

Grace Mennonite Church
Sunday,
December 20, 2020
Fourth Advent
On the Road to Bethlehem ...



Grace Mennonite Church

December 20, 2020

10:00 a.m. – Worship Service

Pastors Mel Letkeman & Kyle Penner

www.gracesteinbach.ca 204 326 3707

Vol 59, No. 51



Fourth Advent

Zoom Link:

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

Gathering

Breakout Groups *

Calling to Worship

Call to Worship

Helpless & Hungry / What Child is This?

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

Christmas Video with Grace Kids

Infant Lowly / Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Reflecting on Christmas Stories

The Shepherd Story, Luke 2:8-20

Bus drivers & Bankers

A Thousand Candles

Sending

Congregational Prayer

Life of the Congregation

Benediction

Worship Leader:

Trudi Graham

Worship Speaker:

Kyle Penner

Scripture:

Paul Barkman

Worship Music:

Jen Rogalsky, Shara Dueck, David Graham

Candle Lighters:

Marian, Stacey, Kate and Natalie Hiebert

Puppets:

Kyle Penner, Lisa Desautels

Digital Usher:

Matt Boese

Christmas Video:

Patrick Friesen with Grace Kids

Christmas Services at Grace

Longest Night Service

Monday, December 21

7:00 pm

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

The Longest Night Service is held on the longest night of the year.

Some years we are living with more darkness than light during the festive holiday season and this service is a time to sit with God and others to acknowledge that darkness and despair. This year our collective struggle has changed all of our Christmas Festivities. We will acknowledge that as we gather with prayer, readings, and some music.



Christmas Eve Service

Directed by David Klassen

Join our Grace Mennonite Community on December 24
for a virtual Christmas Eve Service.

The music of this special season will reach you wherever you are.
The Video/Link will be posted to our church website for all to enjoy.
(Check on the opening page in one of the revolving sliders for the link.)

An email will be sent to you as a reminder as well.)

"Wishing you all a Merry Christmas."

Christmas Day Zoom Worship Service.

10 am

A time of prayers, readings and music
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8984736540>

We Pray Together

Prayer for our Congregation: We pray for those dealing with medical concerns: Matt Rogalsky, Regon Barkman, Laurie Kroeker, Gord Bartel

Prayer for our Community: Meet us in our isolation this week. Give us peace and comfort.



Prayer for this Week: Help us to keep remembering and prioritizing the vulnerable.

Prayer for the World: We continue to pray for remote First Nation communities, including Pauingassi, as Covid and lockdowns have a disproportionately negative effect of them.

Opportunities at Grace

Merry Christmas from Little Bits of Grace: We are thinking about all the children of Grace and their families this Christmas season. We miss you and wish you love and peace. We will start our morning coffee time again just as soon as it is possible. Looking forward to seeing you all again.



Here is a Youtube link to a Christmas recording put together by some of us from the **Faith and Life Male Choir representing MCM (Mennonite Church of Manitoba)**. It is meant to be shared with the congregations in our conference and used by the churches as a Sunday morning filler or simply enjoyed by all of you during this festive season. Obviously, it is a teaser for what our Christmas concerts could have been like. It was fun to put together, none the less.

Merry Christmas and Enjoy! <https://youtu.be/xXXTP9j3zR8>

Leroy Penner

This week at Grace: December 20-26

Sunday: Virtual Worship Service, 10 am ***

Monday: Soup's On lunch program for HSD, 9:00 am
Longest Night Service, Zoom, 7:00 pm

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) ***

Thursday: Advent Stories with Seniors, 10 am. (zoom)***
Christmas Eve Service, link will be available on our website

Friday: **Christmas Day Service, 10 am, zoom**

*** For all zoom meetings please use this link:

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

Save the date: Grace Mennonite 2020 AGM will be held January 24th, 2021.
Details to follow (time, virtual or not).

Dear Friends at Grace M.C.: "Thank you for your partnership, whether through financial donations; packing relief kits; volunteering at thrift shops; making blankets; inviting MCC presenters; sponsoring refugees or remembering us in your prayers. Your community is extending love to neighbors near and far who are in need of care through the ministry of MCC. Thank you for your kindness."

MCC: Darryl Loewen, Brad Reimer

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 pig@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

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 Update:

As the church will remain closed until January 8th we are asking that anyone who is doing the Reverse Advent Calendar for Steinbach Community Outreach to please drop off your donations directly to Steinbach Community Outreach at 345 Loewen Blvd, west side SCO Blue doors from 9-5. Please call 204-898-9033 for days of the week that drop offs can be made. If dropping off your donation is a problem and you need help with that please contact Pearl Barz at 204-228-1526, and other arrangements will be made to do that for you.

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. 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. In this season of Advent let our prayers of waiting be actions of giving. Thank you !



"A Prayer Amidst Disaster"

written by Kelsey Friesen,
volunteer coordinator in the MDS Canada office,
as we wait for joy to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

God our provider and our refuge. God who is with us wherever we are and God
who knows what it is to be displaced and without somewhere to call home.
Mighty God in whom we live and move and have our being.

You, God, have guided your people out of places of despair before and given
them new places to call home. As Jesus, you know what it is to make a new
home in an unfamiliar place. You made yourself incarnate and shared our
experiences of disaster and chaos. But you brought unity and peace, you stilled
the storm. From the very beginning as your spirit hovered over the chaos of
the waters you have been present in all times and all circumstances.

God who knows us and loves us, we trust you to be our resting place from
generation to generation. God you never forget us and you send others to us
and us to others to bring hope to places where there is none.

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed but your steadfast
love shall not depart from us. Flood waters may rise and fall, and homes
disappear, but you show up by sending your people into those places and
staying with us.

At times we cry out, how long Lord? Will you forget me forever?

But you do not forget us. You do not leave us. You are our resting place in
anxiety and uncertainty. You are the God who looks for the lost, because you
see the value in that which is missing. You bring us home.

So God we call upon you to do something! We ask you to bring comfort and
rest. We ask you to make your presence known. May love, unity and hope
triumph amidst disaster. Make a way, Lord, when no way is seen.

Do not forget your people.
Do not leave us or abandon us.
Be our hope. Be our joy. Be our home.

Amen.

Worship service songs for December 20:

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

Helpless & Hungry / What Child is This?

1. Helpless and hungry, lowly, afraid
Wrapped in the chill of midwinter;
Comes now among us, born into poverty's
embrace, new life for the world
Who is this who lives with the lowly,
Sharing their sorrows, knowing their hunger?
This is Christ, revealed to the world
In the eyes of a child, a child of the poor

3. Who is the stranger here in our midst,
Looking for shelter among us?
Who is the outcast? Who do we see amid the
poor, the children of God?
Who is this who lives with the lowly,
Sharing their sorrows, knowing their hunger?
This is Christ, revealed to the world
In the eyes of a child, a child of the poor

5. Bring all the thirst, all who seek peace;
Bring those with nothing to offer.
Strengthen the feeble,
Say to the frightened heart: "Fear not: here is
your God!" Who is this who lives with the lowly,
Sharing their sorrows, knowing their hunger?
This is Christ, revealed to the world
In the eyes of a child, a child of the poor

2. 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.

4. 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.

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

Hymnal: A Worship Book, 1992, Mennonite Publishing House
HWB#215, William C Dix
STS, pg 26, Scott Soper

Infant Lowly / Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Infant holy, infant lowly, For His bed a cattle stall
Oxen lowing, little knowing. Christ, the babe is Lord of all

Swiftly winging, angels singing, Bells are ringing, tidings bringing
Christ, the babe is Lord of all, Christ, the babe is Lord of all

Hark! the herald angels sing: "Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies
With angelic hosts proclaim: "Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! the herald angels sing: "Glory to the newborn king."

Christ by highest Heav'n adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a Virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! the herald angels sing: "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the Heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that we no more may die
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give them second birth
Hark! the herald angels sing: "Glory to the newborn King!"

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping, Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story, Tidings of a gospel true

Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, Praises voicing greet the morrow
Christ, the babe was born for you, Christ, the babe was born for you.

Hymnal: A Worship Book, 1992, Mennonite Publishing House
HWB# 206 Carol Edith M. G. Reed,
HWB# 201. Charles Wesley, Mendelssohn.

A Thousand 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 happy 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 again
In ev'ry home tonight.

In all our homes so cold and dark,
Please, send your warmth sublime,
The warmth that comes from Jesus' love
This blessed Christmas time.



CCLI Song # 1509705
Emmy Kohler | Eugene Thomas | Evie Karlsson
CCLI License # 1259579

Grace and Peace

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.

Grace Contacts:

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