



Informal Fellowship - 9:00 a.m.  
 Sunday School Classes - 9:30a.m.  
 Worship Service - 10:30 a.m.  
 (Online at [www.mgmennonite.org](http://www.mgmennonite.org))



*Disciples of Jesus,  
 Revealing His Kingdom  
 Through Love, Spiritual Growth,  
 and Service Together*

Newsletter dated  
 November 24, 2021

*The word “waiting” for many of us invokes images of standing in line, staring at a slowly ticking clock, or sitting in a literal waiting room. I am sure we all could think of more examples but most of the time waiting is seen as a passive activity. The season of Advent is about waiting. We enter into a space of waiting for the birth of the Messiah. While this season is about waiting, the waiting we are called to is not like standing in line. We are not supposed to be passively watching the proverbial clock until the day of Christ’s birth.*

*Our theme for Advent this year is Dare to Imagine. We can be active in our waiting this Advent season by opening our imaginations to who God is and what God has for us. We dare to imagine more and more what God might do through us in these coming days. I pray y’all might experience deeply the presence of God this Advent season. That the Spirit of God might enchant our imaginations and inspire us toward hope and faithfulness.*

*In Christ,  
 Pastor Nathanael*

From the Leader Magazine - the Dare to Imagine theme:

“Dwelling in the space between the texts and our 2021 context made us long for renewed imagination in our lives and church lives. So much has been put on hold or turned upside down that we need to listen and respond to God’s presence with new ears and renewed hearts and minds. As we begin a new church year, let’s dare to imagine our path forward with God toward God’s good dream for our world. Rooted in our lives of faith and our trust in the Spirit, and arising from our engagement with the Scripture texts, this worship series dares all of us to speak aloud our laments, confessions, and hopes for coming days; to look for a new language to express our faithfulness; to engage and honor the imagination of our children; to offer sermons that call us beyond our comfort zones; and to explore new carols and melodies to loudly sing our praise to God.”



**Advent 1: Dare to Imagine God’s Goodness!**  
*Can we, dare we, embrace hope once more?  
 We can when we remember God’s steadfast goodness and  
 the goodness of learning and walking in God’s ways.*



PERMISSION TO PHOTOCOPY  
 Subscribers to Leader are welcome to photocopy and adapt worship materials  
 Songs used with permission: CCLI 465314  
 HWB-Hymnal Worship Book (blue)    TMH-The Mennonite Hymnal (red)  
 STJ-Sing the Journey (green) STS-Sing the Story (purple)

## Sunday's Service – November 28, 2021

**Message:** Nathanael Hofstetter Ressler  
**Worship Leader:** Paul Bontrager  
**Song Leader:** Tom Lubbers

**Offertory:** Renee Koshmider  
**Candle Lighting:** Sylvia Miller  
**Children's Time:** Sophia Sommers



### GATHERING

Prelude

Opening Song

*Here I am to Worship (Light of the World)*

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

Leader: As we begin our Advent Season seeking hope and imagining the goodness of God, we acknowledge God's goodness to us and all people around the world.

**ALL: His goodness also includes all creation and the land. As the text in the Genesis creation account states, "And God saw that it was good."**

Leader: We recognize that there were Indigenous people here caring for the land before our ancestors and settlers. We remember and recognize the Erie, Kaskaskia, and Osage peoples. To imagine God's goodness is to express gratitude, but also to recognize that those before us were not treated with justice. For that we seek forgiveness.

**ALL: We give thanks to our Creator God for the opportunity and blessing to live, work and worship Him. We humbly live in the presence of God's goodness seeking to live in right relationship with all of God's children and all of creation.**

Lighting of the First Advent Candle

STS #15 *Hope is a Candle* (Verse 1)

Leader: We light a candle of hope. And we imagine:

**People: God's righteousness, God's steadfast love, God's justice.**

Leader: We light the candle to see God's goodness in us, among us.

**People: Imagine that . . . we are God's wonders, blessed wonders.**

### PRAISING

Praise Song

*Good Good Father*

Offering – General Fund

### HEARING GOD'S WORD

Children's Time

Confession & Assurance

Leader: A friend once said children grow taller at night — while at rest — bones quietly stretch, and bit by bit their bodies grow. Trees grow silently, too — from deep inside — energy is released. Branches reach for the light. People can grow silently, too.

**People: We confess that all too often we stifle the growth God inspires deep inside of us, preferring the immediate, the good enough, the comfortable.**

Leader: In Advent — O God — cause us to get up on our tiptoes, lean forward, and extend our gaze.

**People: Surely God, who caused the righteous Branch to spring up, will enliven our imaginations in this season of hope.**

**(Silence)**

Leader: The kingdom of God is near. Listen — can you hear it? Look — can you see it? Our God says, "Surely the days are coming — they are already here!"

**HEARING GOD'S WORD**

Scripture

Psalm 25:1-10 (NRSV)

Message

*Dare to imagine God's goodness!*

**RESPONDING**

Song of Response

*Beautiful Things*

Testimony of God's Goodness

Howard Miller

Congregational Sharing/Prayer

**SENDING**

Sending Song

*Even So Come*

Benediction/Blessing

Postlude



✝ Pray for those from our congregation with health concerns: Marty Miller, Ruth Miller, Sam Miller, and Carol Sommers.

✝ Pray for Marsha Miller who had surgery on Tuesday.

✝ Pray for Mary Hilmer's niece Becky whose son Zach has been missing for several weeks. Becky is also Julie Yoder and Sheryl Weaver's cousin.

✝ Pray for Rachel Weaver as she transitions into living in an assisted living facility.

✝ Pray for Marcus Yoder, brother of Lois Bontrager and Ruth Hills, who is in a rehab nursing facility for health issues.

✝ Pray for Kevin Graber's friends Jeff and Troy who are dealing with health issues.

✝ Pray for Myron & Sheryl Weaver's adopted son Alexis who is in Montreal waiting on the status of the court decision on his permanent residency hearing. Pray for his wife Gloria that they will soon be reunited.

✝ Pray for peace and justice throughout the world.

✝ Continue to pray for the safe release of the Christian aid workers who were kidnapped in Haiti on October 16<sup>th</sup>. As we rejoice about the two hostages who were released over the weekend, we continue to pray for the fifteen who are still in captivity.

For updated information, see <https://christianaidministries.org/updates/haiti-staff-abduction/>



**Offering Last Sunday, November 21-Education Sunday**

**Attendance: 63**

General Fund \$ 4,190.00

Education Fund 2,195.90

Lake Township FISH 75.00

Total Offering \$ 6,460.90

Holiday  
Schedule

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**The church office is closed Thursday and Friday, November 25 & 26**

**Happy Thanksgiving!**

Pastor Nathanael & Savanah will be out of town November 25-27. Please contact a member of Ministry of Congregational Care for any pastoral needs during Nathanael's absence: Paul Bontrager, Dan Dutcher, Clara Sommers, Gary Sommers.



**Please join us on Christmas Eve for a service of singing and celebrating Jesus' birth.**

The service will begin at 5:00 p.m.

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**Coffee Time & Fellowship @ Church – Sunday mornings**



If you would like to help with supplying donuts and baked goods for coffee time on Sunday mornings, please sign up by clicking on the link below. Two dozen donuts and homemade or store-bought baked goods are needed. Please have at the church by 9am on Sunday morning. If you have any questions with signing up, please contact Jen Geiser. Thanks for your help! Use this link to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a054ea9a92da64-coffee>

**The ladies' sewing group will meet on Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>. Lunch will be furnished!!**

Everyone is welcome to join us for a day of fellowship while we knot comforters and quilt in the Fellowship Hall. Spend the day or come for just a bit - we enjoy each other's friendship while we work! Lunch is provided this month! Please contact Twila Miller if you have any questions.

## Kids Club & Jr. Youth Christmas Party – December 12

All kids in grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> are invited to a Christmas party on Sunday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, after church in the Fellowship Hall until 2:00 p.m. Lunch, games and decorating gingerbread houses is planned. Don't miss out on this fun event! Please let AJ or Jen Geiser know if your child is planning to attend.



Thank you to everyone who helped with the collection for the community Thanksgiving Food Drive. Maple Grove collected over 100 boxes of stuffing mix as well as gift cards and money to go toward gift cards. The Ministry of Outreach would like to thank you for your generosity. What a blessing for FISH and our community! Below is a thank you from FISH:



*We had a very successful Thanksgiving bag giveaway on November 23<sup>rd</sup>! We distributed in a drive-thru method over two different time slots and served 126 families, which included 356 people! The number of people is the household number that we have on file, so it is possible that the food is being served to more individuals in their extended friends and family groups throughout the holiday weekend. We were also able to find homes for 26 turkeys and 1 ham which were donated to the event as well. If families did not choose to take a turkey, they were given a \$10 gift card to local grocery store to purchase a different type of meat to add to their meals. THANK YOU to each and every one of you for all of your hard work collecting donations and coming to volunteer in person. We could not have done this event without you! Thank you so much, again, for all that you do to link arms and serve our neighbors in need! I hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving!*

*Kelsey Wood, Director-Lake Township FISH*

## **Deck the Halls & Stock the Store**



Lighthouse Ministries' Affordable Christmas program is for families in the southeast neighborhood of Canton surrounding the Lighthouse. In purchasing presents for kids, the real gift you are offering is dignity for a parent to provide for their children.

- The presents you purchase will be sold at an affordable price in a "store" run by the Lighthouse.
- The purpose is to support and empower neighborhood parents in their roles as provider and caregiver for their children.
- The lists of gifts you see on the board in the church lobby were generated by responses to surveys that were distributed to parents and caregivers of the children who use the Lighthouse services.
- Affordable means the gifts will be marked down so that the parent pays a percentage of the purchase price.
- **All gifts should be returned UNWRAPPED with the purchase price listed somewhere on the packaging - please tape the tag on the gift.**
- **Please return gifts to the church by Tuesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>.**

Any questions, please contact Paul Bontrager.



### **It's time for LOC Christmas 2021!**

This event is a time dedicated for our local schools, businesses, churches, and individuals to partner

together to alleviate some of the burden that the holiday season can bring upon so many families. This year, we will be offering a combination of gift cards and items at a fraction of the cost to local families in need, including necessities like new blankets, socks, toiletries, and gently used winter weather gear. Families will also have the opportunity to shop the LOC Warehouse!

### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

- Purchase gift cards for \$10, \$20, \$40 or \$60 – see the Christmas giving tree in the church lobby, and take a tag for the amount you would like to spend. Suggestions of where to purchase gift cards are printed on the back of the tag.
  - **Label gift card(s) with gift amount and return to the church.**
- If you wish to purchase physical gifts, visit [LOC Christmas website](#) and select one of the stores listed under the Gift Wish Lists. A Charity List of requested items is shown for each store.
  - **Return the UNWRAPPED gift to the church.**

**Please send in all donations to the church by Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>.**

If you have any questions, please contact Holly Miller. For more information about Love Our Community and to sign up to volunteer, visit Love Our Community's website [www.loveourcommunity.net](http://www.loveourcommunity.net).

### **As you shop for the holidays, don't forget to save your Acme grocery receipts.**

Acme will give a percentage of the cash back amount printed on the bottom of each receipt to FISH. The program runs through December 31, 2021. A box is available under the mailboxes for the receipts – thanks for your support of this project! *Ministry of Outreach*

**To include something in the newsletter, please contact Cindy by noon on Wednesday – thank you!**

Church Information: 2121 Smith Kramer St. NE, Hartville, OH 44632 Phone: 330-877-2400  
 Website: [www.mgmennonite.org](http://www.mgmennonite.org) Facebook @MapleGroveMC

Nathanael Hofstetter Ressler: Pastor ([pastornathanael@maplegrovemennonite.org](mailto:pastornathanael@maplegrovemennonite.org))  
 - Office Hours: Monday 9am-12pm; Tuesday thru Thursday-1-3pm; Friday-Sabbath

Cindy Fleming: Church Secretary (Secretary@maplegrovemennonite.org)  
 - Office Hours: Monday-Tuesday and Thursday-Friday – 8am-1pm

Ministry of Congregational Care: Paul Bontrager, Dan Dutcher, Clara Sommers, Gary Sommers

Prayer Chain Contacts: Jen Geiser and Kami Sommers

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES AVAILABLE**

#### **Adult Classes**

Women's Class: Room 1-Education Side  
 Mixed Intergenerational Class: Room 2-Education Side  
 Sr. Men's Class: Room 9-Hallway  
 Sr. Women's Class: Room10-Hallway  
 Mixed Post-High/20's-40's: Basement

#### **Children/Youth Classes**

PreK-4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Rooms 7-8  
 -Teachers: Lesli Miller & Sheryl Weaver  
 Jr. Youth (Grades 5-8): Rooms 3-4  
 - Teacher: Karen Miller  
 Youth (Grades 9-12): Basement  
 - Teacher: Kami Sommers