



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 17, 2021

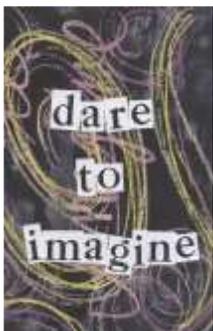
The word “waiting” for many of us invokes images of standing in line, staring at a slowly ticking clock, or sitting in a literal waiting room. I am sure we all could think of more examples but most of the time waiting is seen as a passive activity. The season of Advent is about waiting. We enter into 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*

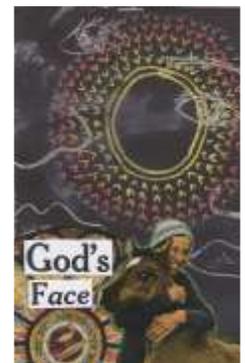
From the Leader Magazine - the Dare to Imagine theme:

“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 4: Dare to Imagine God’s Face!

What amazing love is this that the Godhead comes down to us in the little clan of a little people and takes on a human face? With Mary, we rejoice in God, our Savior, by actively participating in God’s leveling mercy.



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 19, 2021

Message: Nathanael Hofstetter Ressler
Worship Leader: Jill Liechty
Song Leader: Renee Koshmider



Offertory: Handbell Choir
Children's Time: Michael Yoder
Candle Lighting: John & Ann Raber

GATHERING

Prelude

Opening Song

HWB #16 *God is Here Among Us*

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

Come. Come as you are.

Come with your needs, your doubts, your dreams, your hopes.

Come, expecting God to meet us — here and in the innermost longing of our souls.

Watch. Wait. God is present in our worship!

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle

STS #15 *Hope is a Candle* (Verses 1, 2, 4 & 3)

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

People: *the lowly lifted, fear met with love.*

Leader: We light the candle and pray for God's face to shine on us, to save us, restore us.

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

PRAISING

Praise Song

HWB #201 *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

Offering – Education Fund

Away in a Manger

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Children's Time

Confession & Assurance

Leader: We notice, O God, that when You feed people, everyone has enough.

People: *We notice that in our world, when we feed people, some have more than enough, and many are still hungry.*

Leader: Teach us to love.

People: *We notice, O God, that in Your social, economic, racial, and gender orders, no one is greater, and no one is left behind.*

Leader: We notice that in our world there are many ladders, and many are climbing.

People: *Re-orientate us to Your vision of equality.*

Leader: God of mercy, lower us, raise us, empty us, and fill us. Like an empty manger, we want to be ready to receive Emmanuel.

ALL: *Our souls magnify the Lord, our spirits rejoice in God our Savior. God has looked with favor on our lowliness. The Mighty One has done great things for us, and Holy is God's name.*

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scripture

Hebrews 10:5-10 (NRSV)

Message

Dare to Imagine God's Face!

RESPONDING

Song of Response

STS #26 *Helpless and Hungry*

Testimony of God's Face

Joe Weaver

Congregational Sharing/Prayer

SENDING

Sending Song

STS #32 *Oh, Beautiful Star of Bethlehem*

Benediction/Blessing

Postlude



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 Amanda Sommers, Vernon Sommers' mother. Amanda passed away Wednesday evening. Pray that the family may find comfort and peace through Jesus at this time of loss.

† Pray for Lee Yoder who has been ill and admitted to the hospital for testing.

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

† Pray for healing for others with health concerns: Savanah Hofstetter Ressler's father Ray Hofstetter recovering from back surgery; Sami Miller's grandparents George & Joanne Golias who are both ill; Barb Volk's brother Jim and his wife Betty for health issues; Harold & Nancy Beachy's granddaughter Raquel recovering from surgery; Lois Bontrager and Ruth Hills' brother Marcus Yoder in a rehab nursing facility; Barb Dutcher's brother-in-law Neal Orndorff on hospice; Vernon Sommers' family members who have been ill: Loren, Naomi and Wayne, Ben and Marie.

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

† Praise for the release of the remaining hostages who were kidnapped in Haiti. Praise God that all seventeen hostages are now safe!

† Pray for peace and justice throughout the world.



Thank you for the outpouring of love and support we have felt from this congregation over the past several weeks. This church community meant so much to both mom and dad. They truly centered their lives around this church which was evident by the number of visits from church members, prayers, cards, flowers and meals.

Our mom left this earth feeling loved. Thanks for all of your kind gestures.

The Eugene and Ruth Miller Family

(Victoria Brenneman, Laurie Deavers and Stephanie Miller)

Offering Last Sunday, December 12

Attendance: 88



General Fund	\$ 11,527.75
Charity Fund	250.00
Total Offering	<u>\$ 11,777.75</u>

The third Sunday of each month is Education Sunday;

on December 19th, non-designated funds from the offering will go toward the Education Fund.



Church Office Schedule for the Holidays

For the week of Christmas and New Year's, the church office will be closed on Friday both weeks and the newsletters will be sent out on Thursday. Items for the newsletter and Sunday's services will be needed by Tuesday each week. Thank you!

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>

Offering Envelope Numbers

In order to receive a year-end statement of your offerings, you must have an offering number. To obtain an offering number, please contact Kami Sommers. The offering envelopes are designed so you can designate your offering to specific funds. If funds are not designated on the envelope, they are included in the General Fund with the exception of the 3rd Sunday of each month which is Education Sunday and non-designated funds go to the Education Fund. For accurate recording, please mark the front of your envelope with your offering number as well as designation of funds. If you have any questions, please contact John Koshmider, the church treasurer.

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.



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! <i>Ministry of Outreach</i>

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’s cell phone number.

The December edition of *On the Level* is now available from Mennonite Disaster Service. In our current issue: MDS responds to the deadly tornadoes in the Midwest and parts of the South, MDS Canada needs volunteers to help survivors recover from extensive flooding in British Columbia, and you can learn more about our Annual Celebration in Sarasota, Florida in January. Click [here](#) to read more – copies are available on the literature rack at the church as well.

Click [here](#) for the December issue of the bi-monthly newsletter from Ohio Mennonite Conference. Copies are available on the literature rack at the church.

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