

BERGTHALER MENNONITE  
CHURCH of ALTONA  
Brunch Church, November 5, 2023

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*"He has told you, human one, what is good and what the Lord requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God." – Micah 6:8*

**Schedule:**

9:00-9:15: Arrive for brunch.

9:15: Brunch and fellowship.

10:30: Blanket Exercise.

Bring a brunch dish to share and a blanket if you wish to have your own blanket for the Blanket Exercise.

We welcome Kerry Saner-Harvey, and Elder Debra Henry who will be facilitating our blanket exercise today. Kerry is the Indigenous Neighbours Program Coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba. Debra is an Elder at Roseau River First Nation.

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**WORSHIP CALENDAR**

November 5: Brunch Church and Blanket Exercise.

November 12: Faith and Life men's choir with Kathy Giesbrecht of Mennonite Church Manitoba speaking.

In all congregations, different people have different expectations of their pastors. For some people, a visit from a pastor is important and cannot be substituted by a visit from a deacon or friend. For others, a visit from a pastor is not expected in the same way or may even come with some awkwardness. Often, though not always, this is a generational difference. It is right for churches to expect their pastors to be available in times of crisis and it is also good for pastors to visit with people when they are not in crisis. And when the whole church shares in the work of caring for each other in the way of Christ, we are closer to becoming His Body.

Some things make it difficult for pastors to do the work of pastoral care. One is the expectation that we are 'mind readers'. We don't always know who needs a visit; we can't read people's minds. I have seen people grow resentful that their pastor does not visit yet they never take any initiative to connect with the pastor. Yes, I know it is hard to reach out, but we appreciate when people do. When we have included announcements in the bulletin inviting people to connect with us (as we did last Sunday), we never receive any responses. This puts the onus on us as pastors to connect, which is okay, but you still have a role to play if we as pastors are to do what you have called us to do. This means welcoming our initiatives and making time for us to connect and visit. It is hard for us when our overtures are received as unwelcome intrusions in a person's life, or we are avoided, or people are too busy to meet. When we reach out, it is always with interest and genuine care for people.

Engaging in pastoral care makes us better preachers and leaders. How can we preach and lead if we do not know the people we are preaching to? Also, having a greater understanding of the people in our church helps us minister more effectively to people in times of crisis and major life events like weddings and funerals. In these ways, your openness to connecting with the pastors contributes to the health and growth of the church.

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**Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona**

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## THIS WEEK AT ABC

### CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Terrell is asking for baking** once again for our youth groups. Baked goods may be given directly to Terrell, to Ang during office hours, or placed in the basement kitchen freezer. Thanks to all for your support!

**We have a lighter preaching schedule** this stretch so we have lots of time in our schedules to visit with people. Please reach out to us if you are interested in connecting. We can drop by your home, meet for coffee, lunch, breakfast, go for a walk, or whatever. We love to hear from people! – Mark, Virginia, Terrell.

**Here's an invitation from Church Council** to join in a conversation and an update on some of the most recent happenings in your church. The Fall meeting will be held Nov 26th at 1 pm in the church basement. It's a chance to hear about and share thoughts on a proposed summer camp partnership with Matheson Island youth, the proposed subdivision progress, financial update, including how the various commissions are doing the work of the church. More details will be available in upcoming weeks, and at the get together. Please note, at this point, we are proposing a "bring your own bag lunch" with coffee, tea, and water provided.

**The Personnel commission** with the support of Church Council has granted Pastor Virginia a 3 month Sabbatical leave from January to March 2024. Sabbatical leaves are a time for pastors to focus on their spiritual, physical and mental needs. This Sabbatical leave is granted with reference to our church policy and we wish Virginia all the best as she takes time for study and renewal."

#### Mennonite Church Manitoba weekly congregational profile:

Little Flowers Community is a worshipping community in the heart of Winnipeg's West End. They are passionate about helping people feel welcomed, affirmed, and celebrated. They have a particular passion and calling for engaging in transformational justice, working and living alongside people on the margins of society and the church. Their gatherings are intimate, informal, and always include food! The last few years have been hard for everyone, but for people already facing challenges (financial, social, etc.) it has been especially difficult. As a result, the demands on the church to support folks in crisis is at an all time high, while resources are at an all time low. Please pray for resilience and hope for Little Flowers Community, and for funding to do the unique ministry God has called them to.

**Sun. Nov. 5, No Sunday School.** Everyone is welcome for brunch.

**Tues. Nov. 6, 10:30 am-** Coffee with the church staff.

**Tues. Nov. 6, 7-9 pm-** Senior Youth, Youth Talk Night- God loves your... anger.

**Wed. Nov. 7, 7-9 pm** Junior Youth, Youth Talk Night- God loves your ... anger.

**Wed. Nov. 8, 7- 8:15 pm-** Ventures Crokinole tournament in the church basement.

**Thur. Nov. 9, 2 pm-** Book study at Gardens on Tenth.

### PRAYER & PRAISE CORNER

**Hospitalized:** Bernard Wiebe, Bernie Friesen (Edith), Marge Friesen and Ben Dyck at the Altona Health Centre.

**Menno Braun** from our church family passed away on October 30. We are invited to join in gratitude for his life and pray for his children and their families. The funeral service will be held on Nov. 6 at 11 am at Wiebe's funeral home and recorded and shared at a later date.

**Our love and sympathy** to Bill and Carol Bergman at the passing of Bill's sister Gertrude Braun of Winkler passed away Oct. 28. The funeral was held on Wednesday, Nov. 1.

**Our love and sympathy** to Anne and Ronn Friesen and Gert and Peter Hildebrand, at the passing away of a brother-in-law, Don Friesen on Oct. 31.

**Climate Action:** Climate change is a global issue that impacts everyone and requires collective action to address. The responsibility lies with all of us, individuals, households, policymakers, industries, and international organizations. Learn more and take the pledge here: <https://mcc.org/take-climate-action-peace-pledge>



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

Ed Rempel- Nov. 5, Ang Loepky- Nov. 5,

Susan (Ben) Dueck- Nov. 7, Eva Schroeder- Nov. 11

### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

**Steps Toward Reconciliation** invites you to the screening of "Rustic Oracle" on Tuesday Nov. 7, 7 pm at the Community Exchange.

**CMU:** Join authors Sarah Augustine and Sheri Hostetler for the launch of *So We and Our Children May Live* as they offer hope for a better future alongside concrete actions for joining with Indigenous Peoples to protect life and advocate for sustainable change that follows Jesus. November 10 at 7 pm, In person and via livestream. Visit [commonword.ca/go/3438](http://commonword.ca/go/3438).



## Soup & Pie

Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>

4:30 pm – 6:30 pm

at Altona Bergthaler

Mennonite Church

### Proceeds to Missions:

- International Witness Ethiopia Ministry

(Werner & Joanne De Jong)

- M.C.C. Urgent Needs

- Camps with Meaning



### **BLANKET EXERCISE**

This Sunday (November 5) we are having brunch church and our worship time will primarily be participating in a Blanket Exercise. A Blanket Exercise is an interactive way of engaging the story of our land from the perspective of Indigenous communities' experience. Kerry Saner-Harvey, a staff person from MCC, will be facilitating for us along with Elder Debra Henry from Roseau River First Nation. You can learn more about the Blanket Exercise here:

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/what-we-do/indigenous-rights/blanket-exercise>.

Various conversations contributed to the decision to have this event and the process of planning it. A few people from our church have already participated in a Blanket Exercise and have had positive experiences. There has also been an interest in deepening our relationships with Indigenous people and our conversations and actions toward reconciliation. We debated at length about when to do a Blanket Exercise, and through conversations at the Spiritual Advisory Committee and Church Council, eventually decided to do the Blanket Exercise during our regular gathering time on Sunday morning to allow for the greatest participation.

We encourage everyone to come and participate. We know this will be a different type of church service, but it is still church because we will enter the Blanket Exercise trusting in Jesus and his ministry of reconciliation. It may be that we are challenged, inspired, or changed in the way that a Holy Spirit inspired sermon can.

If you cannot participate for whatever reason, including feeling uncomfortable about this event, you may still come and observe the Blanket Exercise from the side.

Regarding the participation of children: Parents, it is your decision as to whether your children participate in the Blanket Exercise. We believe this will be a valuable experience for kids who are mature enough to have some understanding of the themes involved and the attention span to participate. Generally, we suggest children grades 4 and up participate, while younger children do not (but this is not a rule). There will be childcare provided for children who are not participating.

#### **Schedule for the morning:**

9-9:15: Arrive for brunch.

9:15: Brunch and fellowship.

10:30- 12: Blanket Exercise.

#### **What to Bring:**

A brunch dish to share.

A blanket (optional, there will be blankets provided, but you may wish to use your own)

A spirit of gratitude, humility, and kindness.