FROM THE PASTOR – Mark Tiessen-Dyck

While inevitable, pastoral endings are always hard. The pain is multiplied when a pastor's exit is surrounded by difficult circumstances, there is conflict involved, or the pastor exits before they are ready to. Congregations face a unique anguish in these situations, and our church is no exception in light of Pastor Virginia's departure. For some, there is grief in suddenly losing a pastor we appreciated. For some, there is the struggle of doing our best to faithfully discern and respond to a difficult situation and things not going as we hoped or planned and feeling blamed for it. For some, church feels less like home. It may be for different reasons, but we share the emotions of disappointment and grief and the knowledge that church is not supposed to be like this.

From my role as a pastor, I particularly grieve and lament a loss of "church-esteem" (like self esteem but how we see our church) among us. That we are a church of factions, secret meetings, and complainers is a sentiment that has emerged. It's natural for us to feel anger and suspicion in response to shocking or disappointing developments. In such situations, a decline of trust and health is predictable. It's easy to jump to the worst conclusions. But from where I sit, these conclusions are mistaken.

I want everybody to know that this situation has not impacted my "church esteem". I remain honoured to be a pastor of ABC. I believe it would be a misconception to respond to our recent troubles by concluding that we are a defective or troubled church. We are church that had a difficult situation; one that took on a larger role given that a pastor was involved. This does not make us deficient; it means we're normal. These matters are not rare in churches, businesses, or organizations. We are a human and thus imperfect church. At the same time, we are a healthy, joyful, and supportive church. We are a broken church and a faithful church. We are all sinners but we are a wonderful gang of people following Jesus together.

This is not to say that ignoring the situation is best. Our pain and loss is real and must be named before we can heal and move forward in trust. This is why the Spiritual Advisory Committee is planning for a worship series in January to help us along the healing path. With God's help, we will endure this trial.

-BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH of ALTONA-

Sunday, November 23, 2025, 10:30 am

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:42-43

Welcome and Announcements

Gathering and Praise

Call to Worship and Prayer
Hymn Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us HWB 355
Offering

Remembering with Hope

Children's Story
Scripture Luke 23:36-43
Sermon Jesus Remembers
Time of Remembering and Candle Lighting
Words of Tribute
Hymn Jesus, Remember Me VT 327
Candle Lighting

Living for God's Kingdom

Hymn In the Bulb There Is a Flower VT 670
Congregational Prayer
Benediction
Hymn Heart with Loving Heart United VT 813

Sermon: Mark Tiessen-Dyck **Worship Leading:** Terrell Wiebe
Music: Lorraine Hamm and Glenys Voth
Children's Story: Heidi Toews

We remember these individuals from our congregation who have died in the last year

Peter Elias, Elsie Heide, Kathrine Friesen, Art Dyck, Ruth Kroeker, Peter Hildebrand, Clara Kehler, Mary Sawatsky, Sara Stoesz, Bill Driedger

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

- PRAYER AND PRAISE –

Hospitalized: Shirley Schellenberg is in the Altona Health Centre.

We wish a happy birthday and God's blessing to:
Carol Rempel- Nov. 23, Alyssa Neufeld- Nov. 24, Celina Toews- Nov. 24, Heidi Toews- Nov. 26, Josh Neufeld- Nov. 28

Bill Driedger from our congregation passed away on November 7. The funeral service for Bill was held at ABC on November 12. We are invited to join in gratitude for Bill's life and to pray for his wife Dora, son Jason and daughter in law Tammy Driedger, daughter Lori Driedger and granddaughter Kelsie Driedger along with the extended family.

The Home and World Commission wishes to thank all the volunteers, donors, and soup and pie eaters for the successful soup and pie fundraiser. Together $6000 was donated!

Our worship service on Dec 7 will include child dedication. Talk to Pastor Mark if your children aren't dedicated yet!

From the Church Council: It's been our practice at ABC to hold two congregational meetings annually - the spring AGM and fall update as per the Church Constitution. The fall update has been scheduled for Dec 7 in the basement dining area following the morning service. We realize there have been a number of church events recently but also felt it was important to update you on some of the initiatives planned for 2026. It's also our intent to provide a light lunch. Further details will also be included in next week's church bulletin. Thanks in advance for your interest in the happenings at Bergthaler Mennnonite Church.

There is lots of planning involved in the Advent and Christmas season. The Sunday between Christmas and New Years is always a challenge to find people to lead the worship service. In light of this, the Music and Worship Commission is seeking a volunteer (or a few) to plan and lead an informal time of worship, sharing, and coffee in the church basement on Sunday December 28. If there isn't an interest in planning and leading, we will not have a service on December 28. Talk to commission members if you are interested: Delores Enns, Caroline Neufeld, Mary Anne Loeppky, Mark Tiessen-Dyck.

November 30: A celebration of appreciation for Virginia's ministry is being planned. This will include a litany of release and blessing during the service followed by a potluck lunch and program.

- THIS WEEK AT ABC –

Sun. Nov. 23, 9:15 am: Sunday school for all ages
Sun. Nov. 23, 10:30 am: Worship service
Tue. Nov. 25, 10:30 am: Coffee with the church staff
Tue. Nov 25, 7-9 pm: Sr. Youth - Can I ask that: Can I be a Christian and still believe in evolution?
Wed. Nov 26, 7-8:30 - Jr. Youth - Games night!
Wed. Nov. 26, 7-8:15 pm: Ventures
Sat. Nov. 29, 5-6:30 pm: Community Meal at the Exchange

Our Advent worship series is called "Be Amazed." As we wait for Christ's coming through Advent and Christmas, we will be invited to be amazed at the works of God past, present, and future.

Nov 30: First Advent. Hope in the Furnace. Speaker: Mark
Dec 7: Second Advent. Peace in the Valley. Speaker: Mark
Dec 14: Third Advent. Joy in the Desert. Speaker: Terrell
Dec 21: Children's Christmas Program. "So You Wanna Be Mary?"
Dec 25: Christmas Day. Love Comes Down. Speaker: Mark
Jan 4: Epiphany. Come and See. Speaker: Terrell

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

There are posters on the foyer bulletin board for more information and additional community announcements.

Altona Mennonite Church presents a concert and carol singing night on Fri. Dec. 5 at 7 pm featuring organ and piano performances by Edna Zacharias, Nancy Ratzlaff, Loren Hiebert and Marilyn Houser Hamm.

Faith and Life Choirs Christmas Carol Sing: December 14, 3:30pm. Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. A freewill offering will be taken.

Empty Stocking Fund: If you or someone you know would like to receive food vouchers and gifts call 431-342-0525 or email rhinelandesf@gmail.com. Deadline for registration: Nov 30. To donate go to Access Credit Union in Plum Coulee, Gretna or Altona.

Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona 117-2nd St NW/R0G 0B1
Web Page Address: abchurchcommunity.ca **Office:** 324.6717
E-mail: office@abchurch.ca **Facebook:** ABC community
Worship Services available online at: abchurchcommunity.ca
Lead Pastor: Mark Tiessen-Dyck: 324.5990, C 1.204.771.3406, marktd@abchurch.ca
Associate Pastor of Youth Ministries:
Terrell Wiebe C 204.417.8200, terrellw@abchurch.ca