



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

December 20, 2023

To All Brothers and Sisters In Christ:

Next Steps in our Journey - *Latest leadership plans and decisions*

Hi friends,

Merry Christmas! This greeting can be an observation: that Christmas is merry and joyful. Or it can be a way of conveying one's hope that others will have a happy Christmas, "best wishes" style. I try to take it that way, rather than the (also possible) meaning that someone is holding me and my troubles at bay by insisting that Christmas is merry.

Because troubles, illness, and crises do not take a holiday when we celebrate a Holy-Day. Hospitals are open for sick people, debtors still call, and relationships are still broken. Although I enjoy an online advent calendar that plays sweet Christmas music and shows nothing awry, I know that war still rages across the world.

All the more reason to gather with the faith community, is my thinking. Be broken with other broken ones. Because following the Prince of Peace who shows us the paths that lead to shalom (whole peace and full justice), and working at these ways together, is the best way I know to honor the baby Jesus arriving into obscure poverty and under Roman occupation.

Blessings. ~Pastor Kristine

- **Ministries Council:** Annual meeting following a carry-in meal on January 14. Mark your calendars! Team reports need to be sent to secretary@fmchillsboro.com asap!
- **Worship/Nurture/Vision:**
 - **Tonight - Blue Christmas service** –6:30 pm. Enter in silence and come to bring your sorrows and struggles to Jesus.
 - **Dec. 24 – Worship at 4 pm with *faspa* to follow!** Come celebrate with us!

(choir- come ready to warm up voices and practice at 3:30pm sharp!)

- **Dec. 31 – Our New Year's Eve** worship will include carol singing, storytelling and surrender to God for the New Year.

Verse for Pondering: Isaiah 55: 2b-3a (NIV)

“Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.”

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- Pray for one another through our directory!
- Praise God for successful surgeries and healing touches.
- Thanks to those who made our shut-ins all smiles by sharing birthday greetings!
- Pray for one another's grieving hearts.
- Our Christmas Eve offering will go for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) as has been our tradition for many years. Pray for all of our mission efforts, both local and far reaching as people are discerning where to give financial gifts as the year ends. Pray that God would give us generous hearts.
- Rejoice in the gift of Emmanuel, God-with-us! Give thanks for the many ways that WDC congregations embody Jesus' presence in the world today.

Upcoming Events

- **Tonight! 1. Blue Christmas – 6:30 pm**
- **Worship and “Faspa” on Christmas Eve!!!** Come and make memories together as we worship and fellowship together at 4:00 pm on Dec. 24. We will be keeping it simple, but if you would like to bring food to share, please contact Sharon Diener.
- **Sunday** – reminder for choir singers to come at 3:30 pm to warm up our song for worship. This doesn't give much time, so please be prompt.

Other Announcements

- **Invitation for new members:** We had the welcome of new members several months ago, but not everyone who wanted could participate. We'll do it again soon! If you haven't already spoken to administrator Sue or pastor Kristine, there is still time. Our next welcome Sunday is tentatively scheduled for January 7th, 2024.
- **Christmas greetings** from our denominational leaders. Follow this links to view their greetings.

<https://mailchi.mp/mennoniteusa.org/christmas-greetings-mc-usa-2023?e=f1cba2a9e6>

- Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, is celebrating 150 years August 31 - September 1, 2024. **SAVE THE DATES!** We are planning a Sunday School class reunion along with other activities. Share with your families and others who have Hoffnungsau connections. Watch Hoffnungsau's Facebook page for church trivia and more details of our weekend celebration. If you'd like to be added to our email list for further details as they develop, please contact Barb at bj.reeves@live.com
- **Anabaptism at 500:** We are excited to announce that four talented authors have agreed to write three children's books for the Anabaptism at 500 project. From the outset of the Anabaptism at 500 project, the MennoMedia team has envisioned children's books as part of the suite of products. Our hope is that children discover God's love for them and that they learn to know Jesus through our resources. We believe that the three children's books in this suite resonate strongly with Anabaptist values and will encourage readers in their faith formation and mission in the world.