

BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH of ALTONA

Sunday, December 15, 2024, 10:30 am

Third Advent

Why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Luke 1:43

Gathering and Praise

Welcome and Announcements

Music O Come, All Ye Faithful VT 241

Call to Worship, Prayer and Candle Lighting

Music Good Christian Friends, Rejoice VT 261

Entering God's Story

Prayer for Offering

Offering Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus VT 218

Children's Story

Theme Song We Come VT 225

Scripture Luke 1:26-45

Sermon Serving the Christ Child in a World of Need

Responding in Faith

Music Will You Let Me Be Your Servant VT 778

Prayer for the Church and the World

Benediction

Music Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Sermon: Terrell Wiebe **Worship Leading:** Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

Music: Lorraine Hamm and Glenys Voth

Children's Story: Caroline Neufeld

Candle Lighters: Joyce Friesen and Mark Friesen

- **CALL TO WORSHIP** based on Luke 1:26-3 -

Leader: The Lord is with us, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Can you conceive it? Don't say, "It's all relative."

People: It's real! It's right now! It's right here!

Leader: Come young, come old.
Let us worship in the name of Jesus,

All: for nothing will be impossible with God!

FROM THE PASTOR – Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

One of the books/movies that has been talked about recently is the story of "The Worst Christmas Pageant Ever." Which was recently re-made into a movie. While it has been years since I read the book, I recall that it is the story of putting on a Christmas pageant and the surprises and insights that come from the children in unexpected ways. It has almost become a classic. One reason for this is because anyone who has ever worked with children knows to prepare for the unexpected, and to make space for their insights.

As I have been working with the Sunday school children in preparation for our church's Christmas pageant there are a few delights and/or surprises that I want to share with you.

-Being a part of the pageant is important. This year EVERY child involved in our Sunday school program in grade 6 and under (and a few older ones too) can be there and participate.

-It is exciting and joyful. The children have come to the church for practices happy and excited. There is no dread or coercing involved.

-It is energetic. Nerves may take over on Dec 22, but when we practice our Hallelujahs, no mics are needed to hear all the children's words of joy!

-It is holy work. While there is laughter and goofing around, the children know their words are important and want to tell the story of Jesus' birth well.

-And lastly, kids are good at memorizing. Elementary school age children seem to be the ideal age to memorize facts and lines. I hope their words and memories of this experience stay with them and us for years to come.

Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona 117-2nd St NW/R0G 0B1

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CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

This year's Advent theme is "Together on a Journey." Together as a congregation we will travel along a path that draws us closer to God and prepares us to welcome Christ anew into our hearts and our lives.

Dec 1: "Opening Hearts: What do we ask for?"- Virginia

Dec 8: "Anointing for Justice: Who Belongs?"- Mark

Dec 15: "Embodying God's Spirit: Who Lends a Hand?"- Terrell

Dec 22: Children's Christmas program

Dec 24, Tue, 6:30 pm: Christmas Eve Candlelight service at Altona Mennonite Church

Dec 25, Wed., 10:30 am Christmas Day worship at ABC - Virginia

- PRAYER AND PRAISE -

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

Joanna Ginter- Dec. 15, Sharon Lynn Friesen- Dec. 18,

Joyce Friesen- Dec. 17

Hospitalized: Henry Klassen, Art Dyck Centre and Edna Klippenstein are in the Altona Health Centre.

Our love and sympathy are extended to Julie and Lily Niemczak for the passing of their grandma and great grandma, Margaret Elcock of Winnipeg on Dec. 11.

Elsie Heide from our congregation passed away on Dec. 12. We are invited to join in gratitude for her life and pray for her sister Elfrieda Teichrob and extended family.

Thank you to everyone who came to my play last weekend! It meant a lot to have so many people from my church come see the show. -Rowan Wiebe

International Witness: Without the cultural trappings of Christmas, Christians in China focus on the message of Jesus but opening their doors to the public at Christmas has become more sensitive in recent years. Pray with church leaders in China as they plan for Christmas celebrations. May God give joy and wisdom as they discern how best to celebrate the coming of Emmanuel.

Adult Sunday school is on pause starting December 15 until Mark is back from his Sabbatical in February. If you are interested in helping to organize Sunday School for adults in January, please be in touch with Mark.

Pastor Mark is taking his weekend off.

- THIS WEEK AT ABC -

Sun. Dec. 15, 9:15 am: Sunday School for preschool-grade 12.

Sun. Dec. 15, 10:30 am: Worship service.

Sun. Dec. 15, 6 pm: ABC staff Christmas party

Tue. Dec. 17, 10:30 am: Coffee with the Church staff.

Wed. Dec. 18, 7 pm: Spiritual Advisory meeting

Christmas Day impromptu choir. If you would like to be a part of the Christmas day choir practice begins at 9:30 am Dec 25. All ages welcome!

The church office will be closed on *December 25, 26, 27 and January 1.*

Dec. 24: Tuesday coffee is *cancelled.*

Dec. 31: Tuesday coffee *will go ahead*

Virginia will be on vacation from December 30 to January 6.

Terrell will be on vacation from December 26 to January 2.

Mark will be on sabbatical from January 1 – January 31.

Year end donations can be dropped off at the church office *before noon on Tuesday December 31.* Due to the postal strike here are some alternatives to deliver your donation:

- to Ang during administrative office hours (T-F, 9 am-noon), the "mail drop box" right beside Ang's office,
- to Laurie Enns' home (168 Elmcrest), or Keystone Kat.
- call/text Laurie for arrangements at 204.981.4248.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Annual Longest Night Memorial Service on Dec 21, 7 pm. at the Altona United Church. All are welcome.

Pray for our Congregations - Springstein Mennonite Church: Pray for us now and into the new year as we continue to connect with our community through: Kids Club, Youth Group, Pickleball, Floor Hockey, Community Club, Blanket Making (MCC), COOL Field (Foodgrains Bank) and Bridge of Hope (Ukraine Furniture Project).