

BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH of ALTONA

Sunday, November 24, 2024, 10:30 am

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." Revelations 1:8

Gathering and Praise

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship and Prayer

Music 10,000 Reasons VT 111

Offering Living Hope

Remembering with Hope

Children's Story

Time of Remembering and Candle Lighting

Tributes

Candle Lighting

Prayer

Music Oceans VT 456

Scripture Revelations 1:4-8

Sermon Being a Letter in God's Alphabet

Living for God's Kingdom

Music When Pain or Sorrow/Hold On VT 612

Benediction

Music Blessed Be Your Name VT 637

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Sermon: Mark Tiessen-Dyck

Worship Leading: Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

Music: Worship Team **Children's Story:** Terrell Wiebe

We Remember:

Marge Friesen	Hilda Hamm	Abe Klassen
Bernhard Wiebe	Lena Hoffman	Rey Schellenberg
Ben Dyck	Peter Heinrichs	Hilda Wiebe
Bill Bergman	Dorothy Friesen	Jake Rempel

FROM THE PASTOR – Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

I recently attended a workshop put on by MCC Manitoba and Mennonite Church Manitoba called "Domestic Violence: Deep Cultural Norms that effect the Church." The three sessions focused on 1—Porn, Purity and Healthy Sexuality, 2—Naming God: Missing Mother Metaphors, and 3—Restorative Justice and Domestic Violence. It was definitely not a light workshop. Our presenter had a wealth of knowledge in all these areas and a passion that church leaders should be aware of these things, and talk about them in their congregations. So, this is my first step.

My takeaway from the first session was that we as a church need to do a better job talking about healthy sexuality. The culture around us is shouting out its message, and if we are silent our young people will be left on their own to navigate this important aspect of who they are. Likely this will mean talking about things many of us were taught not to talk about. But if the world around us is offering of a very limited definition of sexuality, we as people of faith need to talk about the gift from God that sexuality is for our whole selves.

The second session talked about the ways our language can shape our understandings and experiences. And that our default metaphors for God have sometimes emboldened abusers. They do not cause abuse, but if abusers see God as male, they might also see their maleness as more favoured by God, and therefore freer to wield their power as they so desire. In response the church needs to incorporate a much broader understanding of God, with both male and female attributes as well as metaphors beyond human form, like the wind that hovers over the deep.

The last session was a very thorough dive into what restorative justice is and how it is used in cases of domestic violence. It is not a set of rules or primarily about forgiveness. It is a framework and an approach, like a compass. It is victim centered but geared towards restoring all involved to their best healthy whole selves.

If you have any thoughts or questions on any of these topics I would love to share more. I am still digesting and discerning what to do with this learning.

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

Assoc. Pastor: Virginia Gerbrandt Richert, C 304.6119 viriniagr@abchurch.ca

Associate Pastor of Youth Ministries: Terrell Wiebe, 204.216.0058,

C 204.417.8200, terrellw@abchurch.ca

Next Sunday we will share Communion together. Over the last years we have practiced this important ritual of our faith in different ways. This time we will come forward in two lines, meet another person from our church at the table, and share the bread and cup with them. (As we did at Pentecost earlier this year).

Worship Calendar:

December 1. First Advent. Speaker: Virginia

December 8. Second Advent: Mark

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER AND PRAISE:

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

Alyssa Neufeld- Nov. 24, Celina Toews- Nov. 24, Heidi Toews- Nov. 26,

Josh Neufeld- Nov. 28, Elsie Heide- Nov. 30

Hospitalized: Art Dyck, Henry Klassen and Elsie Heide are in the Altona Health Centre.

Peter Elias from our congregation passed away on Nov. 15. Our prayers and condolences go to his wife Linda. The funeral service for Peter was held on Tuesday at the Bethel Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Hochfeld.

Susan (Anton) Dueck has moved. You will find her at the Gardens on Tenth apartments, room 210.

International Witness: 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>

THIS WEEK AT ABC:

Sun. Nov. 24, 9:15 am: Sunday School for all ages

Sun. Nov. 24, 10:30 am: Worship service.

Tue. Nov. 26, 10:30 am: Coffee with the Church staff.

Tue. Nov. 26, 7-9 pm Sr. Youth - Christmas Decorating and games

Wed. Nov. 26, 7-8:30 Jr. Youth - Come on out for a Christmas themed escape room

Wed. Nov. 26, 7-8:15 pm: Ventures for grades 3-6

Thur. Nov. 27, 2 pm: Book study at the Gardens on Tenth MPR.

Sun. Dec. 1, 12 noon: Potluck and fall meeting.

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.

Here's the most recent update from Finance and Trusteeship. Our offering totals are currently tracking at \$313,635,40 which is approximately \$5500 dollars behind last year's pace. On the positive side, our rental income is \$8108 higher than at this time in 2023. On the other hand, expenses have also increased and are currently running at \$27,953.61 ahead of 2023's financial year. This has resulted in a current shortfall of approximately \$58,000. We continue to be thankful for the financial support of our church family, and are hopeful of more positive news by year's end. **We welcome the opportunity to discuss further at our fall meeting on December 1.**

World/Home Ministries thanks everyone for their support of our recent Soup & Pie Fundraiser. Over \$6600 was donated and will be distributed to MCC Disaster Response, Witness Ethiopia and Camps With Meaning. We appreciate the generous support of our local grocery stores and our pie makers and volunteers.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

From Canadian Mennonite: With the Canada Post strike, your Dec. print issue will be delayed. Sign up for digital delivery to get it by email on Nov. 29. CM sends an email each Friday and attaches a PDF copy of the magazine once per month. Contact Lorna at office@canadianmennonite.org.

Where the Cottonwoods Grow: New screenings! Buhler Hall, Sun., Jan 19, 2:30 pm, Winkler PW Enns Hall, Wed. Dec. 4, 4 pm and 7:30 pm.

Cottonwood Community Drama presents the classic Dickens tale: A *Christmas Carol!* Dec. 5-8 in Buhler Hall, Gretna. Buy your tickets today at www.mciblues.net or by calling 204-327-5891.

MCM: "Bethlehem Then and Now" series of six short meditations available for Advent as a free download from The MC Canada Palestine-Israel Network. This series connects the biblical Christmas stories with the contemporary situation in Palestine, including Israel's war on Gaza--a timely reminder that God comes to us in the struggles of human history and personal experience.

<https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/article/45062>