

Grace Mennonite Church
Sunday,
December 13, 2020
Third Advent
On the Road to Bethlehem ...



Grace Mennonite Church

December 13, 2020

10:00 a.m. – Worship Service

Pastors Mel Letkeman & Kyle Penner

www.gracesteinbach.ca 204 326 3707

Vol 59, No. 49



Third Advent

The sacred lived in the midst of the ordinary.

Zoom Link:

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

Gathering

Breakout Groups *

Calling to Worship

Call to Worship

Come, thou long expected Jesus

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

Memories of Christmas with Freddy and Detty Muganza

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Reflecting on Christmas Stories

The Birth Story, Luke 2:1-7

The Sacred among the Ordinary with Enid Letkeman

Sacred among the Ordinary

What Child is this

Sending

Congregational Prayer

Life of the Congregation

Benediction

Worship Leader:

Heidi Martens

Worship Speaker:

Mel Letkeman

Worship Stories:

Freddy & Detty Muganza

Worship Music:

Pearl Barz, Cathy Barkman, Annalee Schellenberg, James Barkman

Candle Lighters:

Kristy, Jason, Evan, Kian, Avery Rempel

Puppets:

Kyle Penner, Alexandra Nikkel

*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, Churches 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: Lord encourage us in our isolation.

We pray for our International Workers: John & Karen Friesen, living in Egypt. Daniel & Damaris Loewen- Rudgers spending time with Daniel's family in Winnipeg, and Emma Martens living in Rwanda.

Prayer for our Community: Pray that we will continue to have patience with each other as we live these days of COVID and RESTRICTIONS with varied opinions in relation to them.



Prayer for this Week: Lord, give us eyes to see your coming in times which we would rather not see.

Prayer for the World: Pray that governments of our world will be kind to all in assuring that COVID vaccines reach not only those countries most able to pay for them.

Thank You:

Sincere thanks to you, our Grace Church family, for your words of comfort, acts of kindness and many written condolences during the past weeks as we said goodbye to our dad and grandfather, **Homer Janzen**.

We're so grateful that we don't walk life's journey alone. Heartfelt love and blessings to each of you. **Enid & Mel, Becca, Julie and Andrew Letkeman**.



During this time of grieving our loss of **George**, husband, father and grandfather, we would like to thank the collective Grace community for the many expressions of sympathy, caring, and kindness. The food was nourishing, and the sense of being held in community is very real. Our thanks...

Marion & Valerie Penner

Opportunities at Grace

Voices Together New Hymnal:

We've been invited to a digital launch of the new hymnal and are including you. The launch will be held on Sunday December 13, 5 – 7 pm. However, **you must register by 4pm today, Friday December 11, to attend!** **Click here for more information and to register:** [Voices Together Digital Launch Event](#)

Grace Selfie Welcome

The Assi family members that arrived on Nov. 26th have completed their quarantine and are beginning to settle into life in Steinbach. As a way for the Grace Church community to welcome the Assi family we as host families are inviting you to submit a selfie (or other photo) of yourself/family and a brief greeting to [**pdfriesen@gmail.com**](mailto:pdfriesen@gmail.com). Patrick will compile all the greetings onto one large poster and will present that to the Assi family. Please include the names of all the people pictured in the photo. ***Please submit your photo and greeting by Friday, December 18th.*** Thank you. Patrick Friesen

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](#) .

This week at Grace: December 13- 19

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 Zoom, 7:00 pm ***
Thursday:	Advent Stories with Seniors, 10 am. (zoom)*** High School 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.

Pauingassi 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

A Christmas Eve Virtual Service is being planned for December 24

A link to the recorded service will be made available on our website on Christmas Eve, more details to come next week.



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.

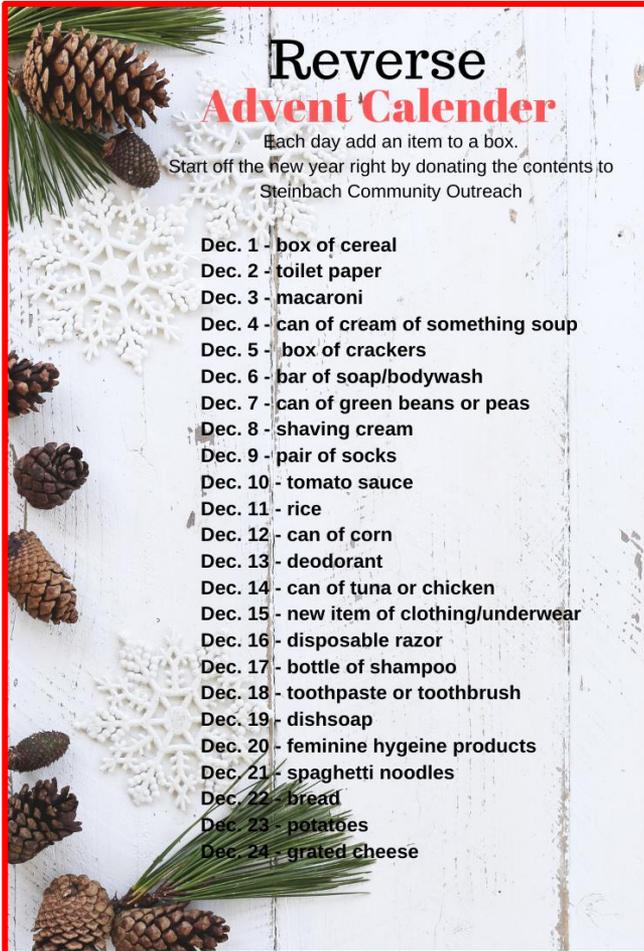
1. Of course, come to Worship. This is a very enjoyable and meaningful time of Community Worship and Gathering. Because we are not in the building to see the candles being lit, we're suggesting that you have four advent candles ready in your home as each week as Candle Lighting will be part of Worship.
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)



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 13:

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

What Child Is This

What Child is this, who laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies He in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear for sinners here,
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh;
Come peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts en-throne Him.
Raise, raise the song on high;
The Virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

CCLI Song # 30983

CCLI License # 1259579

Phillips Brooks / Lewis Henry Redner



O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by;
Yet in they dark streets shineth the everlasting Light:
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning starts, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

CCLI Song # 27879

CCLI License # 1259579

William Chatterton Dix / English Folk Melody

Come, thou long-expected Jesus

Come, thou long-expected Jesus! Born to set they people free,
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear desire of every nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Born they people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit, rule in all our hearts alone.
By thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

Hymnal # 178

Charles Wesley, Rowland H. Prichard

Grace and Peace
