

**WELCOME TO ALL** who are guests this morning. We hope you feel warmly received and experience a time of worship. Please feel free to contact Pastor Susan if you would like to visit.

**YOU ARE INVITED** to share poinsettias to be used in the sanctuary and foyer during Advent. Poinsettias may be brought to the church and left on a table near a window in the Fellowship Hall. Following the Christmas service, you are welcome to take your plant home to enjoy.

**TWENTY TABOR STUDENTS** came to join in a delicious meal of Pozole, chips, and great desserts. The piñata was as fun as ever. Thank you, First Mennonite, to those involved in the Hispanic Group and for FMC's financial support through the Mission and Service Fund.

**OFFERINGS DURING ADVENT** will be received per our regular offering schedule. In addition, during the offering time each Sunday, the children will collect infant receiving blankets from those who bring the blankets to the worship service. You may purchase receiving blankets in stores, or you may purchase one or more any Sunday morning prior to worship at a table in the foyer. The blankets will be our contribution to MCC infant kits. **Please note MCC infant kit guidelines:** Receiving blankets must be lightweight fleece or flannel and minimum length of 36 inches. Our Christmas Eve offering will be for the work around the world of MCC.

**JIM AND SUSAN JANTZEN** will have their younger son, Robert, around until Saturday morning of this week working on house projects. Pastor Susan will be present in the office during her regular morning office hours, but will be taking time off in the afternoons.

**OUR CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP** will again be a time of open sharing. We invite you to share moments of meaning and/or joy. Our service will begin at 10 a.m.

**YEAR-END GIVING/EXPENSES:** please consider handing in your year-end giving/expenses to FMC well in advance of the last days of the year. This helps our treasurer be less swamped – it is the treasurer's holiday as well as ours! Thank you for your support of our congregation!

**FMC WILL HOST A COMMUNITY CAROL SING** on Friday, December 16 at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Holly Swartzendruber, Jen Stephenson, Emily Sternfeld-Dunn, and J. Bradley Baker will lead the caroling. The evening will also feature a performance of Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*. Join us in celebrating the Christmas season with song!

**ANNUAL REPORTS:** We are gathering all the data for the 2016 annual report. If you lead a committee or have a report to share with us, please do so as soon as possible. Annual reports are due **December 15!**

**WOMEN ARE INVITED** to a Christmas party at the Parkside Village activity room on Monday, Dec. 19 at 2:00 p.m. We will have a white elephant gift exchange. Guests are welcome!

**MENTAL HEALTH:** Holidays bring mental health struggles for many of us, men and women. The following link takes you to Prairie View's quarterly periodical – full of helpful material. Copies of the magazine are also available in the narthex.  
[https://issuu.com/prairieviewinc/docs/a\\_new\\_view\\_fall\\_2016\\_winter\\_2017\\_fi](https://issuu.com/prairieviewinc/docs/a_new_view_fall_2016_winter_2017_fi).

**THANK YOU, FIRST MENNONITE,** for your donations for the Prisoner Care Kits! These were delivered to MCC Central States and were received with much gratitude. Since introducing these kits, ours were the first items they have received. Many of you gave generously – thank you!

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** will begin in the Sanctuary at 6:30 p.m. Christmas music will begin 6:15 p.m. Come and join us for this special night!

**CHANGES FOR FIRST THRESHINGS.** This month will be Pat Bartel's last issue as compiler and editor of FMC's First Threshings. For the past 26 years, Pat has generously gathered church news, devotional thoughts and interviews of those among us. There will a time to thank Pat later for her service to us in this faith family. For now, Ministries Council is interested to know if someone among us might be called to create a communication piece for our congregation. Please be in prayer about this. If you have questions feel free to speak to Doug Miller, Pat Bartel, Pastor Susan, or any member of Ministries Council. Thank you for your ideas and thoughts.

**THE KANSAS MENNONITE MEN'S CHORUS** invites men, 8 to 80 plus, to "Sing So That Others May Live!" Concert offerings raise money for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) projects in relief, development and conscience raising activities around the world. Music style ranges from gospel, folk, and hymn arrangements for 4 part male choruses. Men of Hillsboro are among early organizers and leaders in creating this mission outreach which utilizes a unique tradition and ability among us, that of singing praises to God in four-part harmony. Join the hundreds of men who give a few hours of time to make such a wonderful experience possible. Practices begin in late Feb. and concerts are in April, May and June. See bulletin board for more details.

**KANSAS MENNONITE RELIEF SALE (KMRS)** is happening in April 2017. If you have items such as a car, truck, tractor, craft item, antique furniture, quilts, sewing notions, or other items of interest to sale organizers, please let us know in the next months, so it can be properly prepared and advertised.

KMRS Committee: Jan and Deryll Amstutz, Nancy and Douglas Graber

**THE MCPHERSON COMMUNITY BRASS CHOIR** under the direction of Jerry Toews will be giving a CHRISTMAS BRASS CONCERT in the Historic Alexanderwohl Church **tonight** at 7 p.m. Alexanderwohl is located 1 mile north of Goessel on K-15 highway.

### **Among Our Friends**

We lift in prayer: Mieka & Casey Bartel and their baby girl,  
Carson Linnens  
Jim Jantzen  
Linda Bartel  
Frieda Birkle

I wanted to thank everyone in the church who helped put together the care package full of wonderful snacks that I received several days ago! It meant so much to me to know that people back home were thinking of me. The box of delicious snacks came at the perfect time - they will help a lot during finals (and already are!) :) Thank you! -Erin Wiebe

### **BETHEL COLLEGE:**

Kauffman Museum at Bethel College seeks artifacts, letters, photos and documents that tell the story of conscientious objectors during World War I. To learn more, or if you have an item for donation or long-term loan, please contact museum director Annette LeZotte at [alezotte@bethelks.edu](mailto:alezotte@bethelks.edu) or 316-283-1612.

### **MCC:**

You're invited to the MCC Christmas Soiree! Please join MCC for a delicious and fun holiday celebration on Thursday, December 15 from 5 p.m.-7 p.m. at the MCC Center in North Newton (121 E. 30th). At 6 p.m. we will hear from MCC International Volunteer Exchange Participants about the work they are doing in Kansas and to hear about Christmas traditions from their home countries of Laos and Egypt. Good food, live music and great fellowship - everyone is welcome to join in the fun!

Take chances. Make mistakes. Get messy. Be challenged. Learn some things. Teach some things. Spend a year living somewhere that you never dreamed you'd go... Start now at [salt.mcc.org](http://salt.mcc.org), find answers to frequently asked questions, assignment options and apply! Contact [sharonnelson@mcc.org](mailto:sharonnelson@mcc.org) for more information.

## Luke 1:39-56

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

<sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.