



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 3, 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*

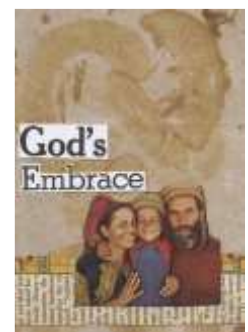
From the Leader Magazine - the Dare to Imagine theme:

“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 2: Dare to Imagine God’s Embrace!

*Imagine the wideness of God’s embrace
 of all creatures and creation! It will widen our hearts
 to do the things that make for peace.*



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 5, 2021

Message: Nathanael Hofstetter Ressler
Worship Leader: Lois Bontrager
Song Leader: Ruth Yoder

Offertory: James Yoder
Candle Lighting: Larry & Ruth Hills
Children's Time: Michael Yoder



GATHERING

Prelude

Opening Song

HWB #212 *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

In the quietness of our winter season, God breathes. God comes close, open-armed.
We are held: tightly, gently, tenderly. God's embrace is wide.
A voice cries in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord,"
and God pulls the cries close. God is already here.

Lighting of the Second Advent Candle

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

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

People: God's tender mercy, God's compassion.

Leader: We light the candle of peace to feel God's embrace, God's nearness, God's breath.

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

PRAISING

Praise Song

HWB #195 *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*
(Verses 1, 2, 4 & 5)

Offering – General Fund

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Children's Time

Confession & Assurance

Leader: We invite those who can kneel for our time of confession today. In humility, we willingly bend our knees, silence our many thoughts, and bow our heads, as we bring ourselves into the forgiving embrace of God's presence.

(Silence)

Leader: God, we begin these moments of confession by imagining your beauty and goodness. In silence, we ask you to hold us in peace.

(Silence)

Leader: Held in your strength, we give to you the noise, the conflict, and the irritations that occupy and zap us of energy we need for other thoughts and tasks.

(Silence)

Leader: Confident because your arms hold us close, we dare to imagine freedom from sin. We are ready to step into the crooked and uneven world in which we live, knowing your hand will guide us.

(Silence)

Leader: I invite you now to imagine the support of God's hands as you rise to your feet physically or in spirit. Hear now God's words of assurance and peace:

"By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:78-79)

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scripture
Message

Dare to Imagine God's Embrace!

Philippians 1:3-11 (NRSV)

RESPONDING

Song of Response

STJ #54 *Longing for Light*
(Verses 1, 2, 3 & 5)

Testimony of God's Embrace
Congregational Sharing/Prayer

Sylvia Miller

SENDING

Sending Song
Benediction/Blessing
Postlude

STJ #31 *He Came Down*



† Pray for Ruth Miller who is on hospice and declining rapidly. Pray for her family; pray for her daughters Victoria, Laurie and Stephanie.

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

† Pray for Ray Hofstetter, Savannah 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.

† 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 peace and justice throughout the world.

† Pray for the safe release of the Christian aid workers who were kidnapped in Haiti on October 16th.

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



Offering Last Sunday, November 28

Attendance: 63

General Fund	\$ 2,472.00
Education Fund	10,005.00
My Coins Count - MCC	528.00
Total Offering	<u>\$ 13,005.00</u>



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

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

Advent Season Resources: Mennonite Church USA's annual [Advent at Home worship guide](#) is now available to help individuals and households of all ages prepare for the Advent season. The 2021 guide follows the theme "Dare to Imagine!" This resource offers weekly and daily Scriptures, worship rituals, prayers, activities, and background information. Goshen College is offering online weekday devotions during Advent based on the "Dare to Imagine!" theme. These daily devotions are available online at www.goshen.edu/devotions.



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>

There will be puzzle time in the Fellowship Hall at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 7th.

We're currently working on a puzzle that has different churches on it, but feel free to bring more puzzles! Anyone is welcome to come and participate. If you have any questions, contact Savannah Hofstetter Ressler.

Kids Club & Jr. Youth Christmas Party – December 12

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.





SS quarterlies for the spring quarter will be ordered the beginning of January.

Please let Ruth Yoder know by January 9th how many quarterlies your class will need. If you would like to be added to the list to receive the daily devotional magazine *Rejoice*, or no longer wish to receive it, please let Ruth know that as well.

Thank you – Ministry of Education

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.



The Ministry of Outreach would like to thank the congregation for your support of the two Christmas-giving projects Maple Grove participated in the last few weeks. The gifts and gift cards for Lighthouse Ministries in Canton and Love our Community in Lake Township are greatly appreciated. God bless!

The second Thursday of each month is Maple Grove's turn to supply volunteers at the Hartville Thrift Shoppe. Men and women are needed Thursday, December 9th, at 6:00 p.m.

As you shop for the holidays, don't forgot 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



Everence® to hold last Medicare & Social Security Workshops of 2021 – December 7

Topics will include, when and where to sign up for Medicare, what Medicare does (and doesn't) cover, strategies to maximize your Social Security benefits and the best time to begin taking Social Security. The Hartville workshop will be held at the Everence office on Tuesday, Dec. 7, starting at 5:30 p.m. To reserve your spot, contact Kelly Troyer at 800-986-9988 or northeastohio@everence.com.

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.

The current edition of *On the Level* is now available from Mennonite Disaster Service.

In our current issue, MDS Canada Hay West program provides relief to farmers, the U.S. border reopens for volunteers coming from Canada, 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.

Announcements & Prayers for December from Ohio Conference:

(Copies of all are posted on the Conference bulletin board in the hallway at the church.)

- Mennonite Education Agency has compiled [Prayers for Mennonite Education](#) for December.
- Prayer Vine, a publication of Mennonite Mission Network, lists daily prayer requests for mission workers serving in locations around the world. The December issue of [Prayer Vine](#) is available.
- MC USA announcements for the month of December are available [here](#).

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