



FMC Weekly

December 18-31

Worship this Sunday, December 20

8:15 - 8:50 AM Service of Contemplation in the Sanctuary.

9:30 AM Fourth Sunday of Advent. Heavenly lights: Blessed is she
Luke 1:39-45; Pastor Annie Lengacher Browning preaching. An FMC string ensemble will be playing excerpts from the Saint-Saens' Christmas Oratorio and the choir will sing.

Worship Sunday, December 27

9:30 AM. Winter Count. Heavenly lights: Glimmers of divine light in our lives. A service of bearing witness from our year.

For a listing of future worship services and the choir schedule, go to the FMC website at <http://www.fmcdenver.org>.

Education this Sunday, December 20

For Children

The title of the lesson for the fourth Sunday of Advent is "Jesus is born." The Scripture/Bible story is Luke 2:1-20. Jesus is born in a Bethlehem stable while Joseph and Mary are there registering in a census. An angel tells nearby shepherds of the birth and they come to see Jesus. The faith focus is, "Good news! A savior is born."

For Adults

Anabaptist and Mennonite spiritual practice - Tim Pynes and Annie Lengacher Browning. Sanctuary

Education Sunday, December 27

No classes for children or adults.

For information about upcoming Adult Education, go to <http://firstofdenver.co.us.mennonite.net/Education/Adult%20Ed>

Events December 18-30

December 19

1-3 PM Choir Rehearsal

5:00 PM "Celebration of Christmas" with Vicky Mierau and Faye Yoder in the Sanctuary. Reception follows music program.

December 20

8:30 AM Choir Rehearsal

December 24

Round Table will not meet.

5:30 PM Choir rehearse prior to service

Christmas Eve Service and Wassail

Gathering Music - 6:15 - 7 PM

Worship service - 7 - 8 PM

Wassail in Community Center - 8 - 8:45 PM

December 31

Round Table will not meet.

Prayer Requests

We welcome your requests for prayer. Please e-mail your prayer request to the church office with "Prayer Requests" in the subject line. Also, if you would like prayer for any reason and do not want it to be published, feel free to contact Pastors Vern or Annie.

Happy Anniversary

19 - Jason and Rachel Stutzman
22 - Anna and Brian Yoder Schlabach
24 - Nancy and Russ Gregory
25 - Carla and Vernon Stoltzfus
26 - Emily and Sam Martin
27 - Greg Devlin and Natalia Terekhova
27 - Floyd and Lynette Stoltzfus
28 - Annie Lengacher and Morgan Browning
28 - Crystal and Tory Doerksen
29 - Ardell and Donna Swartzendruber
31 - Lynn and Sherman Wenger

Happy Birthday

18 - Angela Birky Bohnert
18 - Martin Brotherton
19 - Caitlin Bay
20 - Elizabeth Grace-Mullett
20 - Le Shoemaker
21 - Ava Spragins
23 - Aggie Polak
24 - Rachel VanWagner
26 - Kelsie Dunn
26 - Brian Yoder Schlabach
27 - Greg Polizzotto
27 - Carol Reitmeyer
28 - Ardith Barnhorst
28 - Louise Carlsten
28 - Ethan Mullett
28 - James Stuckey Weber
31 - Grace Martin

Attendance

December 13

8:15 am Service: 11

9:30 am Service:

Adults - 250

Children - 65

Total -315

Our FMC Community

For a little extra enjoyment at Christmas:

~ "Celebration of Christmas" at 5:00 PM on Saturday, December 19, presented by Vicky Mierau and Faye Yoder. Reception follows in the Community Center.

~ Christmas Eve Wassail. All are invited to this annual FMC event immediately following the Christmas Eve service. Bring goodies to share. Beverages will be provided.

Thank you for your generosity! You provided \$1020 in grocery cards for our Head Start families and a few hats/mittens. Folks from Glennon Heights Mennonite provided additional hats and mittens for the families.

Pledge Update: We still want to hear from everyone regarding planned giving to FMC in 2010. As of December 17, the proposed 2010 budget is 80% pledged. Our goal is 85% pledged. If you have never pledged and would like to or if you are just behind in getting your information in, please let us know your plans for giving in 2010. Pledge forms can be found on the Welcome Table at the church or e-mail your pledge to Karen. Thank you!

Jr. High Snow Camp isn't far away! Mark your calendars for Jan. 22-24. Sponsors will coordinate transportation. Marie will contact you soon via email with more details.

Lost and Found. Check the table in the Community Center for any items you are missing.

FMC Directory Updates

Additions and Changes to the Main Section of Directory (white pages):

Jennifer Conder and Keith Wood

717 Clermont St.

Denver, CO 80220

Delete home phone. Cell phones remain the same.

Lisa Stauffer Mayen

Correction to cell phone number: 303-564-6791

Roger and Sherry White

4710 W. 3rd Ave.

Denver, CO 80219-1120

Roger's cell - 316-217-5514

Sherry's cell - 316-284-1281

E-mail for Roger & Sherry - huahatoya@yahoo.com

There will be no FMC Weekly December 24. The *Weekly* resumes December 31.

Two-service venture

by Pastors Annie and Vern

Background and rationale

For some time, we, your pastors, have been contemplating the possibility of trying two worship services on Sunday morning. Based on the 80% rule ["The 80% Rule: Fact or Fiction" and other articles ("Bad Math" and "Space Use and Numbers")] are available by contacting the church office], we are and have been "full" in worship for several years now. The rule of 80% makes the case that once available seating is generally 80% used, either new attenders

Sermon

December 13

There was no sermon on December 13 due to the Children's Christmas program. Hard copies of recent sermons are available in the literature rack in the Community Center.

Menno Focus

December issue of *Menno Focus* is available at www.fmcdenver.org/Newsletters or on the Welcome Table in the foyer.

Conference Connections

December issue of *Conference Connections* is available at on the Welcome Table in the foyer.

Emergency Closure

When weather or any other emergency event necessitates last minute cancellation of worship or other events here at FMC, the following procedure will be followed: 1) The cancellation will be posted on the FMC website. 2) A message will be left on the FMC Worship and Activities Line. Call 303-892-1038 and press 1 at the prompt. 3) Email will be sent to all known FMC email addresses. If you receive the email and know someone who does not have email, please call them to let them know. 4) If possible, we'll post the info on Channels 4, 7 & 9.

Links

For Mountain States Conference
www.MountainStatesMC.org

For Mennonite Church USA
www.MennoniteUSA.org

Contact Us

FMC General Mailbox
fmcdenver@aol.com

Market Square

If you want to sell, buy, trade, get a ride, find a roommate, find an employee, find a job, find sponsors, or advertise an event requiring purchase of tickets, this section is for you! Please e-mail your request to the church with "Market Square" in the subject line. It will be run one time. Deadline is midnight Wednesday.

stop coming or all attenders become less and less regular in attendance. We continue to have many new attenders. So we are experiencing the latter idea: less regular attendance. We are becoming an increasingly "part-time" congregation. From Sunday to Sunday, we see a very different congregation as we look out over the congregation. We invite you to consider whether or not you have noticed this as well. Are people opting more frequently to "take a break" or just stay at home for a Sunday or two? Do you see a fair number of different people each Sunday?

We are also experiencing an almost uncomfortable fullness in our Sunday morning worship service. It can from time to time feel like we're trying to do too much all at once for all people. We would like to venture the possibility of serving a bit greater diversity of worship sensibilities by trying to offer to worship services that have some shared "bones" but also will feel a bit different from each other: an early service that is a bit more on the contemplative side and a later service that is more interactive.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, when a worship event is chronically over-full, attenders can default to becoming more and more like spectators rather than strongly-connected participants in the worship time. We think that addressing this question of an over-80% full worship time is important as we continue to strengthen our sense of membership and ownership in what happens in church and particularly in the worship time.

Over the past several years, we have offered several alternative worship events that have had some measure of success but have not fully flourished into strong additions: Friday evening worship, Sunday morning "add-on" worship offered right before the main worship (like we are doing for Advent this year), and Wednesday evening worship. Currently, there is a periodic worship time that is a gathering of several young adult small groups, on Sunday evenings. But we think that it is worth trying yet another approach.

The details:

Having discussed this with the Leadership Council, and having given it considerable thought and time to mature as an idea, we would like to offer two morning services, one before and one after our education hour, for an exploratory period running from Lent 1, 2010 (Feb. 21) through the last Sunday of the education program (the 1st Sunday in June, 2010), except for Palm Sunday and Easter, when we would have only one service. (If we continued in the future with two services, we would propose that we still gather for one service on "high holy days" such as All Saints, All Earth/First Fruits Sunday, Christmas Program, Palm Sunday, and Easter, and possibly a music celebration Sunday in May. The second service would be suspended during the summer months.)

Morning outline with two services:

8:30 - 9:30 AM 1st service

9:45 - 10:45 AM Education hour (coffee/donuts 9:30 - 11:00 AM by Jr. Youth/MYF)

11:00 AM - Noon 2nd service

The worship commission would continue to provide leadership and logistical support of the second service. The first service would be lead primarily by a core group comprised of individuals that self-identified as having interest in an earlier service and through leadership selection with the pastors. This core group would also help with networking and encouraging individuals who might fit with the first service to begin attending this service.

The first service would be planned entirely by this core group and the

pastors, who would take leadership in coordinating between this core group and the worship commission in the initial start-up phase. However, it is our intent that the planning of both services, should this two-service pattern continue, be shifted beyond a core group and primarily located in an expanded worship commission.

Both pastors would participate in both services and the same sermon would be given at both services. We would attempt to both share and rotate responsibilities with in the two-service format as seems appropriate.

The impact on other commissions will need to be discussed with each commissioner. For example, in terms of ushering, we would collect an offering at each service. However, there would be no need for ushers at the first service, as there is no open sharing time, offering is taken to the front during communion, and traffic flow is not anticipated to be an issue (see columns below). The ushers/greeters scheduled for the second service would be in charge of counting both offerings. Details like this example would be negotiated with each commissioner.

We think it would improve the interest and provide better for multiple styles of worshipping sensibility to make the services somewhat different, while retaining similarities in sermons, childrens' story and quality of music. Here's how two services might look:

1st Service

"Tone" words: *Intra-active, introspective, spiritual, intra-dependent, contemplative*

- Children's story
- Sermon
- chimes, silence, confession
- smaller by default?
- serves a strong minority culture at FMC
- more early morning quiet energy
- no introit, but other child participation
- communion every service
- sharing but not open mike
- no offering of life
- tend toward more silence
- good strong hymns but more contemplative
- fewer "outside" presentations
- simpler worship "card"?
- bring \$ offering to front

2nd Service

"Tone" words: *Inter-active, extroverted, social, inter-dependent, verbal*

- Children's story
- Sermon
- no chimes, but a unison confession/affirmation reading
- tend to be larger?
- serves the historic majority culture at FMC
- more "prime time" worship energy
- introit with children
- periodic communion
- open mike sharing often be practiced
- offering of life
- tend toward more responsive reading
- good strong hymns with more "rippers"
- more "outside" connection presentations
- worship folder
- ushers receive \$ offering

Frequent concerns raised when congregations consider moving to two substantial services:

– We will not see each other on Sunday morning.

This is a leading concern. We go to church to be a community. In this regard, our pastoral perception is that people no longer all see each other now, and that it is a time in our congregation when people can successfully migrate together to a service in which their best friends will also be present, or they will see each other at the shared coffee time in between. We are also finding that the feeling that we don't know everyone is inevitable, a sign of integration of many new people, and that it is okay and a good thing for us to relate more to sub-groups. This creates new challenges for nurturing First Mennonite as a community because we become more a "community of communities." We think we can meet these challenges and be a strong and vital church body together through new communication patterns, and with periodic all-church shared worship events and meetings.

– We don't want to "get big."

Our goal would not be to become a "big" church, but rather to we wish to nurture the health of a congregation that involves increasing numbers of people in a way that maintains meaningful community connections in worship. This means we would not recommend moving toward a new facility with a larger worship space. We believe week to week worship happens best among people who know each other. We think two (initially) smaller service will meet this need for community better than trying to incorporate everybody and every worship sensibility into one large service.

– Won't we lose all the good energy of strong attendance at a single service?

This may be an issue with the later service, which is likely to be the one most folks attend and the service which is intended to be more energetic. But we think that 1) there are folks who prefer a quieter, more low-energy

service (see majority and minority culture notes above) and 2) that ultimately, there are plenty of folks around to serve the energies of both services. And since the early service would remain a bit simpler in it's structure, the focus on large numbers of musicians and so on would continue to only be in one service - the later service.

– Could we just plant a church or two to help with crowding?

This is a very healthy thing to do. However, the record of church planting is that it tends to improve both the health and attendance of the parent church and therefore does not address the question of numbers in worship. But we would be pleased to work with folks who would like to consider a church plant or participating in one of several church plants currently underway in the metro area, supported by the conference.

– Do we have enough people to lead two services?

Our experience is that we have more than enough musicians, artists, and other potential "up-front" leaders for two services. It will be extra work on Sunday morning for us as well, but we nevertheless think it is something important and valuable to try.

We look forward to working with the congregation as we try this new approach, seeking the health and joy of this wonderful worshipping community. And if it ultimately becomes clear that this approach is not a good path for the congregation, we will happily leave this idea behind and seek to discover other ways for providing a church home for all who would join together at FMC.

Pastors Annie and Vern

Around Mountain States Conference

Ten Thousand Villages, 2626 E Third Ave, presents Holiday Carols on Hammered Dulcimer performed by local musician Mary Ellen Garrett on Friday, December 18, from 4 - 6 PM. For more information, call the store at 303-316-8773.

Mennonite Church USA

Two prayers from Mennonite Mission Network:

- As college students and participants in Mennonite Voluntary Service and other short-term mission programs travel home for the holidays, pray for safety and that their time with family and friends will provide the rejuvenation necessary for them to joyfully return to complete their academic years and their service terms.
- The end of the year is a time of spiritual combat between the forces of life and death in many parts of the world. Pray that Mission Network personnel and our partners in more than 50 countries may work in life-giving ways.

Christmas Greeting from MEDA: “Over the last year, with your support, MEDA has been busy working with families in need around the world. From helping to create a banana cooperative in Peru, to creating access to treadle pumps for farmers in Zambia, and helping women develop their small businesses in Pakistan and Afghanistan, our work has been varied and successful. Thank you for the gift of enduring hope. If you would like further information, please visit our website www.meda.org or call Maureen Crawford at 1- 800 665-7026 x 50. Merry Christmas and blessings to all.