, January 12, 2019 at the Lerner Theater, 410 S. Main St., Elkhart at 12:00 noon. The program will include emcee Jeff Fater, RETA Men's Coaching Manager and keynote speaker Ramona Trvino. The Rally will include testimonies from those who have experienced abortion and will be followed by a short pray walk to RETA and the Women's care Center in Elkhart. Go to www.elkhart4life.org for more information.

DISCIPLING

Discovery Bible Study will not meet tonight. We will resume our Joshua study with chapter 9 on January 2nd at 6:00 PM. Join us!

Please join Michiana Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MMEDA) for our first dinner program event of 2019 -- "Goshen College Study Service Term: 50 years of Transformational Global Citizenship." The event will take place Thursday, January 17, 6:30pm in the College Mennonite Church Koinonia Room (1900 S Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526). Professors Jan Bender Shetler and Duane Stoltzfus will share the history of the SST program, the goals and outcomes, and ideas about the future of SST. You'll also hear from former SST participants Jose Ortiz (current student) and

Joe Christophel (a member of the very first SST group) about their SST experience and how it has impacted them. A Jamaican-inspired meal will be catered by the College Mennonite kitchen staff. Please RSVP by noon on FRIDAY, January 11, to info@michianameda.org or 574-355-3607. Cost is \$5 for students, \$15 for Michiana MEDA members, and \$20 for others, payable at the door (now accepting credit cards!).

OUTREACH

First Mennonite Women's next project is collecting items for The Window. Items needed are: coats (new or used), hats, gloves, scarves, socks and underwear.



