

Grace Mennonite Church
Sunday,
December 6, 2020
Second Advent
On the Road to Bethlehem ...



Grace Mennonite Church

December 6, 2020

10:00 a.m. – Worship Service

Pastors Mel Letkeman & Kyle Penner

www.gracesteinbach.ca 204 326 3707

Vol 59, No. 48



Second Advent

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8984736540>

Gathering

Breakout Groups *

Calling to Worship

Call to Worship

Emmanuel, God with us

Light two candles, Christ is coming, Christ the light of the world.

Light two candles Christ is coming, Christ is coming soon.

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness

Christmas Stories

Puppets

Stories of Christmas with Scott & Adrielle Jodoin

Precious Promise

Reflecting on Christmas Stories

Joseph Story, Matthew 1:18-25

Change of Mind

Reflection

Blessings

Sending

Congregational Prayer

Life of the Congregation

Benediction

1000 Candles

Worship Leader:

Worship Speaker:

Worship Stories:

Worship Music:

Candle Lighters:

Puppets:

Judy Hiebert

Kyle Penner

Ashlyn Wolfe

Katie Schroeder & Melissa Taylor

Garth, Stephanie, Lewis, Mable Allan

Kyle Penner, Lisa Desautels

*During the zoom worship there will be a time for break out groups - It will give you an option to join a group or stay with the original group until the smaller groups return (approx. 5 minutes).
Feel free to join a group or opt out. Kyle will guide you through this at the designated time.

Per public health guidelines, Church's are closed.
Grace Office Staff will be working from home until further notice.
If you need to get into the building for something,
please contact the office via email.
Please see our website for updated Covid guidelines.

We Pray Together

Prayer for our Congregation:

We pray for those in care homes: Linda Martens, Jake Penner, Martha Plett, Nancy Pauls, Abe Friesen, Marie Dyck, Irene Rempel and Florence Goertzen, Teena Rempel, particularly as they live very isolated lives due to Covid restrictions.



Prayer for our Community: We pray for all the teachers, students, and parents as they see the Christmas break on the horizon.

Prayer for this Week: Help us to remember where we have found hope in the past.

Prayer for the World: We pray for Pauingassi in Covid lockdown, and all First Nation communities who are at high risk of negative health outcomes.



Our Condolences go out to **Eva Unger, Teena Rempel, and Margaret Blatz and their families** on the passing of their sister and sister in law, **Anne Blatz**, November 30, 2020, in Steinbach. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Anne is also an aunt to Bruce Blatz and Jodi Unger. We pray for you all, as you spend time remembering your loved one.

Opportunities at Grace

Wanting to connect with your friends from Grace? You are welcome to join our Facebook group @ Connecting Community – Grace Mennonite.

Digital Ushers: We're looking for some people to help be "digital ushers" for Zoom worship to help with let people in, mute/unmute people, be available in case Kyle's internet conks out, etc. If you are interested, please let Kyle know.

It's Christmas time and **Eden Foundation** is hoping you might consider making a year-end gift that will be used in a number of different ways; all of which are going to benefit people on a mental health journey. Click here to donate: [Eden Mental Health Donation](#) .

MCC Announcements:

Support for Central American hurricane recovery. Within two weeks, not one, but two hurricanes have caused extensive flooding in Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Hurricanes Eta and Iota have destroyed crops and forced people from their homes. MCC is working with churches and community organizations to provide emergency food, hygiene supplies and cleanup support. Join us as we help these communities recover. You can donate online at mcccanada.ca/eta-iota-relief or by calling 204-261-6381.

Missed the Centennial Celebration The 75-minute program included storytelling, music and a time for reflection. View the recording at mccmb.ca/Centennial-Celebration.

Give the perfect Christmas gift this season. Finding it hard to choose between pigs and planting a garden? Give the gift that does it all. A gift of hope is used where it's needed most. Purchase your Christmas Giving gift at mccmb.ca/Christmas or call 204-261-6381.

This week at Grace: December 6 – 12

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|-------------------|--|
| Sunday: | Virtual Worship Service, 10 am *** |
| Monday: | Soup's On lunch program for HSD, 9:00 am |
| Tuesday: | Soup's On Take out only, 5:00 pm |
| Wednesday: | Advent and Christmas Prayers with Henri J M Nouwen, 7:15am & 9:15 pm (zoom) ***
Middle School Xmas movie watch party, 7:00 pm *** |
| Thursday: | Advent Stories with Seniors, 10 am. (zoom)***
Senior youth zoom, 8:00 pm*** |
| Friday: | Soup's On, Take Out only, 5:00 pm |

***** For all zoom meetings please use this link:**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8984736540>

Grace Mennonite Church

Financial Update to November 30 2020

Our church continues to be fortunate in that giving to the end of November 2020 is similar to where we were at the end of November 2019. However, the auction in 2019 was held very late in November last year so almost all of the payments for auction items last year came in during December. With no auction occurring in 2020, achieving similar totals this December compared to what was received last December will be difficult.

Our budgeted general donations for 2020 is \$454,081 and actual giving to the end of November is \$335,085, for a difference of \$118,996.

Having said this, there will be some categories of expenses that will be under spent.

Paungassi Family Camp did not happen - potential savings of \$12,000

Refugee family did not arrive until last week of November - savings of \$20,000 - \$25,000 (?)

Mortgage interest moved to a much lower rate in 2020 - savings of \$10,000

Pledges

There are several building fund pledges that remain outstanding for 2020.

Cheques can continue to be mailed to the church. If you have started to donate by e-transfer and want to pay a pledge with this method, please mark 'building fund' in the memo line so your donation can be recorded as intended.

Finally, if you have any questions regarding giving or pledges for 2020, contact Phil Guenther at pjg@mymts.net.

Grace Donation Options:

- mailing your cheque to the church
- through automatic withdrawal
- e-transfer at donate@gracesteinbach.ca
- emailing the office to arrange a time to drop off a donation

Grace Contacts:

The church office will be closed due to Covid Restrictions. Staff will be working from home.

Pastor: **Mel Letkeman**

mel@gracesteinbach.ca

Associate Pastor: **Kyle Penner**

kyle@gracesteinbach.ca

Administrative Office:

office@gracesteinbach.ca

Administrative Assistant's:

Cathy Barkman *Tuesday & Wednesday 9:30-1:30*

cathy@gracesteinbach.ca

Audrey Frey *Thursday & Friday 9:30-1:30*

audrey@gracesteinbach.ca

Advent at Grace

Today Advent, the four Sundays before Christmas, Continues. Continues differently than usual.

Who'd have thought?

Well, who'd have thought, or not, here we are. And, despite not being together, we are. So, together we will share Advent and Christmas as a faith community. In ways different, yes. But in ways still good, meaningful and life giving because, while so much is missing, we, the story and God are still here.



Advent is a time of waiting. But, we're waiting a lot these days. Waiting for the NHL season to start, for COVID numbers to drop, for isolation to end, for vaccines, for hope. So, we won't wait to get into the story this year. Rather, we'll tell the Christmas Story throughout Advent. And, we'll tell it chronologically, getting to the birth story before Christmas Day.

We'll worship with a beautifully visualized message on the stage and bulletin cover, telling us that we're on the road to Bethlehem. That is, on the road to God and God's work among us in Jesus. We'll be on that road with prayers, songs, stories, candles, reflection and sharing.

On line for now. We don't plan much in advance these days so we won't even speculate for how long that will be. But, however we are together, we hope that being here, with each other, at Advent and Christmas will give us smiles, joy and hope as we are with each other and God in this special time of year. Even when it might not seem as special as we'd like.

No, it might not be. But, we will gather.

In hope, in faith and in love. Because...

***God,
in Jesus here you are,
here we are,
here we are together
with you and those you love...***

Advent Activity

Just because we're at home, doesn't mean we can't be together. Or, that we can't be doing something together. Here are four ways you can enjoy Advent and Christmas at Grace.

1. Of course, come to Worship. This is a very enjoyable and meaningful time of Community Worship and Gathering. Because we are not in the building to see the candles being lit, we're suggesting that you have four advent candles ready in your home as each week as Candle Lighting will be part of Worship.
2. You can participate in the Reverse Advent Calendar. Details in the bulletin and via Constant Contact.
3. You can come together with others for a weekly Advent Devotional. In place of the usual prayers, we'll be doing short devotionals with writings from Henri Nouwen, a scripture passage, prayer and daily action at 7:15 am and 9:15 pm each Wednesday. Follow the link. (I know I'm late on this, but if you'd like to order the book it's ***'Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M Nouwen'***)
4. We used to have a 'Stories with Seniors' Bible Study once a month at church. Well, we're going to have an Advent 'Stories with Seniors' (or whoever wants to join!). Each Thursday morning at 10:00 am we'd invite you to grab your coffee and Christmas cookies and join us online to talk about the Biblical and Personal stories from the Sunday before. Again, follow the link.

FAITH HOPE LOVE

Reverse Advent Calendar collection for Steinbach Community Outreach

This year Outreach would like to encourage anyone who is able, to participate in a **Reverse Advent Calendar collection for Steinbach Community Outreach**. Each day during the season of Advent from **Dec 1–24** we are asking you to collect an item off the attached list and add it to a box that you can bring to our church between **Dec 28–31**. Team up with another family to fill a box if that is more doable or how about grandparents working together to fill a box with their grandchildren. We will also have some boxes in the entry way at Grace so if you want to bring individual items from the list feel free to drop them off in the boxes any time the church is open. In this season of Advent let our prayers of waiting be actions of giving. Thank you !

Outreach Committee (Willie Stoesz and Pearl Barz)

A graphic for a Reverse Advent Calendar collection. The background is a white wooden surface decorated with pinecones and white snowflake ornaments. The title 'Reverse Advent Calendar' is written in black and red. Below the title, there are instructions: 'Each day add an item to a box. Start off the new year right by donating the contents to Steinbach Community Outreach'. A list of 24 items follows, each corresponding to a day in December.

**Reverse
Advent Calendar**

Each day add an item to a box.
Start off the new year right by donating the contents to
Steinbach Community Outreach

- Dec. 1 - box of cereal
- Dec. 2 - toilet paper
- Dec. 3 - macaroni
- Dec. 4 - can of cream of something soup
- Dec. 5 - box of crackers
- Dec. 6 - bar of soap/bodywash
- Dec. 7 - can of green beans or peas
- Dec. 8 - shaving cream
- Dec. 9 - pair of socks
- Dec. 10 - tomato sauce
- Dec. 11 - rice
- Dec. 12 - can of corn
- Dec. 13 - deodorant
- Dec. 14 - can of tuna or chicken
- Dec. 15 - new item of clothing/underwear
- Dec. 16 - disposable razor
- Dec. 17 - bottle of shampoo
- Dec. 18 - toothpaste or toothbrush
- Dec. 19 - dishsoap
- Dec. 20 - feminine hygiene products
- Dec. 21 - spaghetti noodles
- Dec. 22 - bread
- Dec. 23 - potatoes
- Dec. 24 - grated cheese

Worship service songs for December 6:

Songs may have been modified for the worship service this morning.

Emmanuel, God with us

She lit a candle in a downtown cathedral
Quietly confessing, counting on a blessing
She looked as if she had nowhere to go
I could see her weeping
Hands together hoping you would hear...

This is the time of year
We hold our families near
But God let us be a friend to the hurting

Oh Emmanuel, God with us
Spirit revealed in us
That we may be your hope to the world
Oh Emmanuel, God with us
With a light to break the darkness
That we may show your hope to the world
Emmanuel, God with us
Be God in us

I moved in closer just so I could see her face
Maybe she was a mother
Someone's only daughter
Her silver hair shimmered like the snow
Christmas bells were ringing
Now beside her kneeling I asked her name

(And she said)
This was the time of year
I had my family near
But they've all gone and I have been so lonely
[Chorus]

So with my family that Christmas day
A girl of sixty years would laugh and play
And as we watched her dance our eyes were full of tears...

Precious Promise

Oh what a precious promise,
Oh what a gift of love;
An angel tells a virgin that
She's gonna have a son.

And though it's a precious promise,
She wonders how can this be;
What will the people say
And what if Joseph can't believe.

And her questions and her fears
Are met with an overwhelming joy
That God has chosen her.
Oh what a precious promise;
Mary waits as heaven comes to earth.
Oh what a precious promise,
Oh what a gift of love;
Joseph makes his choice to do
What few men would have done:

To take Mary as his bride,
When she's already carrying a child
That isn't his own.
Oh what a precious promise;
Mary and the child will have a home.
And shepherds stand on a hillside,
Their hearts racing with the news the angel told them;
A star's light fills up the dark sky,
As the night of precious promise is unfolding.
Oh what a precious promise,
Oh what a gift of love;
The waiting now is over and
The time has finally come.

For the God who made this world
To roll back the curtain
And unveil His passion for the heart of man.
Oh what a precious promise,
Lying in a manger in Bethlehem.
Oh what a precious promise,
Lying in a manger in Bethlehem

Blessings

We pray for blessings

We pray for peace

Comfort for family, protection while we sleep

We pray for healing, for prosperity

We pray for Your mighty hand to ease our suffering

All the while, You hear each spoken need

Yet love is way too much to give us lesser things

'Cause what if your blessings come through raindrops

What if Your healing comes through tears

What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near

What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise

We pray for wisdom

Your voice to hear

We cry in anger when we cannot feel You near

We doubt your goodness, we doubt your love

As if every promise from Your Word is not enough

All the while, You hear each desperate plea

And long that we'd have faith to believe

When friends betray us

When darkness seems to win

We know that pain reminds this heart

That this is not our home

What if my greatest disappointments

Or the aching of this life

Is the revealing of a greater thirst this world can't satisfy

What if trials of this life

The rain, the storms, the hardest nights

Are your mercies in disguise

1000 Candles

We light a thousand candles bright, around the earth today,

And all the beams will shine across the heaven's grand display.

Yes, over land and sea tonight the joyful message brings

The birth of Him, our Lord and Christ, our Savior and our King.

Dear brightest star o'er Bethlehem, O let your precious light

Shine in with hope and peace toward men in ev'ry home tonight.

In all our house so cold and dark, please send your warmth sublime,

The warmth that comes from Jesus' love this blessed Christmas time.

Grace and Peace