

BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH of ALTONA

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023, 10:30 AM

John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

John 1:23

How will we know ... what's next?

Gathering in God's presence

Welcome & Announcements

Hymn We come VT 225

Call to Worship and Prayer

Hymn Poor Of The Earth VT 213

Prayer for the Offering

Offering

Hearing God's Word

Children's Story

Drama

Scripture John 1: 6-8, 19-27

Sermon Reframing The Question: Encountering What Is Next

Responding in Faith

Hymn What Child Is This? VT 267

Prayer for the Church and the World

Candle Lighting and Benediction

Hymn Hark! The Herald Angels Sing VT 247

* * * * *

Reflection: What is a question that you have been sitting with?

Sermon: Terrell Wiebe Worship Leading: Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

Music: ABC Ensemble Children's Story: Kristin Falk

Drama: Tom and Gail Braun

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. Speaker: Mark. Volunteer choir

FROM THE PASTOR: Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

When we hear of wars and fighting around the world our lives can seem so far away from the conflict, and our actions so hopeless. Recently the Mennonite Action movement was started as one source of hope.

Mennonite Action is a movement of Mennonites from Canada and the US who are taking bold, public action to stop war and end the occupation of Palestine. (www.mennoniteaction.org) From what I understand this group was formed after the violence erupted on October 7, 2023. They are building on the historic peace church tradition of Mennonites and Anabaptists and are renewing the vision of Mennonite peacemaking. This is based on the belief that the good news of Jesus is that he came among us to proclaim good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4) And that Jesus has invited us into this good news, to join with him in the liberation of all people. They say our voices are needed in the public sphere now because our responsibility extends beyond simply non-participation in war, but non-participation in oppressive institutions and nations that support war.

Mennonite Action's immediate goal is a ceasefire, and their long-term goal is a political solution that brings about a lasting peace. Their strategy is to put public pressure on our elected officials to support a ceasefire. They have planned Action hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays where people gather on zoom to get tips and support for how to engage and talk to elected officials on this topic. Then they collectively leave zoom and make their calls. This does not require people to even leave their homes, but it does take effort, willingness, and a desire to work for peace.

I invite you to think about what brings you hope in the midst of stories of war, and what you can do to live out Jesus' call to be peacemakers.

Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona

Web Page Address: abchurchcommunity.ca **Office:** 324.6717

E-mail: office@abchurch.ca **Facebook:** ABC community

Worship Services available online at: abchurchcommunity.ca

Lead Pastor: Mark Tiessen-Dyck, 324.5990, C 204.771.3406, marktd@abchurch.ca

Assoc. Pastor: Virginia Gerbrandt Richert, C 304-6119 viriniagr@abchurch.ca

Associate Pastor of Youth Ministries: Terrell Wiebe, 204.216.0058,

C 204.417.8200, terrellw@abchurch.ca

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The church office will be closed December 25-27. Pastor Virginia and Ang will be in the office, regular hours from December 28-29. Pastor Mark and Pastor Terrell will be taking time off between December 25 - January 1.

Book Study in the new year! The book study group plans to continue with a new book in January; *Walking Together: Intercultural Stories of Love and Acceptance* by Edith and Neill von Gunten. Thursday afternoons at 2 pm. If you would like to join, please let Virginia or Ang know by Dec 29.

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.

End of year donations: You may e-transfer, bank online or send/drop off a cheque either to the office or to Laurie's house - 168 Elmcrest drive. For assistance in e-transfer 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.

This week at ABC:

Sun. Dec. 17, 9:15-10:15 am- Sunday school for all ages.

Tues. Dec. 19, 10:30 am- Coffee with the church staff.

Youth programs are done for 2023.

Book Study is complete for 2023.

Prayer and Praise:

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

Joyce Friesen- December 17, Jeanette Giesbrecht- December 22,
Esme Ginter- December 23

Congratulations to Ryan Alex and Rachel Wahl on a momentous 20 year wedding anniversary on December 20!

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

Mennonite Church Manitoba weekly congregational profile:

Glenlea Mennonite Church is located south of Winnipeg, just off on Highway 75 on Glenlea Road. They are a small, multi-generational congregation that offers children's and adult Sunday school and church services which are held on Sunday mornings. They have groups that volunteer in various mission-based activities, and they care deeply about the needs of people close to home and around the world. They enjoy singing and worshipping together on Sunday mornings, and fellowshiping together anytime, especially when food is involved! Please hold them in prayer as they continue to discern the ways in which God is calling them as a "country church" and a "commuter church" to love their neighbours near and far.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Many of the community announcements have posters in the lobby for more extensive information.

Climate Action: Please pray for the international community gathered in Dubai at COP 28 - for decisions that serve the vulnerable and enlivened vision for a world no longer dependent on fossil fuels. Pray for activists and diplomats and lobbyists and leaders to be moved by God's Spirit! To organize or find a prayer vigil near you, check out <https://fortheLoveofCreation.ca/cop28-unite-act-deliver/>

CMU: The 2024 John and Margaret Friesen Lecture Series begins Thursday, January 18. Titled "Revisiting the Mennonite Experience in Ukraine," the two presentations will feature Dr. Nataliya Venger, Professor of History and Chair of the World History Department at the Dnipropetrovsk University of Ukraine. Visit cmu.ca/friesenlectures for more information.

MCI: MCI invites you to Buhler Hall on Dec. 21 at 7:30 pm for a Christmas Concert! Come hear our choirs and join us in singing the Hallelujah Chorus as we celebrate our Saviour's birth together! Doors open at 7:00.

Mennonite Collegiate Institute invites applicants for a High School Science Teacher. This is a term position for the 2nd semester (February – June) of the 2023-2024 school year with the potential of permanent status. Please send a resume and cover letter or any questions you have to principal Jennifer Klippenstein at jenniferklippenstein@mciblues.net.

The Longest Night Memorial Service will be held on Thursday Dec. 21st at 7pm at the Altona Mennonite Church. If you are grieving the loss of a family member, friend, or any other loss, you are invited to attend this quiet night of remembrance and candle-lighting, hosted by Altona and District Palliative Care Volunteer Team.

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.