

FROM THE PASTOR: Mark Tiessen-Dyck

BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH of ALTONA

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023, 10:30 AM

"Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come." Mark 13:33

How will we know ... how long?

Gathering in God's presence

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship and Prayer

Hymn Here I am to Worship VT 227

Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus VT 218

Prayer for the Offering, the Church and the World

Offering

Hearing God's word

Children's story

Drama

Scripture Mark 13:24-37

Sermon Waiting on God

Responding in Faith

Communion

Hymn Poor of the Earth VT 213 vs. 1,2

Candle Lighting and Benediction

Hymn We Come VT 225

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Reflection: Think of a time when God was with you while you waited

Sermon: Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

Worship Leading: Melissa Tiessen-Dyck

Music: Laurie Enns and Tamara Franz

Children's Story: Sharon Friesen **Drama:** Byron and Ang Loepky

Everyone is welcome to participate in Communion by sharing the bread and cup. We will share Communion in small groups together at the front of the sanctuary. If you are not able to travel to the front of the sanctuary, we will serve you where you are seated. Further instructions will be given verbally. Gluten free bread is available in the paper cups on each plate.

Wine is red. Juice is clear.

A couple weeks ago I attended an event called "Returning Wealth—Land Reparations and the Church". It was planned by the Mennonite Coalition on Indigenous Solidarity and held at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship. The event was well attended (close to 150 people) with people from most Mennonite Church Manitoba Churches (and many other churches) in attendance. The purpose of this gathering was to explore what it could look like for churches to act toward repairing the harms that the colonization of our country has caused Indigenous communities.

The keynote speaker, Sarah Augustine, an Indigenous and Mennonite person from Washington State, shared this thought experiment: You are a guest in someone's home and behave recklessly and break a precious vase which had been a family heirloom. What would it look like to make reparations? Buying a replacement vase at the dollar store? Definitely not. Gluing the broken pieces back together as best you can? Not really. How to repair the harm done would need to be determined by the person who lost the vase. Conversations would need to happen. Relationships maintained and developed. Imagination cultivated.

Such is the opportunity before people and churches committed to repentance, righting past wrongs, and reconciliation. At the event we heard from churches that are working at reparations through relationships and financial commitments such as: granting the use of church facilities to Indigenous groups without cost, walking with the Bear Clan, involvements in Thunderbird House, and committing a percentage of the church's budget to Indigenous organizations and/or reparations funds.

Our church's participation in a Blanket Exercise was part of this movement toward reconciliation. This experience helped us to visualize and comprehend a history and reality we may have heard about but not yet grappled with. This in turn could open our hearts and our imaginations.

This is difficult subject matter and we are unsettled when we are confronted with a history that implicates our people in societal sins and names that we have benefited from these sins. Despite this, the event reminded me that this conversation and process is one of hope. Emotions of guilt, despair, and our natural defensiveness arise, but more importantly this is an opportunity to be part of a different future and a better story. I'm grateful to God for the opportunity to share and live in this hope.

Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona

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CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Terrell and Glenys Voth are leading worship at Gardens on Tenth apartments this Sunday.

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.

This week at ABC:

Sun. Dec. 3, 9:15-10:15 am- Sunday school for all ages.

Tues. Dec. 5, 10:30 am- Coffee with the church staff.

Tues. Dec. 5, 7-9 pm- Sr youth - Christmas decorating and games.

Wed. Dec. 6, 7-9 pm- Jr youth - Christmas window painting and games.

Wed. Dec. 6, 7- 8:15 pm- Ventures- Gingerbread houses.

Thur. Dec. 7, 2 pm- Book study at Gardens on Tenth.

Fri. Dec. 8- Staff Christmas banquet.

Sat. Dec. 9, 2 pm- Funeral for Marge Friesen at ABC.

Prayer and Praise:

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

Marge Friesen from our church family passed away on November 26. We are invited to join in gratitude for her life and keep her son Al Friesen and Tara Funke-Friesen and families in our prayers. Marge's funeral service will be held at ABC on December 9 at 2 pm.

Indigenous Relations: MMIWG final report. Back in September, the regional siblings of Mennonite Church Canada released a joint statement (<https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/article/16049>) supporting the landfill search in Winnipeg, Manitoba. At the end of October, the newly elected Premier of Manitoba, Wab Kinew, met with and apologized to the families of two slain First Nations women whose remains are believed to be in a Winnipeg-area landfill. Kinew met with the families of Morgan Harris and Mercedes Myran to reset the relationship between the two families and the government. We pray for those involved in discerning the path forward, holding in the light all the MMIWG families grieving the loss of loved ones, and commitment of all of Canada to realize the recommendations (<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>) which seeks to end violence against Indigenous women.

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

Lyndon Friesen- December 6, DJ Wahl- December 6,

Denise Fast- December 9

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

CMU: CMU Festival Chorus and the WSO perform Handel's Messiah on Friday, December 15 and Saturday, December 16 at 7:30 PM at Knox United Church. Purchase tickets at my.wso.ca/events/messiah2023.

MCI is seeking a host family for a male student in gr. 12 from Hong Kong. Hosting dates are Dec. 15-17th and Dec. 22-Jan. 7th. There is a \$600 stipend available for hosting over the Christmas break to help take care of our students. For more information, please reach out to mci@mciblues.net or call 204-327-5891.

MCM: Faith and Life Choirs Christmas Carol sing "My Soul Magnifies the Lord". Sun. Dec. 17, 3:30pm at Bethel Mennonite Church. Featuring poetry by Sue Sorensen and monologues by Arlyn Friesen Epp.

MCC: Christmas is a season that is filled with the spirit of generosity. Have you ever stopped to think what it means to be generous? MCC has an educational resource to help young people explore that question and many others. Download it today for activities and ideas that can be used for Sunday school classes, youth groups, families with kids or anyone young at heart. mcc.org/learning-about-generosity-mcc

Mennonite Church Manitoba weekly congregational profile:

Jubilee Mennonite Church is a small family-like community located in Winnipeg's North Kildonan area. Sunday worship gatherings see 30-50 people each week and are filled with the sounds of fellowship, children at play, and prayer for each other. Jubilee is closely tied into its surrounding community, hosting and working with the Community Roots Resource Centre operating out of the building and serving those around them who need emergency food, computer access, cooking lessons, children's clubs, and more. Pray for Jubilee as they navigate a new season of church life after adopting their affirmation statement last year and hiring their new lead pastor, Janessa Nayler-Giesbrecht, this September. Pray for Community Roots as they provide important programs and resources to their community and partner with Jubilee to bless those that come in the church doors.