



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



Maple Grove
Newsletter

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

Newsletter dated
 November 30, 2023

Advent Season begins this Sunday.

I am sure most of us who have ridden in a car with children have heard the infamous question, “Are we there yet?”. This question often stems from multiple factors: Excitement for the destination, boredom of their present situations buckled in a car seat, a tenuous grasp on the concept of time or some precarious combination of hunger and tiredness. Regardless of the originating factor, the question expresses a longing for that which is not yet realized while addressing the present reality. As adults, however, fielding the “Are we there yet?” question is typically not as romantic as the previous sentence makes it out to be. Maybe because we ourselves are hungry and tired or, more likely, because we have answered that question a dozen times in the last 20 minutes. Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet? It is much easier to dismiss this question, to ignore it, to find any distractions to divert their attention away from it. Questions can be frustrating, difficult, and can make us uncomfortable for one reason or another.

Our theme for Advent this year, brought to us by the Leader Magazine, is “How Will We Know?” Advent is a season of waiting. It reflects the waiting ancient persons practiced as they waited for Messiah and our own waiting, as we wait for the return of Jesus. From waiting can emerge questions perhaps like a child squirming in a car seat. We might imagine ourselves as children in the car seats of life crying out to God: How long must we wait for Jesus’ return? What should we do as we wait? What is next for us in this waiting? Are we there yet!?!

In the Church it can be easier to dismiss or ignore questions, whether about faith practice, tradition, theology, belief, or any number of life’s complexities. Questions such as these can be challenging because, if we are really honest with ourselves, we don’t fully know the answers. Though ignoring such questions can often leave the persons who ask them feeling dismissed, unimportant, or alone. Our Advent theme invites us to sit with questions, to ponder, to puzzle, to probe, to perplex. In this we are invited to avoid the trap of rushing to answers; even when these questions are challenging or uncomfortable or annoying. And even when we think we know the answer. Our Divine Parent longs to hear our questions. Cherishing them with limitless patience and love. This Advent theme is one of wondering in the question “How Will We Know?” as it applies to the movements which emerge in this season and in life in general.

*In Christ,
 Pastor Nathanael*



Advent at Home 2023: *How will we know?* worship guide accompanies individuals and families through the days and weeks of Advent through Epiphany with scriptures, prayers, worship rituals, suggested activities, and contextual information. Click [here](#) for an electronic copy of the guide – printed copies are available on the literature rack at the church.

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)
 VT-Voices Together (purple)

Please pick up paper and pens when you enter the sanctuary to be used after the message.

Advent 1 – December 3, 2023 - *How will we know . . . how long?*



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

GATHERING

Prelude

Opening Song

VT #219 *Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord*

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

Leader: O God, tear open the heavens and come down
so that the mountains would quake at Your presence!

Ladies: No one has heard,

Men: no ear has perceived,

People: no eye has seen any God besides You, who works for those who wait for You.

Leader: No one knows when the time will come.

(Pause)

ALL: Together we wait.

PRAISING

Praise Songs

VT #125 *Shout to the Lord*

VT #218 *Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus*

Offering – General Fund

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Drama

Scripture

Mark 13:24–37 (NRSVUE)

Message

How will we know . . . how long?

RESPONDING

Congregational Response

Song of Response

HWB #584 *They that Wait Upon the Lord*

Congregational Sharing/Prayer

SENDING

Sending Song

STJ #31 *He Came Down*

Benediction/Blessing

Pastor: Together we wait.

People: How long must we wait?

Pastor: No one knows when the time will come.

So, go! Keep alert, strengthened by God's faithfulness to you.

Postlude





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- ✝ Pray for Sylvia Miller's sister Ellen and her husband Don as he recovers from injuries he sustained in a highway crash.
 - ✝ Pray for those with health concerns: Lura Bowin, Rachel Weaver, Cindy Fleming.
 - ✝ Pray for Kathy Johnson's mother, Gale, as she begins radiation treatment for cancer.
 - ✝ Pray for Alexi Deuzoumbé and his family that they may soon be reunited.
 - ✝ Pray for those affected by violence and hate all over the world.
 - ✝ Pray for peace and justice for everyone in the world.
 - ✝ Pray for those affected by natural disasters, and those involved with the relief & recovery efforts.
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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 Lake Township's Community Christmas are greatly appreciated.



- Sunday – December 3 - Kids' Club/Jr. Youth Christmas Caroling after church
 - Wednesday – Dec. 6 - Ladies' Sewing & Comforter Knotting – carry-in for lunch
 - Sunday – December 24 - Puzzle Time – 1pm
 - Saturday – Dec. 30 / 2-5pm - Christmas Eve Service – 4:30pm (only 1 service on Christmas Eve)
 - Saturday – Dec. 30 / 2-5pm - Open House Birthday Celebration for LeRoy Yoder's 90th birthday!
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Birthday Party for LeRoy Yoder - LeRoy will be 90 years old soon and his family is celebrating his birthday! A drop-in party is scheduled for everyone on Saturday, December 30, 2023, from 2pm-5pm in the Maple Grove Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall. No gifts are necessary but cards would be appreciated. Light food and drink will be provided. Come and celebrate with us!



Kids' Club/Jr. Youth and their families are invited to go Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 3, after church. We will all go to eat together at Dairy Queen in Hartville and then Christmas Carol to some members of Maple Grove afterwards. If you have any questions, please contact Ruth and Michael Yoder.

The ladies' sewing group will meet on Wednesday, December 6, with a carry-in for lunch. Everyone is welcome to join us for a day of fellowship while we knot comforters and quilt in the Fellowship Hall. Join us for lunch and spend the day or come for just a bit - we enjoy each other's friendship while we work! Please contact Twila, Margaret or Sheryl if you have any questions.

There will also be puzzle time in the Fellowship Hall at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 6. Come and work on a puzzle with us or just enjoy the company! Anyone is welcome to come and participate. If you have any questions, contact Savannah Hofstetter Ressler.

Click [here](#) for a copy of the bi-monthly newsletter from Ohio Mennonite Conference. Paper copies are available on the literature rack at the church.

To include something in the newsletter, please email Cindy Fleming at secretary@maplegrovenennonite.org by Wednesday each week – thank you!

Ongoing News @ Maple Grove

Coffee Time & Informal Fellowship @ Church – Sundays @ 9am

Join us Sunday mornings before Sunday School – Everyone is welcome!

If you would like to help with supplying donuts and/or baked goods, please get in touch with Barb Dutcher (for baked goods) or Perry Miller (for donuts). Two dozen donuts and homemade or store-bought baked goods are needed at the church by 9am on Sunday mornings. Thanks for your help!

Encouragement Cards - There are encouragement cards placed in every pew so that as the Spirit lays someone on your heart, you can share your thoughts and encouraging words with them. You may place the cards in their mailbox or give directly to them.

Receiving of the offering

An offering basket is available at the back of the sanctuary for you to place your offering before the service begins. The basket will be brought to the front of the sanctuary during the offertory music to be blessed during the offering prayer.

You may also place your offering in the basket after the service. Thank you!



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.

Family Ministry has freezer meals available to share with 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. Please let Cindy in the church office know what you are taking and who it is going to. If you have any questions, please contact a member of Family Ministry: – Barb Dutcher, Betty Miller, Marsha Miller, Sheryl Weaver

Acme Community Cash Back Program runs through February 15, 2024.

If you shop at Acme, save your receipts and bring them into the church – a collection box is available under the mailboxes. Lake Township FISH can turn these in at the end of the program and Acme will give a percentage of the cash back amount printed on the bottom of each receipt to FISH.

Church Information: 2121 Smith Kramer St. NE, Hartville, OH 44632 Phone: 330-877-2400

Website: www.mgmennonite.org

Facebook – Maple Grove Mennonite Church Group

(send updates to Pastor Nathanael, Jill Liechty or Julie Yoder)

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 – 8am-1pm**

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

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
Men's Class: Room 9-Hallway
Mixed Post-High/20's-40's: Basement

Children/Youth Classes

PreK-4th Grade: Rooms 7-8
Jr. Youth (Grades 5-8): Rooms 3-4
Youth (Grades 9-12): Youth Room-Basement