

BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH of ALTONA

Sunday, December 1, 2024, 10:30 am

First Advent

And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Romans 5:5

Gathering and Praise

Welcome and Announcements

Music Holy Spirit Come with Power VT 57

Call to Worship, Prayer and Candle Lighting

Music Oh, How Shall I Receive Thee VT 215

Entering God's Story

Prayer for Offering and the Church and World

Children's Story

Theme Song We Come VT 225

Scripture Joel 2:12-13, 28-29; Luke 11:13

Sermon Looking to God on our Journey

Responding in Faith

Music Comfort, Comfort, O My People VT 212

Communion

Benediction

Music Spirit of God! Descend VT 557

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Sermon: Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

Worship Leading: Esme Ginter and Shelby Penner

Music: Flying Free Children's Story: Al Friesen and Tara Funke

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Everyone is welcome to participate in Communion by sharing the bread and cup. We will share Communion in pairs at the front the sanctuary. You will be invited to come to the tables from the side aisles. If you are not able to travel to the table we will serve you where you are seated. Further instructions will be given verbally. If you require gluten free bread, it is available in the paper cups on each tray. Wine is red. Juice is clear.

FROM THE PASTOR - Terrell Wiebe

When I served at a church in Winnipeg it seemed as if we were one of the few churches without a sign. Drive anywhere in the city and you will see a church sign promoting events, stating a belief, telling a joke, or attempting an analogy. Some churches did these things more effectively than others. ABC also does not have a changeable sign. Personally, I am fine to keep it that way. However, if we did have a sign, I wonder what kinds of messages we would like to convey to the community?

A few weeks ago, our senior youth group talked about what makes us unique and what makes our Christian faith unique. Near the end of our event I asked the group, "Let's imagine we have a church sign with space for just five words. What five words (or less) would we chose to tell our community about the Christian faith?" The group then spent a few minutes thinking and writing.

Here are a few of the responses from the youth that I remember.

- God loves you
Worshipping and loving God
Following Jesus together
Jesus died for you
God is love

Apparently, the youth did not even need five words!

Wishing to capture both the beliefs and actions of the Christian faith, I found this a tough assignment. My final response was "God's beloved failures seeking peace". I wanted to say more, but that of course is the nature of the task.

I give this assignment over to the rest of you. If you had to create a church sign message about our faith in only five words, what would you say? I would love to hear your responses.

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## CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, the time of preparation for Christmas. 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. We will explore such themes as God's guidance, who is included on this journey and where we find our support. May we find hope and joy along this journey, assured that our loving God is faithful in walking with us.

**Dec 1:** 1st Advent "Opening Hearts: What do we ask for?" Speaker Virginia

**Dec 8:** 2nd Advent "Anointing for Justice: Who Belongs?" Speaker Mark

**Dec 15:** 3rd Advent "Embodying God's Spirit: Who Lends a Hand?" Terrell

**Dec 22:** 4th Advent 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

### **THIS WEEK AT ABC:**

**Sun. Dec. 1, 9:15 am:** Sunday School for all ages

**Sun. Dec. 1, 10:30 am:** Worship service, potluck lunch and fall mtg.

**Mon. Dec. 2, 6:45-8:30 pm:** Combined youth event. We are joining the Altona Special Olympics group! Drop off and pick up at South Wing.

**Tue. Dec. 3, 10:30 am:** Coffee with the Church staff.

**Wed. Dec. 4, 7-8:15 pm:** Ventures for grades 3-6

**A casual substitute secretary** is needed for the ABC office for when Ang takes holidays a few times/year. This position is a shared substitute position. Please talk to Ang at the office if you are interested.

**ABC** has been asked to help contribute to the Community Christmas dinner. We have decided to contribute financially instead of supplying specific food items. If you would like to donate, contributions can be made to the church designated "Community Christmas dinner" or can be given directly to Carol Rempel Dec. 1-8.

### **PRAYER AND PRAISE:**

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

Wilma Martens- Dec. 1, James Friesen- Dec. 2,

Lyndon Friesen- Dec. 6, DJ Wahl- Dec. 6

**Hospitalized:** Henry Klassen is in the Altona Health Centre.

**Elsie Heide has moved** to Eastview Place.

**Indigenous Relations and International Witness:** Join the global conversation on Nov. 30! Mennonite Church Canada Indigenous Relations and International Witness invite you to an online conversation about decolonization with speakers from Israel/Palestine, Philippines, South Africa, and North America. Register here <https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness>

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

**Altona Food Bank:** We ask you to pause for a moment and think of those in our communities who are struggling with food insecurity. We serve an average of 60 clients/week and expect those numbers to increase over the winter months. We could not do this without your support. 100% of your donation is used to supply food to those in need. Donations can be made by cheque to: Rhineland Area Food Bank, box 1107, Altona, R0G 0B0 or electronically at the Access Credit Union: [rhinelandfoodbankinc@gmail.com](mailto:rhinelandfoodbankinc@gmail.com). Thank you.

**Blood Donor Clinic:** This winter we are rallying people to join the 450 challenge! Our goal is to get 450 new donors a day so we can meet the growing need of patients in communities across our country. Thur., Dec. 12 at the Altona Rhineland Centre. Register with Blood.ca.

**Thank you to the ABC community** for the gift of smile cookies. They were delicious and very much appreciated. - South Park Mennonite Brethren Church.

**MCI** invites you to ring in the Christmas season with us on Dec. 19 at 7:30 pm in the Buhler Hall for our Christmas Concert! All are welcome.

**MCC's** work continues despite the postal strike. To support MCC this Christmas season, you can donate online at [mcc.org/donate](http://mcc.org/donate), or call us at 204-261-6381 during regular business hours and our team will be happy to assist you. During this season of giving, we're grateful to partner with you in spreading Christ's love around the world!

**Pray for our Congregations: Arnaud Mennonite Church:** Pray for a relatively small but vibrant community of believers in Jesus in the farm country east of the Red River. Pray that we would continue to love and encourage each other in the faith, as Jesus taught us to, and that we would continue to demonstrate that love and share that good news of Jesus to others, in the Morris/ Arnaud/ St. Malo/ Stuartburn neighborhoods and beyond.