

Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona
Worship Service
December 25, 2022, 10:30 am

*“Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine,
that we may be saved.” Psalm 80:19*

Celebrating Christ’s birth

Prelude
Welcome
Hymns O come all ye faithful VT 241
Call to worship and prayer

Hearing the story

Scripture Luke 2:1-7
Poem Squall
Hymn To us a child of hope HWB 189

Offering In the bleak midwinter
Time with our children
Hymn Infant holy, Infant lowly HWB 206
Scripture Psalm 80:14-19
Sermon The Beauty of Restoration

Sharing the story

Response time
Hymn Angels we have heard on high HWB 197
Christ whose glory fills the sky HWB 216

Blessing
Hymn Joy to the World HWB 318

Sermon: Virginia Gerbrandt Richert
Worship Leader: Mark Tiessen-Dyck
Children’s story: Andrew Richert

Music: Hilda Franz, Imy Rempel, Andrew Richert, Ang Loepky

PRAYER & PRAISE CORNER

- ~ **Hospitalized:** Rey Schellenberg at the Altona Health Centre.
- ~ **Mary Sawatzky** has moved to the Morris Lodge room #36.
- ~ **Joyce Loewen** of our church family passed away on December 17. We are invited to join in gratitude for her life and pray for Lloyd, their family and extended family.
- ~ **International witness:** Join in prayer for Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission churches affected by heavy rains and subsequent flooding in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo. The flooding has resulted in deaths, destroyed roads, and lost homes. Pray for an end to the rains and for God's provision as those affected rebuild.
- ~ **We wish a happy birthday and God’s blessing to:**
 - Tina Braun December 25
 - Melissa Tiessen-Dyck December 27
 - Edgar Loepky December 31
- ~ **We wish to congratulate** Al and Tena Giesbrecht on a momentous 60-year wedding anniversary on December 28.

WORSHIP CALENDAR

- November 27:** Advent 1 – Watch: The day is almost here
- December 4:** Advent 2 – Prepare the way of the Lord
- December 11:** Advent 3 – Tell what you hear and see
- December 18:** Advent 4 - Children’s Christmas program at 10:30 am
- December 24:** Candlelight service at 6:30 pm
- December 25:** Sing for Joy: Your God reigns
- January 1:** Welcoming the New Year
- January 8:** Worship with potluck brunch and conversation. Beginning at 9:30 am.

On Sunday January 8 we are integrating worship, fellowship and discernment! We will begin at 9:30 with a potluck brunch (bring brunch food to share such as egg dishes, pancakes, muffins, fruit, etc). Our worship time will include guest speaker Michael Pahl, director of Mennonite Church Manitoba. There will also be a time of conversation together, with our morning together concluding by noon. There will not be Sunday school on this day, children will be included in our worship and conversations.

FROM THE PASTOR – Virginia Gerbrandt Richert

A Christmas Greeting and prayer for you this day

Today, we will not find you, God,
in high and lofty places,
not even in the heavenly choir of angels,
but instead in the straw of a manger,
kept warm by the breath of cattle,
lulled to sleep by the bleating of lambs.
We will not find you
in the tinsel and stars adorning our trees,
but in the torn and discarded wrappings
that litter our streets,
sleeping in doorways,
covered over by cardboard.
For you came not for the
high and the mighty,
but for the poor and the lowly.
May we stoop down
and look you in the eye,
take your hand and raise you up
and walk beside you through our world,
attuned to what you see
and how you love,
alert to serve you
in those we meet along the way.
Vulnerable God,
be born in our hearts this Christmas,
so that we too can reach out
with vulnerability
to serve our world with love.
Amen.

<http://revgalblogpals.org/2014/12/23/11th-hour-preacher-party-christmas-eve-and-christmas-day-edition/>

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Church Council is thrilled to announce that Terrell Wiebe has accepted your invitation to join the Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church staff in the position of Youth and Family Pastor. He will begin his ministry with youth in the 2nd week of January

There will be no noon hour sermon discussion Dec. 27.

Pastor and office hours over the Christmas holidays:

The church office will be closed Dec 26 -28.

Pastor Virginia will be on vacation from Dec 26 – Jan 2.

Pastor Mark will be taking some additional time off between Dec 26 – Jan 2.

Year-end donations should be handed in by December 30 at 12 noon to the office or dropped off at Laurie Enns' home. Otherwise, they will be receipted for next year.

Mitten Tree: You are welcome to donate mittens, toques and scarves to our mitten trees on either side of the East doors to the foyer. We will send some to "Share the warmth" Altona and others to places of need in Winnipeg.

An announcement from Al Friesen, Church Council Chair: An "early" thanks from Finance for your continued support of the operation of, and financial encouragement of Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church Outreach ministry. The 2022 outreach represents approx 115,000.00 or 20 % of our annual expenditures. Based on your direction, this provides much needed financial support for MCI, MDS, MCC, Eden Mental Health Foundation, Gardens on Tenth Chaplaincy programs, Camps with Meaning, Mennonite Church Manitoba and YFC The Station. At this point of the calendar year, while we are approximately \$30,000 behind our traditional rate of outreach contribution, it's also our experience that our congregation responds generously at year end. On behalf of Finance and Treasurer Laurie Enns, thank you for considering a year end boost for the financial well being and outreach of ABC. Donations can be dropped off at the church office or at Laurie's home: 168 Elmcrest Dr.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MCC: Need a last-minute gift? Buy a book for someone else's library and support peace education in Rwanda with MCC. Our Christmas Giving guide is online and you can transform a life this Christmas through the gift of books, chickens, sewing machines, or room at the inn. Check out mccmb.ca/Christmas.

Mennonite World Conference: We pray for the MC Canada congregations and pastors who are recovering from the pandemic. Attendance at worship has decreased and many pastors are feeling tired and uncertain about the future, yet we have hope that God is doing a new thing in this time. While new ways of being the church are beginning to emerge, many still grieve what was. Pray that we may have the humility admit our longings to God the courage to follow Jesus to the place where the church in Canada will be renewed.

- submitted by Doug Klassen, executive minister, Mennonite Church Canada

Indigenous Settler Relations: Save the date! A play about reconciliation featuring poetry, music, contemporary and traditional dance at Jubilee Place. 173 Talbot, Winnipeg. Tickets: \$10 (+ fees), available from December 22. Info: www.mennochurch.mb.ca/newblood

MCM Pastoral Transitions:

- Ken Quiring at Grace Mennonite Brandon has resigned from his pastoral position. This Sunday, Dec 25 is his last Sunday as his pastor. Ken has accepted a job in Spiritual Care at Deer Lodge in Wpg beginning early January 2023. Please pray for this congregation and Ken and Yolanda as they bring 17 years of ministry to a close.
- Jonathan Neufeld will be installed as a .5 Co-Pastor at Charleswood Mennonite Church on Jan 29, 2023.
- Ellis Hamm began as the Interim Associate Pastor at Hope Mennonite Church on Nov 7, replacing Lisa Martens.
- Tobia Veith will begin as the Children's Ministry Leader (.5 FTE) at Douglas Mennonite on Jan 1, 2023.

Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona: 117 2ND Street NW Altona, MB, R0G 0B1

Web Page Address: abchurchcommunity.ca **Office:** 324-6717

E-mail: office@abchurch.ca **Worship Services available online at:**

abchurchcommunity.ca **Facebook:** ABC community **Lead Pastor:** Mark Tiessen-Dyck, 324-5990, (C) 1-204-771-3406, marktd@abchurch.ca

Assoc. Pastor: Virginia Gerbrandt Richert, cell 304-6119 virginiagr@abchurch.ca