

BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH of ALTONA

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023, 10:30 AM

"But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells."

2 Peter 3:13

How will we know ... what now?

Gathering in God's presence

Welcome & Announcements

Hymn Bless'd be the God of Israel VT 223

Call to Worship and Prayer

Hymn Hope is a Candle VT 211

Prayer for the Offering

Offering

Hearing God's word

Children's Story

Drama

Scripture 2 Peter 3:8-15

Sermon The Problem with Time

Responding in Faith

Hymn Poor of the Earth VT 213 Vs. 1-3

Prayer for the Church and the World

Candle Lighting and Benediction

Hymn Oh How Shall I Receive Thee VT 215

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Reflection: What is one thing you will do while you wait this week?

Sermon: Mark Tiessen-Dyck **Worship Leading:** Jolene Friesen-Stoesz

Music: Flying Free **Children's Story:** Amanda Wiens

Drama: Jolene and Jacob Friesen-Stoesz

WORSHIP CALENDAR

Advent: Our theme for Advent this year is **How will we know?** Each week we will ask this question and expand on it as we watch, wait, discern and trust that we will know when we know.

Dec. 3 Advent 1- How will we know . . . how long?, Communion.

Dec. 10 Advent 2- How will we know . . . what now?

Dec. 17 Advent 3- How will we know . . . what's next?

Dec. 24 Advent 4- 10:30 am- Children's Christmas program.

Dec. 25 10:30 am- Christmas Day worship.

FROM THE PASTOR: Terrell Wiebe

I am an avid disc golfer (frisbee golf) who not only plays regularly but also follows the professional tour. Yes, it is a real sport with real money! Over the last couple of years, the tour and the wider recreational disc golf community have come under fire for being an unwelcoming community for certain people. I admit that when I first heard this my hackles were raised. I had made many good friends through disc golf and experienced nothing but welcome. It was hard for me to believe that this would not be the case for everyone else. Eventually I listened to stories from women, people of colour, and 2SLGBTQ+ folks who had experienced the community as anything but welcoming. It is taking a while to sink in that my own good experience does not negate the need for the disc golf community to improve its welcome so that all can have good experiences.

I was reminded of our need to understand what we cannot experience for ourselves earlier this week when I read about The Mosquito; a wall mounted speaker that blares a constant, high-pitched ringing noise – but one that only teenagers and young adults can hear. Anyone over age 25 is supposed to be immune because, basically, their ear cells have started to die off. Some historical cities employ The Mosquito to keep areas clear of young people, dogs, and anything else that they think might diminish the feel of the area. Other cities use them in parks to stop teenagers from loitering or vandalism.

If one of these speakers were installed in an Altona neighbourhood, most of us would be blissfully unaware of the pain and irritation that a certain part of the population would experience just by walking through. Would we be able to empathize with the younger crowd? Would we hear their stories of pain and act to remedy the cause, even though we could not experience it?

Where in our community and in our society are there metaphorical Mosquito speakers – by that I mean elements of society and our government systems that make life difficult for specific groups and tell them they are not welcome while many of us remain blissfully unaware. Does our church have any? Can we be convinced that others experiences are valid and true, even if they are different than our own?

As he journeyed, Jesus was constantly stopping to listen to the experiences of the people no one else wanted to hear from. Foreign women and blind men were all attended to by Jesus, even though the crowds and his own disciples urged him to move on. Can we attend to the stories of others as Jesus did?

Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona

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CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

We wish a happy birthday and God's blessing to:

Joanna Ginter- December 15

Thank you to Sophia and Jolene Friesen-Stoesz for the beautiful Advent visuals.

Calling all singers: There will be a volunteer choir for the Christmas morning worship service! Please meet in the sanctuary at 9:45 Dec. 25.

This week at ABC:

Sun. Dec.10, 9:15-10:15 am- Sunday school for all ages.

Tues. Dec. 12, 10:30 am- Coffee with the church staff.

Wed. Dec. 13, 6-8 pm- Gr. 7-12 Youth Christmas Potluck Banquet! Bring a finger food item to share for the meal. Christmas activities and games also.

Wed. Dec. 13- Ventures is done for 2023! See you in January.

Thur. Dec. 14, 2 pm- Book study at Gardens on Tenth.

Children's Christmas program practices will be on:

Tuesday Dec 12: 3:45-5, Friday Dec 15: 3:45-5, Sunday Dec 17: 9:15-10:15

Prayer and Praise:

Hospitalized: Bernard Wiebe and Ben Dyck at the Altona Health Centre.

Thank you to Pastor Terrell and the youth for the basement and foyer Advent decorations!

From Al Friesen, Church Council Chair: Thank you for your attendance at our recent fall meeting. It was a welcome opportunity to hear of some the happenings in our church. For those unable to attend, the discussion included: A review of our most recent blanket exercise ceremony, the upcoming Advent season theme "How will we know", reporting on our Youth playing a spirited game of "sardines", an example of the wood craft completed by our Ventures, how the Community meal is striking a positive chord, and a look ahead at an invitation from the community at Matheson Island to grow a relationship with ABC Youth and Adults. We also had some meaningful discussion on the current revenue shortfall and how that will potentially impact the operation of ABC and our outreach program in the community and beyond. ABC Treasurer Laurie Enns shared a year-to-date financial report and has some additional donation information in this bulletin. Minutes were taken of the get together and are available for review from Ang in the administration office.

End of year donations: You may etransfer, bank online or send/drop off a cheque either to the office or to Laurie's house - 168 Elmcrest drive. For assistance in etransfer and online donations please call or text Laurie Enns at 204.981.4248. The deadline for 2023 donations is **Sunday, December 31st.**

Please note: the church office will be open Friday, December 29th until noon.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

International Witness: Christmas cancelled! This year, the churches in the land of Jesus' birth have agreed that festive seasonal decorations and events are inappropriate given the horrors of war and ethnic cleansing in Gaza and in the West Bank (see this news article from Sojourners magazine - <https://sojo.net/articles/christmas-canceled-bethlehem-say-palestinian-christians>). Our siblings in faith suffer immense grief over friends and loved ones killed or injured, uncertainty about the future, and economic devastation related to the war—especially in Bethlehem, which is dependent on Christmas tourism. The [Mennonite Church Canada Palestine Israel Network](#) calls our churches and households to two actions of solidarity: 1) extinguish the Christmas lights for times of lament and intercession for the people of Israel and Palestine; and 2) write or phone your MP to ask our government to support an immediate ceasefire and a resumption of negotiations toward a long-term peace based on justice. For prayer and action resources, go to mennonitechurch.ca/pin

MCC: "Pray for us." MCC laments the violence and mourns all lives lost in Palestine and Israel. We recently asked Palestinian Christians what they want Christians from around the world to know about Palestine and Israel, in light of the conflict in Gaza. To view their video, check out this link: [The Christian church in Palestine is small but resilient. Here are some of their thoughts for brothers and sisters in the West.](#)

Youth for Christ needs more baking for their breakfast program at Miller. They bring 100-140 baked items every Wednesday and their stock is running low. If this is something that interests you, please let them know, or you can stop in. Someone is typically in the office between 9am-4pm during the week, but feel free to call or email to ensure someone is in. Thank you! You can email Kendra at kendra.fehr@yfc.ca.

Mennonite Church Manitoba weekly congregational profile:

Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach has the opportunity to live out its name and enact the grace of God in their church-rich community. People who are willing to give their crumbling faith a last try find they are welcomed with all their questions, doubts, fears, and disappointments. They find a faith community that is willing to bend with them as they seek to respond to large issues in our world and catch glimmers of hope together. They also have a large number of young families joining them and together they seek to understand and live out their faith in a God who calls us to put our love for God into action. Pray for them during upcoming transitions. Long-time pastor Mel Letkeman is retiring, and Kathy Koop is joining as interim pastor in the New Year. They will also begin a consultation process, talking about who they are and where God is leading them.