

*Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona*  
*Worship Service*  
*December 18, 2022, 10:30 am*

*“The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising  
God for all the things they had heard and seen.”*  
~ Luke 2: 20

**“SIGNS” AND WONDERS**  
**A Christmas Pageant**

Welcome  
Pre-School singing  
Call to worship  
Hymn **Come thou Long Expected Jesus** HWB 178

**Scene 1**  
Scripture Luke 2:1-7

**Scene 2**  
Hymn **Hark! The Harold Angels Sing** HWB 201  
Hymn **The First Noel** HWB 199  
Offering and instrumentals

**Scene 3**  
Hymn **O Little Town of Bethlehem** HWB 191  
Hymn **Oh, beautiful star of Bethlehem** STS 32  
Scripture Luke 2:8-16  
Hymn **Away in a Manger** HWB 194  
Hymn **Go Tell it on the Mountain** VT 252  
Sending blessing

There will be a short congregational meeting after the service

\*“Signs” and Wonders was written by Clare Schellenberg for Hope  
Mennonite Church in Winnipeg in 2016\*

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Worship will be led by the children in our Sunday school classes,  
aged 3-18. Music: Glenys Voth

**PRAYER & PRAISE CORNER**

- ~ **Hospitalized:** Mary Sawatzky and Joyce Loewen at the Altona Health Centre. Rey Schellenberg is at the Brandon Regional Health Centre.
- ~ **We praise God** for the safe location of Rey and give thanks for all the prayers that were offered on his behalf. -From the Schellenberg family.
- ~ **Anne Sawatzky** has now moved to Eastview, room 212.
- ~ **International witness:** Pray for the leadership of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia as they work with communities affected by ethnic conflicts and drought. Pray for Werner and Joanne De Jong, Witness workers at the Meserete Kristos Seminary, as they work to grow spiritual leaders from diverse regions in Ethiopia.
- ~ **We wish a happy birthday and God’s blessing to:**

Sharon Lynn Friesen	December 18
Jeanette Giesbrecht	December 22
Esme Ginter	December 23

**WORSHIP CALENDAR**

- November 27:** Advent 1 – Watch: The day is almost here
- December 4:** Advent 2 – Prepare the way of the Lord
- December 11:** Advent 3 – Tell what you hear and see
- December 18:** Advent 4 - Children’s Christmas program at 10:30 am
- December 24:** Candlelight service at 6:30 pm
- December 25:** Sing for Joy: Your God reigns
- January 1:** Welcoming the New Year
- January 8:** Worship with potluck brunch and conversation. Beginning at 9:30 am.

On Sunday January 8 we are integrating worship, fellowship and discernment! We will begin at 9:30 with a potluck brunch (bring brunch food to share such as egg dishes, pancakes, muffins, fruit, etc). Our worship time will include guest speaker Michael Pahl, director of Mennonite Church Manitoba. There will also be a time of conversation together, with our morning together concluding by noon. There will not be Sunday school on this day, children will be included in our worship and conversations.

## **FROM THE PASTOR – Mark Tiessen-Dyck**

Our church is part of the CARE Program with Recovery of Hope, which means that anyone from ABC can access counselling through the program and the cost will be covered. The way it works is that you call Recovery of Hope to make an appointment (1-866-493-6202), identify yourself as from Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church, and Recovery of Hope will send a confidential invoice to the church (the invoice does not include your name). Through our current arrangement, the church will cover the cost of 6 sessions per year per individual, couple, or family.

Even though the process is completely confidential, I encourage you to let Virginia or myself know if you do seek counseling so that we can hold you in our prayers and support you through your journey. This program has been underutilized in the last couple years. Yet it is one way that we support and care for one another in the church. We strive to be a community that shares one another's burdens. In this case, we also share the cost of counselling as a church so that finances will not be a barrier for anyone seeking help for life's journey.

This is a time of year, despite the celebrations and joy, when pain and sorrows rise to the surface. Counselling can be one way that we receive the healing Christ brings. Counselling has been a gift for me personally, and I encourage anyone else to consider it.

## **CALL TO WORSHIP LITANY:**

Leader: Yes, we wait... but we do so with purpose. Each week during Advent we wait by lighting an Advent candle...

**People: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love**

Leader: Four flames, four sparks, four prayers, four thoughts

**People: Hope Peace Joy and Love**

Leader: May this story we tell this morning inspire us all to a deeper expression and longing

**People: of Hope peace joy and love**

Leader: For ourselves, our homes, our neighbourhoods, and this world which we all share. AMEN.

## **CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**There will be no children's coin** offering this Sunday. The children will all be busy with the Christmas program.

**There will be no noon hour** sermon discussion Dec. 20 or 27.

**Part of the process of calling a pastor** is affirming the work done by leaders and committees in the church who have discerned on behalf of the congregation. While Church Council strongly recommends Terrell Wiebe for a part-time role as a pastor primarily to youth in our church, God's call must finally be discerned by the whole church. Following our weekend of getting to know Terrell everyone will have the opportunity to affirm the work of our Church Council and endorse the invitation to Terrell through a vote. **Voting will take place at a special church meeting following today's worship service.** Everyone who is currently engaged in the life of our church is welcome to participate by voting.

**Pastor and office hours** over the Christmas holidays:

The church office will be closed Dec 26 -28.

Pastor Virginia will be on vacation from Dec 26 – Jan 2.

Pastor Mark will be off Dec 22 and 23 and taking some additional time off between Dec 26 – Jan 2.

Year-end donations should be handed in by December 30 at 12 noon to the office or dropped off at Laurie Enns' home. Otherwise, they will be receipted for next year.

**Mitten Tree:** You are welcome to donate mittens, toques and scarves to our mitten trees on either side of the East doors to the foyer. We will send some to "Share the warmth" Altona and others to places of need in Winnipeg

## **CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTINUED:**

**An announcement from Al Friesen**, Church Council Chair: An "early" thanks from Finance for your continued support of the operation of, and financial encouragement of Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church Outreach ministry. The 2022 outreach represents approx 115,000.00 or 20 % of our annual expenditures. Based on your direction, this provides much needed financial support for MCI, MDS, MCC, Eden Mental Health Foundation, Gardens on Tenth Chaplaincy programs, Camps with Meaning, Mennonite Church Manitoba and YFC The Station. At this point of the calendar year, while we are approximately \$30,000 behind our traditional rate of outreach contribution, it's also our experience that our congregation responds generously at year end. On behalf of Finance and Treasurer Laurie Enns, thank you for considering a year end boost for the financial well being and outreach of ABC. Donations can be dropped off at the church office or at Laurie's home: 168 Elmcrest Dr.

## **COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**The Altona Palliative Care Volunteer Team** is hosting a Longest Night Memorial Service on Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 pm at the Altona United Church. All are welcome in a service to remember lost loved ones.

**Come to Bethlehem: an MCI Christmas** - Mennonite Collegiate Institute invites you to join us in Buhler Hall for our Christmas concert on December 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 pm (doors open at 7:00). It will be an evening of music from our choirs & bands as we celebrate the Christmas season. The evening will also be livestreamed on our YouTube channel.

**Merry Christmas from YFC Altona!** We are looking for food donations for our Christmas party, and when we are open during the Christmas break. We are looking for food donations (food items or gift cards) baking, appetizers, meal items are all appreciated. Our Christmas party will be Dec. 22. Call 204 304 6521 or email [stationyfc@gmail.com](mailto:stationyfc@gmail.com) Thank you!

**Christmas Day Dinner Committee** – Angelika Stoesz: Hello Christmas Day Dinner Sponsors! We are pleased to announce that there will be Christmas Day Dinner again this year. We have appreciated your support all these years, and are hoping for your help again in 2022. The dinner will be on December 25 from 11:30 am till 2 pm at the Rhineland Pioneer Centre. If you would like to volunteer in one of the following areas (Shift one: prep, Shift two: serving, shift three: cleanup), please call Angelika at 204 324-8139. **You can make donations to the meal in the church foyer on December 11 and 18.** You can also bring donations to the church office or you may call 204 324-8139 to make the donation.

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[abchurchcommunity.ca](http://abchurchcommunity.ca) **Facebook:** ABC community **Lead Pastor:** Mark Tiessen-Dyck, 324-5990, (C) 1-204-771-3406, [marktd@abchurch.ca](mailto:marktd@abchurch.ca)

**Assoc. Pastor:** Virginia Gerbrandt Richert, cell 304-6119 [virginiagr@abchurch.ca](mailto:virginiagr@abchurch.ca)

