



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



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

Newsletter dated
 December 10, 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 3: Dare to Imagine God’s Song!

Singing together causes great joy and jubilation.

*But, even more, our hearts exult and swell
 as we imagine God singing over us.*



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 – December 12, 2021

Message: Nathanael Hofstetter Ressler
Worship Leader: Paul Bontrager
Song Leader: Lois Bontrager



Offertory: James Yoder
Children's Time: Sophia Sommers
Candle Lighting: Amanda Simms & Morgan Ruppelius

GATHERING

Prelude

Opening Song

HWB #197 *Angels We Have Heard on High*

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

Leader: Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say: Rejoice!

People: Shout for joy; rejoice with all your heart!

Leader: God sings over you. Fear not, for God is in your midst.

People: Shout for joy; rejoice with all your heart!

Leader: Sing praises to God—shout aloud and sing for joy.

People: God is in our midst.

Leader: We listen.

People: We strain to grasp the sound of God's song.

Lighting of the Third Advent Candle

STS #15 *Hope is a Candle* (Verses 1, 2 & 4)

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

People: Jubilation! Rejoicing! Do not fear!

Leader: We light the candle and join in God's song, singing loudly, singing fiercely, singing together.

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

PRAISING

Praise Song

STS #124 *My Soul Cries Out*

Offering – General Fund

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Children's Time

Confession & Assurance

Even our wildest imaginations cannot grasp the immense beauty of God. This is a true confession. We are small; God is bigger. We will never fully know, but we are fully known. We catch glimpses of God's magnificence, and we accept that it is only that, a glimpse. God invites us to accept our smallness—while we join the awesome song of God's joy.

Today, instead of the usual words of confession, we invite the church to be immersed and “covered” in song. Over our heads, there is music. As we await the birth of Jesus, we do well to joyfully give ourselves to the One who imagines the divine in the form of a child. Dare to imagine!

Song of Joy

STJ #18 *Over My Head*

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scripture
Message

Luke 3:7-18 (NRSV)

Dare to Imagine God's Song!

RESPONDING

Song of Response
Testimony of God's Song
Congregational Sharing/Prayer

HWB #318 *Joy to the World*
Ruth Yoder

SENDING

Sending Song
Benediction/Blessing
Postlude

HWB #427 *You Shall Go Out With Joy*



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

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



† Pray for the family of Ruth Miller. Ruth passed away last Saturday and the funeral was held on Wednesday.

† Pray for Margaret Miller who had knee surgery on Friday.

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

† Pray for healing for Harold & Nancy Beachy's granddaughter, Raquel, who is recovering from surgery.

† Pray for Ray Hofstetter, Savanah Hofstetter Ressler's father, who is having back surgery on December 13.

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

† Pray for Neal Orndorff, Barb Dutcher's brother-in-law, who has cancer and is on hospice.

† Praise for Myron & Sheryl Weaver's adopted son Alexis that his Canadian status was approved. Pray for the process for his wife Gloria to join him in Canada.

† Pray for Scott Bruegger, an incarcerated friend of Maple Grove's. His mother Grace passed away.

† Pray for peace and justice throughout the world.

† Praise for the release of three more Christian Aid workers who were kidnapped in Haiti on October 16th. Continue to pray for the safe release of the remaining hostages.

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



Offering Last Sunday, December 5

Attendance: 81

General Fund	\$	4,982.50
Education Fund		500.00
Special Designation		6,000.00
Total Offering	\$	<u>11,482.50</u>



Church News

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>

Kids Club & Jr. Youth Christmas Party – Sunday after Church



All kids in grades 1st through 8th are invited to a Christmas party on Sunday, December 12th, 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.

Ohio Conference will hold a Women in Leadership Retreat February 18-19, 2022, at the St. Francis Spirituality Center in Tiffin. The theme of the retreat is "Empowered by the Holy Spirit to lead like yourself." The input speaker for this retreat will be Rebecca Slough, academic dean emerita and professor emerita of worship and the arts at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. **Maple Grove will sponsor any congregants that would like to attend – the deadline to register is January 28.** Please let Pastor Nathanael know if you are interested. For more information, please see the [retreat brochure](#). Copies of the brochure are on the literature rack at the church.

From Ministry of Gifts Discernment

Thank you to our new committee members for your willingness to serve beginning January 1st!

<u>Committee</u>		<u>Term Expires end of year</u>
Family Ministry	Barb Dutcher	2023
	Sheryl Weaver	2023
Food Committee	Harold & Nancy Beachy	2023
	Kami Sommers	2023
Lake Center Christian School Corporation Members	Scott & Kami Sommers	2026
Ushers	Larry Hills	2023
	Mike Sommers	2023

Thank you to those who have fulfilled the open Ministry & Committee positions:

<u>Committee</u>		<u>Term Expires end of year</u>
Charity Committee	Perry Miller	2025
Lake Center Christian School Corporation Members	AJ Geiser	2023
Ministry of Congregational Care	Clara Sommers	2024
Ministry of Education	Charla Sommers	2023

The Ministry of Gifts Discernment would like to thank our members who finish committee terms the end of this year. Your willingness to serve contributes to Maple Grove living out its mission of being "Disciples of Jesus revealing His Kingdom through love, spiritual growth, and service together."

Ministry of Gifts Discernment: Betty Miller, Vee Miller, Mike Yoder



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*

Family Ministry has freezer meals available for those in need.

These can be taken to someone in the church or a neighbor or a friend who could use some help. The meals are in the freezer in the church kitchen and labeled with heating instructions. There is Tater Tot Casserole, Buffalo Chicken Mac-n-cheese, and Apple Crisp. Please let Cindy in the church office know what meal(s) you are taking and who it is going to. If you have any questions, please contact a member of Family Ministry:

– Marsha Miller, Vee Miller, Charla Sommers, Sheryl Weaver



Lighthouse Ministries has an exciting matching gift opportunity! From now until December 31, every dollar given to the Lighthouse will be matched dollar-for-dollar (up to \$16,000), doubling your impact! Please prayerfully consider giving a gift to help us reach our goal of raising \$35,000 to meet our budget. Your partnership in our work and your investment in the children living in our SE Canton neighborhood means the world. You can give a gift at www.cantonlighthouse.org/donate or by mailing a check to the Lighthouse at 1931 3rd St SE, Canton, OH. 44707.

Give gifts of comfort and joy with MCC! Delight your loved ones and share God's love with our global neighbors this Christmas. Choose from unique gifts such as goats, clean water, fruit trees, books and many more. Give at mcc.org/delight or call 888.563.4676.

Family Looking for a Nanny: John Arnold, Jr. is looking for an in-home nanny 2 days a week starting early January. They are flexible on those 2 days and the kids are both boys. One will be 3 months old and the other is 3.5 years old. They live in West Akron/Bath area. If you know of someone that would be interested, contact the church office for John Arnold's cell phone number.

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 Facebook @MapleGroveMC
 Nathanael Hofstetter Ressler: Pastor (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-4th 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