



# First Mennonite Church

## Midweek E-Newsletter

December 22, 2021

### From Pastor Tom

#### Seven Reasons to Come to Church This Sunday

It's awful tempting to cancel church altogether this Sunday, or to play hookie and spend a relaxing morning at home, isn't it? ☺ After all, we will have just gathered for a meaningful worship service on Christmas Eve. Some of us have plans to gather with family or friends afterwards (my family will gather at Lois' mom's house in North Newton). The next day, of course, will be Christmas Day—another day for many of us to gather with our families, to open gifts, to enjoy good food, maybe watch some football, perhaps enjoy a walk outdoors, etc.—in other words, to take a holiday! Many of us may have trouble even remembering what day of the week it is!

And then the next day will be . . . that's right, Sunday. December 26 on the calendar. (And known in some countries and cultures as Boxing Day—which is another topic for another time!). We'll likely be exhausted by the previous day's activities and excitement. But here, nevertheless, are seven possible reasons to come to church anyway.

1. Sunday is our Sabbath day, the day each week God asks his people to set aside for, among other things, meaningful time with God and with our brothers and sisters in Christ. In other words, maybe going to church each and every Sunday, whether we feel like it or not, is a kind of spiritual discipline. It keeps the rest of our lives properly oriented and in proper perspective.
2. Anyway, this Sunday will be a chance to sing some of our favorite Christmas carols, including those we haven't sung yet, like O Come All Ye Faithful; and Angels We Have Heard on High. Christmas isn't complete until we have all sung our favorite carols!
3. We can excitedly share with one another what Santa brought us this year! Let's face it: we're all kids at heart. ☺
4. It's a good opportunity to check your church mailbox—maybe someone left you a Christmas card!
5. We will read the joyful Psalm 148 as our Call to Worship (how can that not lift our spirits?), read together a short Confession and Assurance (after all, who doesn't need to confess at least once a week, including the day after Christmas?), and listen to a portion of Paul's letter to the Colossians (hint: how many of us will have received some new clothing for Christmas?).
6. It's another opportunity to spend time with some of our favorite people!
7. You can then enjoy a luscious, completely guilt-free afternoon nap! Ahhh!!

Well, I hope at least some of these were convincing! See you Sunday. ☺

### Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- ☞ Remember those who are dealing with illnesses of all kinds.
- ☞ Remember those who will be traveling in the next several days.

- ☞ Remember those unable to gather with family or friends on Christmas Day.

## Upcoming Events

- ☞ **THIS WEEK'S FESTIVITIES:** Christmas Eve is Friday! The Christmas Eve service will begin at 6:30 p.m. (with prelude music starting at 6:10). The service will be in the traditional "Lessons and Carols" format, featuring a sequence of seven Scripture readings telling the Christmas story, interspersed with familiar Christmas carols or hymns. Readers will include Koren and Miranda Pawlowski, and Brayson and Connor Amstutz. Accompanying the singing will be Shirley Baltzer, organ; Anna, Hillary, and John Harder, violins; and Tom Harder, string bass and guitar. Holly Swartzendruber will sing the beautiful "Still, Still, Still" as one of the Carols. Sunday, December 26, will feature more celebratory singing of Christmas songs from *Voices Together*.
- ☞ **The church office will be closed the next two Fridays, Dec. 24 and Dec. 31. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

## Other Announcements

- ☞ **Poinsettias:** You are invited to share poinsettias for Advent! Please place plants in the Fellowship Hall south window area. Plants can be taken home after the December 24 Christmas Eve Service. Thank you!
- ☞ **The advent wreath that we are using at FMC this advent season was made by Roger Ryder.** In honor of his wonderful craftsmanship, let us all remember his contributions to the Hillsboro community. Please remember his family in your prayers this Christmas season.
- ☞ **WDC Office Schedule** - The WDC office and library will be closed from Friday, December 24 through Friday, December 31. The office will then open on Monday, January 3. If you need to drop off or pick up anything from the office or library before the end of the year, be sure to do so by Dec 23rd. Have a merry Christmas season and we will see you in the new year!
- ☞ **Luis Elier Rodriguez, a WDC pastor and ACPE Educator, would like to announce his book** *On Significant Components of Spiritual Care*, now published and available for purchase. This book can be helpful for pastors, chaplains, spiritual counselors, ACPE Educators, CPE students, and people with careers related to spiritual care and human services. Also, it is a resource for spiritual retreats and spiritual caregiver's training. You can send any feedback to the author's email: [Lerodriguez@houstonmethodist.org](mailto:Lerodriguez@houstonmethodist.org).

## Verse of the Week

"In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.'"— Luke 2:8-11 (NRSV)