

*Welcome to the  
Bergthaler Mennonite Church  
of Altona*

*May 10, 2020*



*Thank you to our Mothers*

**BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH OF ALTONA  
WORSHIP SERVICE**

**May 10, 2020**

*“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” ~ John 14: 6-7*

**Sermon:** Mark Tiessen-Dyck

**Worship Leader:** Craig Neufeld

**Children’s Story:** Kristin Falk

**Music:** Anne Friese, Verna Heinrichs, Dave Wiebe

**Sound Techs:** Andrew Rempel, Ben Dueck

Our guiding scripture for today’s time of worship: **John 14:1-14.**

Our worship service will be posted to [abchurch.libsyn.com](http://abchurch.libsyn.com) [Audio]  
[abchurchcommunity.ca](http://abchurchcommunity.ca) [Video] first thing Sunday morning.

**PRAYER & PRAISE CORNER**

- ~ **Hospitalized:** Anne Kehler at Altona Health Centre.
- ~ **Mennonite Church Canada**  
**Pray:** Uncertain futures for young adults. As borders are closed and travel is restricted, pray for young adult children of Witness workers who are separated from parents at a time of uncertainty and anxiety. Pray for those dealing with job losses and uncertain futures. Pray that God will be near to them and that our family of faith will come be near to them.
- ~ **Church closures** in China affect salaries of staff - The closure of churches in China due to COVID-19 has had devastating financial effects on several large congregations that have worked with Mennonite Partners in China for decades. With no opening dates in sight even though other aspects of life are starting to get back to normal, church staff are taking drastic reductions in salary and making difficult decisions about selling property. Pray that God will give wisdom and peace in this difficult time.

## **Sr & Jr YOUTH**

- Youth group will meet on a bi-weekly basis on Zoom with the next gathering Sunday, **May 17**. But be on the lookout for texts or phone calls from Pastor Josh!

## **CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- This Sunday we are planning a Sermon Response Discussion time by zoom at **11:15 am**. This will be a time for us to engage the scripture and sermon more deeply. See the mid-week email attachment for more info. Watch/listen to the worship service beforehand and join using this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88931116582>
- **During** this time of separation, if you or a loved one is hospitalized, struggling, or in need of some pastoral care, please be in touch with Mark or Virginia.
- **Previous videos** of worship services are available on our website [abchurchcommunity.ca](http://abchurchcommunity.ca). Click 'videos' to access older recordings.
- **Though** the church doors remain closed, the church continues to operate. We will continue to strive to meet our financial obligations. Please continue your giving. Here are ways you can continue giving:
  - Dropped off at Don & Grace Fehr, 38 Sunflower Crescent. A mailbox is located on the front porch...Just drop it in and ring the doorbell - No cash please.
  - Mailed to the church. We still pick up the mail on a regular basis. 117nd Street NW Altona, MB R0G 0B1.
  - Electronic transfer - If you have not already set this up, Call Don & Grace Fehr 204-324-5908.

## **COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Mennonite Church Manitoba** [www.mennochurch.mb.ca](http://www.mennochurch.mb.ca) 896-1616

- The Anabaptist Story Lives On: Virtual Museum & Archive Tour 7pm on Tuesday evenings in May & June, join archivists and executive directors from Anabaptist and Mennonite museums, archives, and heritage centres across North America for 20-minute presentations followed by Q&A. **May 12, 7pm** join Conrad Stoesz, archivist at Mennonite Heritage Archives in Winnipeg, Manitoba, as he talks about the importance of story. More info at [www.tourmagination.com/vtour/](http://www.tourmagination.com/vtour/) or register at [https://bit.ly/Anabaptist\\_vtour](https://bit.ly/Anabaptist_vtour). Hosted by TourMagination.
- The MCM Executive Minister Search Committee - will be interviewing Executive Minister candidates in late May, checking references and then discerning our recommendation to the MCM Board. Pray that God's Spirit will guide the entire process and the choice that is made.

### **Mennonite Church Canada** – [office@mennochurch.ca](mailto:office@mennochurch.ca) 888-6781

- Mount Royal Mennonite Church from Saskatoon, Sask., welcomes you to join their worship service this coming Sunday, May 10. They are working through a series on Everyday Jesus Spirituality, and this

coming Sunday focuses on the spiritual practice of blessing as we consider Genesis 18:1-15 and Matthew 5:3-11. Val Regier will lead us in worship along with a music team led by Darrell Bueckert. Claire Ewert Fisher will encourage us to consider our role in blessing. [www.mennonitechurch.ca/worshipservices](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/worshipservices)

### **Mennonite Collegiate Institute** – [info@mciblues.net](mailto:info@mciblues.net) 327-5891

### **Canadian Mennonite University** – [www.cmu.ca](http://www.cmu.ca)

- CMU High School Essay Contest: CMU is inviting high school students to reflect on three possible questions, including whether we should be concerned if our phones are listening to us? Check out all essay question topics/details. Enter by May 5 to be eligible to win cash and CMU tuition credit. [cmu.ca/docs/enrolment/CMU Essay Contest.pdf](http://cmu.ca/docs/enrolment/CMU_Essay_Contest.pdf)
- Online Webinars: CMU's Admissions Department is offering information webinars online every Wednesday at 2pm. These webinars are designed particularly for prospective students and their parents. Go to [cmu.ca/campuvisit](http://cmu.ca/campuvisit) for webinar information.
- CMU's Canadian School of Peacebuilding (CSOP) is offering three fully online courses this spring including: Leading in an Age of Polarization, Does Religion Cause Violence? and Reconciling Stories: Indigenous Laws and Lands. Go to [csop.cmu.ca](http://csop.cmu.ca) for details and to register.

### **Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba** – [Manitoba@mccmb.ca](mailto:Manitoba@mccmb.ca)

- Kids try out one of MCC's recipes and make sure mom has a day off! Try Bonbon Siwo - Haitian gingerbread, mango chutney with a side of radical kindness or a tea to soothe and replenish - Te jenjanm. Find more of MCC's recipes at [tiny.cc/Covid-19-Resources](http://tiny.cc/Covid-19-Resources).
- Spring Fest 2020 has been cancelled this year due to the coronavirus. If you would like to learn about how you can support Spring Fest and contribute to MCC's work in light of COVID-19 please visit [tiny.cc/SpringFest2020](http://tiny.cc/SpringFest2020).
- MCC is prepared to address the threats of COVID-19 on some of the world's most vulnerable communities. Learn more about our work by watching this video [tiny.cc/MCC-is-prepared](http://tiny.cc/MCC-is-prepared).
- It's time to colour! Kids can learn about MCC's history and mission as they colour MCC's Centennial colouring book. Download it here at [mccanada.ca/media/resources/10546](http://mccanada.ca/media/resources/10546). Find more exciting resources and videos to keep you busy at [tiny.cc/Covid-19-Resources](http://tiny.cc/Covid-19-Resources).

### **Mennonite Disaster Service** -

- There are no current volunteer needs. MDS has canceled all scheduled summer projects due to health/safety concerns related to COVID-19.

Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona 117 2<sup>ND</sup> Street NW Altona, MB R0G 0B1

Web Page Address: [abchurchcommunity.ca](http://abchurchcommunity.ca) Office: 324-6717 E-mail: [office@abchurch.ca](mailto:office@abchurch.ca)

Worship Services available online at: [abchurch.libsyn.com](http://abchurch.libsyn.com)

Lead Pastor: Mark Tiessen-Dyck, 324-5990/cell 1-204-771-3406 [marktd@abchurch.ca](mailto:marktd@abchurch.ca)

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

Children's Ministry Coordinator: Amanda Wiens, 324-6719 [amandaw@abchurch.ca](mailto:amandaw@abchurch.ca)

Associate Pastor of Youth Ministry: Josh Janzen, 324-6717, 1-402-631-3481 [joshi@abchurch.ca](mailto:joshi@abchurch.ca)

## **From the Pastor**

### **A Tribute to My Moms and Mennonite Central Committee – by**

**Mark Tiessen-Dyck**

A month ago the church received an email from MCC Manitoba which included a video with Executive Director Darryl Loewen sharing words of thanks and encouragement and explaining how MCC is responding to the COVID – 19 pandemic. I was genuinely blessed by this message and renewed in my gratitude for MCC and its ministry happening around the world on our behalf and *in the name of Christ* (an important motto of MCC).

I am also filled with gratitude as I contemplate MCC's centennial. It was 100 years ago that Mennonites in Canada and the United States organized to provide food and relief to the Mennonites who were suffering the effects of war and starvation in Russia. Over the years MCC has become a dynamic organization that works around the world in responding to disasters, working for development, promoting peace and justice all *in the name of Christ*. Perhaps more than any other Mennonite organization, MCC is supported by a broad constituency of Mennonite churches. MCC is a grassroots organization reflected in the countless thrift stores across Canada and the United States, including the first one right here in Altona, started in part by our own Sara Stoesz. Myriad people are part of MCC: the thrift store volunteer, the blanket sewer, the school or hygiene kit assembler, the child who collects coins for Sunday School offering, and the staff and service workers across the globe.

All of my mothers are part of MCC. My living grandmother, Helen Epp, continues to volunteer at MCC's Material Resource Centre in Kitchener-Waterloo and every year blesses her family with "living gifts" that support the work of MCC. I also remember her initiating school kit assembly lines at our family Christmas gatherings. My deceased grandmother, Nellie Tiessen, volunteered at Leamington's MCC thrift shop for a few decades. During our growing up years, visits to see Oma—one of the primary clothes sorters and pricers—would include an all-access-after-hours-pass to the thrift store for all the grandkids and family. This included exploring the back rooms and returning with treasures and inevitably some junk too. Little did I know as a child the connection

this experience had to the work MCC does around the world. My mother-in-law continues to be a prolific blanket maker for Winkler's MCC thrift store. Her connections at the thrift store secured us the crib our babies slept in.

This Mother's Day, I'm grateful for the immeasurable contributions my mom, Esther Epp-Tiessen, has made to MCC. My mom is a person of deep faith and love for God which has been expressed in her lifetime of work for MCC. This includes being Country Representative (with dad) in the Philippines, working for MCC Ontario in responding to violence against women, leading MCC Canada's peace program, writing the history of MCC in Canada, and working in advocacy for MCC's Ottawa Office. As I write this, I notice my wedding ring which was purchased second hand so as not to support the gold mining industry; Melissa and I made this decision as a direct impact of my mom's work with MCC on mining justice in response to the devastating impacts gold mining companies were having on communities in Central America. I love my moms and I love that they love MCC.

I consider it an amazing honour to be part of the MCC story in a number of ways. All of my great-grandparents, and the child who would be my grandfather, came to Canada from Russia in the 1920s with the assistance of MCC. I was born in the Philippines during the time that my parents were MCC country representatives there. I managed an MCC thrift store (admittedly a role for which I was poorly suited). I have shopped many times at MCC thrift stores and found my share of great deals. I have cooked and eaten many recipes from the MCC cookbooks, especially More with Less. And while I'll admit that some recipes may be better categorized as 'less with less', and I've generally doubled all spices when cooking from More with Less, the biblical value of simplicity reflected in the book continues to be important in our family. Living and eating simply is one way we seek first the Kingdom of God.

As a pastor at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, I got to know many people who owed their very lives to MCC. This church originated as a ministry to Mennonites who were arriving in Canada as refugees who first fled their homes in Russia during World War II. It was due to the heroic efforts of MCC workers, Peter and Elfrieda Dyck that so many were able to escape Europe and come to Canada and Paraguay (see Peter and Elfrieda's book, Up From the Rubble,

to hear this story). In my time at Sargent, people shared their stories of this experience with me; stories of survival, desperation, and perseverance so profound I will never be the same. I had the honour of preaching at the funeral of Mrs. Sawatzky, a woman whose husband was taken away and who had to flee her home with her four young children, eventually arriving in Canada with her children after years as a refugee.

My place in the MCC story was cemented when I served in Zambia with the Serving and Learning Together program. In Zambia I witnessed the impact that MCC has in digging wells so people have access to clean water, initiating peace clubs in schools, partnering with local churches and organizations. In Zambia, and around the world, MCC is making it possible for children to go to school. It seems like a truism when we tell our kids, in the midst of their complaining about school, how so many children in the world want nothing more than to go to school. But it is true. At the school where I taught, MCC sponsored many students whose families could not afford to send them to school. In addition to teaching, I had the opportunity to interview these youth, as well as children from other schools, and write their stories for MCC newsletters. I visited schools in desperate need of resources, desks, and textbooks. I also witnessed the life changing impacts of education. Various articles I've read over the years have also noted that education—especially for girls because they face greater barriers to schooling—is one of the ways we can change the world. Educating girls has enumerable benefits such as; providing economic opportunities for individuals and communities; fostering healthier lives for women, children, families, and communities; increasingly environmental sustainability while reducing the impacts of climate change; and promoting peace while reducing violence against women. Shortly after my departure from Zambia, MCC helped to build a dormitory for girls at my school. This helps girls to stay in school longer, decrease the danger posed by inadequate accommodations, and fosters a superior learning environment. Our family has maintained a connection to MCC Zambia by being Global Family sponsors (while MCC no longer uses the name Global Family, its work in education continues) and I have no doubt that this is one of the best places our resources can be shared.

In attempting to articulate how the experience of serving in Zambia has impacted me, I realized I could not do this neatly. That's because the experience has become so deeply part of me it can't be disentangled. It's like gum stuck in your hair. I do know that this is the time when I began exploring my call to ministry and when my faith galvanized. And, during my time in Zambia I gained a mom, Esther Kalambo. She was my host mom and is now a principle figure in my cloud of witnesses. On my second day at her home, she noticed my incessant trips to the bathroom (traveller's diarrhea) and made a clandestine call to the doctor to make sure everything was okay. A few months later when I awoke in a fury of nausea and vomiting, she cleaned up the mess, had the doctor come in the middle of the night, and nursed me back to health in the next days. Mrs. Kalambo adopted nephews and nieces who were orphaned, was a volunteer chaplain at the local hospital, a leader in the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia, and an advocate for justice in her community. She lived and shared her faith in Jesus daily and was one of the most compassionate and caring individuals I've known. She died in a car accident a few years after I left Zambia, but her simple faith and her deep walk with the Lord will never be forgotten. Mrs Kalambo taught me that while we can't all be mothers or be mothers to all, we can be mothering. I aspire to this Godly character.

There are organizations that we value and support. But then there are organizations that we have a deeper relationship with; our identity is somehow wrapped up in them. For me, MCC is not just an organization I support, but it is my organization. If for some reason MCC ceased to exist, it wouldn't be a dilemma of finding new organizations to support, but a part of me would die too. As I reflect on MCC's 100 years of exemplary and broad ranging efforts, the opportunity I've had to be part of MCC's work, the impact MCC has had on me, and the possibility of another century of work *In the name of Christ*, I am brought to tears.

One of my hopes for the church is that we continue to support MCC, that people from our church serve with MCC, and that there continue to be great finds at the thrift store.

In gratitude for moms, for MCC, and for Jesus in whose name we serve,  
Mark