

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.

TODAY IS THE FIRST SUNDAY of Advent and the first Sunday of the Christian year. Communion will be served as we walk forward in faith, in community.

ADVENT CHOIR REHEARSES at 7 p.m. All are welcome to join the music fun which becomes worship together.

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 Narthex. 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 Mennonite Central Committee.

A LARGE ADVENT POSTER is located on a table in the fellowship hall. All ages are invited to color portions of the poster anytime throughout Advent! Let's complete the poster by Christmas Eve!

REHEARSALS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE Worship Service will be Sunday mornings from 9:30-10 a.m. (Dec. 4, 11, 18) in sanctuary and Wednesday evenings from 6:30-7 p.m. (Nov. 30, Dec. 7, 14, 21) in sanctuary. A small group of 3rd - 7th graders will remain on Wednesday evenings to rehearse from 7-7:45 p.m.

THANK YOU FOR your contributions to the youth soup lunch and to the college care boxes!

NURTURE COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED to try discontinuing Children's Time starting in January 2017. There will still be adults in the Nursery, so the youngest children are welcome in there. We will be looking for more ways to involve children in the services, and welcome suggestions and ideas.

BOB AND JUDY JANTZ have chosen their parents memorial money to provide a beautiful rustic nativity scene for the "west lawn" of our church. Bob Jantz' father, Art, loved the Christmas season, especially the carol, Silent Night. Art and Linda's memorial also provided us with the white tables you can now see within our building. Rest in peace, Art and Linda.

HISPANIC GROUP WILL HAVE a Christmas gathering at Tabor College on December 4 at 4 p.m. Talk to Nancy or Douglas Graber, Deryll or Jan Amstutz, or Jim or Susan Jantzen for details.

CHANGES FOR FIRST THRESHINGS. December 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 ADVENT BANNER:

A consideration in the design of each banner was the acknowledgement of the quilting tradition, which is so rich among central Kansas Mennonites. This was done by using modules, or units, consisting of squares divided diagonally to create triangles within the squares, as the basic matrix or framework for each banner. These modules are then modified to the extent necessary to allow specific symbols to emerge and yet remain fully integrated with the quilt matrix.

The advent banner incorporates a color gradation from the bottom to top that suggests a rising sun and its outstretched rays. This portrayal of dawn symbolizes a new day, new beginnings – certainly one of the messages of advent. The sun is also a traditional symbol for Christ, based on the prophecy of Malachi 4:2: *But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.*

The three trumpets formed near the bottom remind us that musical instruments frequently symbolize praise and joy – heralds of good news. Colors also have symbolic meaning. The strongest color in this banner, the golden yellow of the sun, has traditionally symbolized divinity.

The undulating bottom edge of the banner evokes our rolling prairie landscape. The advent events did not only occur in some distant time and geographic location. They occur in our own time and space.

YEAR-END GIVING: please consider your year-end giving to First Mennonite 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!