

-BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH of ALTONA-

Sunday, March 23, 2025, 10:30 am

Lent 3 Christ Collides with our Priorities

If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part gets the glory, all the parts celebrate with it. You are the body of Christ and parts of each other. 1 Corinthians 12:26-27

Gathering

Announcements

Hymn Holy, Holy, Holy VT 76

Call to Worship and Prayer

Hymn Nothing is Lost on the Breath of God VT 653

Offering Could It Be That God Is Singing VT 42

Engaging God's Word

Children's Story

Hymn The Lorica

Confession and Words of Assurance

Scripture Luke 15:1-32

Sermon Lost and Found

Hymn Christ Has No Body Here but Ours VT 568

Prayer of the Church and the World

Sending

Benediction

Hymn May the Face of God Shine on You VT 844

Sermon: Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

Worship Leading: Grace Harms

Music: Hilda Franz, Andrew Richert, Ang Loeppky

Children's Story: Andrew Richert

We are in the midst of our Lent series. The theme is **Christ Collides**

March 9 Lent 1 Luke 10:25-42, Our Bias: Speaker Virginia

March 16 Lent 2 Luke 13:1-9, Our Condemnation: Speaker Mark

March 23 Lent 3 Luke 15:1-32, Our Priorities: Speaker Virginia

March 30 Lent 4 Luke 16:19-33, Our Selfishness: Speaker Mark

April 6 Lent 5 Luke 18:31-19:10, Our Blinders: Speaker Virginia

April 13 Lent 6 Luke 19:29-44, Our Expectations: Speaker Mark

April 18 Good Friday, 10:30 am, Communion and Foot Washing

April 20 Easter Luke 24:1-12, Speaker Terrell

CONFESSION AND WORDS OF ASSURANCE

All: *Loving and merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you.*

Leader: We have not loved you with all our thoughts, words, and actions.

Many: **We have sinned through what we have chosen to do and what we have chosen to neglect.**

Leader: We have not fully accepted your love for us. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

Many: **We prioritize the wrong things.**

All: *We repent before each other and before you, our loving God. Please help us open our hearts to your love. Help us bring our priorities in line with yours so we may better share your peace in your world, rejoicing in your name. Amen.*

Leader: Now hear these words of assurance: God tells us that we are created in God's image. God created us for relationship with God and each other. In this, we know that God will never break our relationship. God's steadfast love endures forever.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

- PRAYER AND PRAISE -

Hospitalized: Henry Klassen, Pete Hildebrand and Gert Hildebrand are in the Altona Health Centre.

International Witness: Praise God for a great harvest of Korean yams in the house church/income generation work of Witness workers, Tom and Christine Poovong. This sustainable agriculture and community building effort is an exciting new way that the Poovongs are working to share God's love with their community. The fields will now be flooded, and rice will be planted for a second crop.

If you are reading the New Testament during Lent and are interested in participating in our conversations, please talk to Mark TD.

Have kids going to Bible camp? ABC is offering a campership of \$100/camper. Contact Ang in the office for more details. The deadline is May 1.

You are invited to volunteer alongside Mark and Terrell and their families at Camp Koinonia from August 4-8. Volunteer positions still needed: 3 maintenance workers and one health officer.

Pastor Virginia will be on holidays March 26-April 1

- THIS WEEK AT ABC -

Sat. Mar. 28, 9:30 am: New Testament Bible reading at Mark's house.

Sun. Mar. 23, 9:15-10:15 am: Sunday school for all ages.

Sun. Mar. 23, 10:30 am: Worship service.

Tues. Mar. 25, 10:30 am: Coffee with the Church staff.

Tues. Mar. 25, 6:30 - 9:30, Sr youth - Volunteering at the Southman Gleaners in Reinfeld.

Wed. Mar. 26, 7-8:30, Jr. Youth - We finally have the church to ourselves! Let's play some church wide games!

Sat. Mar. 29, 5-6:30 pm: Community Meal at the Exchange.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Eastview Place provides a day program for those living with Alzheimer's. If you know someone who would benefit from the Alzheimer's Day Program (ADP) please contact Home Care in Altona. If you are willing to be a driver for this program, please contact Candace Enns at 324.2375.

The Southern MB Choral Society will be performing their spring concert on Sunday, March 23 3:00 p.m. at the Altona Bergthaler Church.

Pray for our Congregations: Sargent Avenue Mennonite

Church: Sargent is in the midst of a season of grief and letting go as a number of our life-long members have passed away this month and a number of others are transitioning into higher levels of care. And yet, we are also feeling excited and hopeful as a community striving to follow Jesus in living lives of justice, peace, inclusion and love. Please pray for the wisdom to carry both grief and hope, and inspiration and energy for the work of discipleship.

FROM THE PASTOR – Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

I have recently been reflecting on the legal experts that appear in our scriptures. These have come up a few times in the past few weeks. (Lent 1—Luke 10:35, Lent 3—Luke 15:2 in the CEB) Who were these legal experts and how similar are they to legal experts today?

When Luke uses the term legal expert, he is talking about those who are experts in Jewish law and traditions. He is talking about people who know the over 600 laws from the Old Testament by heart and know the supplementary rules and practices that have been developed around them. These are not lawyers as we would see them today. Another word for these legal experts is scribes. They dedicated most of their time and effort to studying the laws of Moses.

We don't really have anything comparable to those types of legal experts today. They focused on the religious laws and the rules. Which also meant sometimes looking for loopholes and work arounds to get around fully following the law, without actually breaking it.

Jesus' main critique of them was that if they were looking for loopholes and work arounds they were not trying to follow the "spirit of the law" but just "the letter of the law." Jesus continually and emphatically calls their (and our) attention to the spirit of the laws that God has given us, which is justice, mercy and faith (Matt 23:23b). He says that God "wants mercy and not sacrifice." (Matt 9:13b; 12:7)

I give thanks that today we are much less concerned with dissecting every detail and aspect of the law. But focus our energy on what it means to seek justice, love mercy and walk faithfully with our God. And in all ways, reading the Bible through the lens of Jesus' call to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves.

Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona 117-2nd St NW/ROG 0B1

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