



Welcome!

Welcome to our Sunday worship service in a variety of ways. This second week of Advent, we continue on the road, preparing the way of the Lord. Advent is a time of preparation - preparing our hearts to receive the gift of Christ in a new way. To embrace this promise of peace, we have to let go of whatever stands in the way to make space for God's new work in us.

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

Prelude

Jared Janzen

Welcome

Pastor Lois Harder

Opportunities for Celebration and Service

Call to Worship and Invocation

Adapted from Isaiah 40:3-5

Leader: Listen! A voice cries out in the wilderness:

People: Prepare the way of the Lord!

Leader: Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low.

People: Prepare the way of the Lord!

Leader: Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together.

All: Prepare the way of the Lord!

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Instrumental song

Hope is a Candle

STS 15

*Peace is a candle to show us a pathway / Threatened by gusts from our rage and our greed
Friend feel no envy for those in the shadows / Violence and force their dead end course.*

1: We light a candle for *peace: peace* in our hearts, *peace* in our homes, *peace* in our world.

2: **May the light of peace shine through our lives.**

Peace Prayer

Advent Hymn (instrumental)

Bless'd be the God of Israel

HWB 174

Bless'd be the God of Israel,
who comes to set us free,
who visits and redeems us,
and grants us liberty!
The prophets spoke of mercy,
of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill the promise
to bring our people peace.

Now from the house of David
a child of grace is giv'n,
a Savior comes among us
to raise us up to heaven.
Before him goes the herald,
forerunner in the way,
the prophet of salvation,
the harbinger of day.

On prisoners of darkness
the sun begins to rise,
the dawning of forgiveness
upon the sinner's eyes,
to guide the feet of pilgrims
along the paths of peace.
O bless our God and Savior
with songs that never cease!

Children's Story

Delbert Peters

Morning Prayer

Pastor Lois

Worship Music

Come thou long expected Jesus

Laura Unrau and Elaine Unruh

Advent Hymn (instrumental)

O come, O come, Immanuel

HWB 172

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in
lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

O come, thou Dayspring,
come and cheer our spirits
By thine advent here.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows
put to flight.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid envy, strife,
and quarrels cease.
Fill the whole world
with heaven's peace.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Worship With Our Tithes and Offerings Prayer of dedication

First Fruits Giving
Pastor Caleb Yoder

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 40:1-11

Message

"Comfort and peace in hard times"

Pastor Caleb

SENT AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Song of Response

Comfort, comfort, O my people

HWB 176

Comfort, comfort, O my people,
speak of peace,
now says our God;
comfort those
who sit in darkness,
mourning 'neath
their sorrows' load.
Speak unto Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them.
Tell of all the sins I cover,
and that warfare now is over.

Hark, the voice
of one who's crying
in the desert far and near,
bidding all to full repentance,
since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way.
Let the valleys rise to meet him
and the hills bow down
to greet him.

O make straight
what long was crooked,
make the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be
true and humble,
as befits his holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now o'er earth is shed abroad.
And all flesh shall see the token
that his word is never broken.

Prayer of Confession and Assurance

Adapted from Mark 1, Psalm 85:8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a

Leader: We hear the prophet's cry in the desert and are called to repent and prepare the way.

People: We will hear what God the Lord will say:

Leader: The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, but is patient, not wanting anyone to perish.

People: Revive us again, that we may rejoice in you.

Show us your unfailing love, and grant us your salvation.

Leader: Salvation is near to those who fear God.

All: We receive this gift. Help us to walk in your way.

Benediction

Pastor Lois

+ The peace lamp serves as a visual reminder for us that we follow Jesus the Prince of Peace and believe in uncertain times that God's shalom will prevail.

This service made use of resources and ideas from *Leader* (MennoMedia), Fall 2020

Special thanks to Jared Janzen, Delbert Peters, Laura Unrau, Elaine Unruh, Myron Goertzen, Lynel Unrau, Steve Unruh, Delton Voth, and the AMC Covid Task Force.

Visual Arts for December: Tina Schrag, Megan Duerksen, Kevin and Bonnie Gaeddert, Eric and Gretchen Schrag, and LaNae Unruh. Thank you!

Questions for Reflection – Isaiah 40:1-11

1. How does the peace that God offers change the challenges you are presently living through or see in our community?
2. What is our role in making "rougher places" level to prepare for Christ's arrival?

Next Sunday is the third Sunday of Advent. Pastor Lois will be preaching.

Praying for our Congregation and Beyond

- ❖ We pray for those facing health issues and medical treatments in the coming days and weeks. Grant your comfort and healing, God, and the presence of your Spirit.
- ❖ As the rising numbers of Covid cases from the recent Thanksgiving gatherings become apparent we continue to pray for stamina, perseverance and health for those working in hospitals and other medical settings.
- ❖ We pray for those feeling loneliness this Christmas season whether because of life changes, remembering loved ones who are gone, or altered Christmas plans.
- ❖ We give thanks for the different means we have to worship together and remain connected, and we are thankful for Delton, Steve and others whose technical expertise makes our services possible.
- ❖ We give thanks for successful surgery that Janice Voth had this past week.
- ❖ We give thanks for a successful knee replacement for Rod Peters on Thursday.

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If you would appreciate a porch visit or phone call from one of the pastors or deacons, please feel free to contact us!

Coming Events

Today, Sunday, December 6	10:00 am	Worship service via Zoom
Wednesday, December 9	4:30 pm	Faith formation task force evaluation meeting
Sunday, December 13	10:00 am	Worship service via Zoom
Monday, December 14	1:00 – 6:00 pm	Goessel Blood Mobile
	4:30 pm	Covid Task Force
	5:45 pm	Board of Mission and Service
	7:00 pm	Church Council

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The AMC COVID-19 task force continues to meet and make plans to the best of our knowledge and ability. In the interest of the greater good, and to make it possible for the pastors to plan worship, we decided to continue virtual worship together for Sundays, December 6 and 13. The task force will meet again on Dec. 14 to discuss further plans.

As we enter the Advent season, we would like to offer a resource for families to use at home. The 2020 Advent at Home devotional, "We Wait for Jesus" is an easy-to-use resource that includes suggested Bible readings, activities, and simple celebratory rituals that can be done at home together as a family. The flexible, intergenerational format makes it ideal for families of all sizes and ages. Use it for all of Advent to Epiphany (November 29 through January 6), just for Christmas week, or whatever rhythm works for your household. The Advent at Home advent series is a publication from Mennonite Church USA and this year's devotional material was written by Talashia Keim Yoder, pastor of Christian Formation at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana. You can download this free resource at <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/advent-at-home/> or pick up a copy in the NE entryway.

Christmas Giving Tree -- There are still plenty of tags left on the Christmas Giving Tree at The Citizens State Bank. Thank you for your generosity in helping some of the children and families in our community

have a good Christmas celebration. Gifts are to be wrapped and brought to the bank by Monday, December 14. If you have any questions, please check with one of the pastors.

Current and upcoming devotionals (*Upper Room & Rejoice!*) are available in the NE entryway for purchase.

Thank you! I meant to send this note weeks ago! I so much appreciated all the kindness shown to me while I was in the hospital and in the following weeks! Thank you for the texts, emails, cards, phone calls, food, thoughts and prayers. I continue to improve and hope to have more energy as the days go by. I'm thankful to live in such a caring community! ~Darla Banman

Bloodmobile: As you make plans for the holidays, include sharing the gift of life by donating blood at Goessel Church between 1:00-6:00 on Monday, **December 14**. Over half of the slots are already filled, so go to www.redcrossblood.org to get the time you want.

CONFERENCE PRAYER REQUESTS

Western District Conference

Pray for health and safety for healthcare providers and other essential workers, and for all WDC members working to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our local communities.

Mennonite Mission Network

Mennonite Mission Network's SOOP has developed COVID-19 protocols that permit serving in some locations. While the Navajo Nation has a high rate of infections, most of the cases are further west than the Navajo Brethren in Christ Mission. Pray for volunteers to serve through tutoring and Christmas activities.

COMMUNITY & CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Camp Mennoscah

You are invited to a socially distanced Christmas Gathering at Camp Mennoscah on Saturday, December 12, at 2:30pm. Camp will provide s'mores and a beautiful outdoor space. **Registration required.**

Email office@campmennoscah.org or call 620-297-3290. Bring a mask for indoor spaces and those times when you cannot be 6 feet apart. Those under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Dress for the weather and don't forget to register!

Camp Mennoscah is a wonderful place for family gatherings of whatever size! A variety of facilities fit any number of family groupings. Maybe you only need a space during the day for walking the trails or playing disc golf. There is plenty of outdoor space! Contact Camp Mennoscah at 620-297-3290 or office@campmennoscah.org to reserve! You are welcome here!

If you missed ordering your Camp Mennoscah hoodie online, contact Camp Mennoscah at 620-297-3290. There will be a limited number of extras available.

Western District Conference

Save the date: WDC Annual Assembly will be July 30-Aug 1, 2021, in a hybrid model with the possibility of both virtual and in-person activities. More information to come!

The *WDC Garden December 2020/January/February 2021* issue is now available for viewing at: <https://mennowdc.org/wdc-garden-december-2020-january-february-2021/>. Learn about how WDC is engaging with racial justice and cultural diversity, the impact of Covid-19 on Hispanic churches, an announcement about Sandra Montes-Martinez as the new WDC Associate Conference Minister (Texas-Based), and more!

Bethel College

TODAY (Sunday, Dec. 6), 7-8:30 p.m. – Bethel College alumni and others who studied organ with Shirley Sprunger King are invited to a virtual reunion with Shirley and other organ alumni. RSVP by 3 p.m. Sunday, by clicking <https://tinyurl.com/yxrl199y>, to receive the link to the Zoom meeting, hosted by Bethel instructor of organ Donna (Ratzlaff) Hetrick.

Sunday, Dec. 13, 8 p.m. – All are invited to take part in Bethel College’s annual Lighting of the Green, from wherever you are. This long-standing Bethel Advent tradition celebrates the Light that shines in the darkness, the life and light of Christ who came into the world giving light to all humankind. Normally held on the Green in the center of campus, the gathering will take place virtually this year, live online (links follow) with some parts pre-recorded.

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/LZeLxduHoVk> or

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/98444357235?pwd=N1MzQlpiQ29HQWZiWUs2NGpNWwtlZz09>

Kauffman Museum at Bethel College is hosting the Smithsonian traveling exhibit “Crossroads: Change in Rural America” through Jan. 17. Accompanying it is a local companion exhibit, “Of Land and People: Our Community at the Crossroads,” created from the museum’s permanent exhibit “Of Land and People.” **The museum is open 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Tues.-Fri; 1:30-4:30 p.m., Sat.-Sunday; and closed Mondays and major holidays.** Admission to the “Crossroads” exhibit is free on Saturdays.

Sunday, Dec. 13, 3 p.m. – Gene Chávez, Ed.D., Shawnee, Kan., will give a virtual presentation on the rich history of Mexican immigration to Kansas and the journey of the humble but important flour tortilla. This Kauffman Museum “Sunday-Afternoon-at-the-Museum” program is connected to the museum’s current special exhibit, “Crossroads: Change in Rural America.” **Visit the museum website (kauffmannmuseum.org) and/or Facebook page for registration instructions.**

Mennonite Church USA

SOOP (Service Opportunities with our Partners) is accepting applications! Use your gifts and skills to work alongside others in a network of ministries across the church. Flexibly designed for retirees, families, and adults over 25. Visit MennoniteMission.net/SOOP to learn more!

Youth Venture is accepting applications for summer 2021! Discover and experience the work that God is doing in the world with a team of other young people as you serve, learn, worship, and build relationships.

Visit MennoniteMission.net/YouthVenture to learn more!

Mennonite Central Committee

Free resource from MCC: Learning about generosity! Help children learn about generosity with MCC printable worksheets including activities, a story, a craft to make and Christmas gift ideas that benefit global neighbors with colorable greeting cards, find it all at mcc.org/generosity. Explore the full list of Christmas giving options from MCC at mcc.org/christmas.

A memorable, meaningful and unique MCC gift to give this Christmas! Grab a piece of MCC history to use in a modern day Mennonite feeding station - your home! Get one for yourself and order more for family and friends. Hang it on the wall in your kitchen or dining room, display it on a shelf or use it as a serving tray! Remember the kitchen at your church, too. Each tray was uniquely handcrafted by an artisan in Siberia using Siberian hardwood. The tray is 16” in diameter and 2” deep. Suggested donation per tray is \$150. Full details and pictures are available at <https://mcc.org/feeding-station-tray>.

MCC asks for support for Central American hurricane recovery. Not one, but two hurricanes within two weeks 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 organization to provide emergency food, hygiene supplies and cleanup support. Join us as we help these communities recover. You can donate online mcc.org/eta-iota-relief, by phone (888) 563-4676 or by mail at MCC, 21 S. 12th St., PO Box 500, Akron PA 17501.

Join MCC for a series of “MCC and me” webinars to hear more about service opportunities. Are you ready to step out and into service? To gain new skills and experiences while working for relief, development and peace in the name of Christ?

MCC is working to adapt our programming as the situation with COVID-19 develops. All sessions relate to anticipated service needs, though timing and some other details may be subject to change.

- December 9 at 7 p.m. EST: Serving and Learning Together (SALT)
- January 13 at 3 p.m. EST: Summer Service leadership program
- February 25 at 10 a.m. EST: Sharing With Appalachian People (SWAP) summer staff
- February 25 at 8 p.m. EST: International service worker
- March 6 at 12 p.m. EST: International service worker
- March TBD: Mobile Meat Canner

For more information and to register: mcc.org/mcc-me-webinar-series-service-opportunities

Everence to hold Social Security and retirement income planning webinar

Everence will host a *Social Security and retirement income planning* webinar, on Monday, Dec. 14 at 6:30 p.m. Attendees will learn about Social Security strategies, risks that can impact retirement savings and strategies to help income last throughout retirement. This online workshop is free. Register soon by contacting our office at 316-283-3800, 877-467-7294 or central.kansas@everence.com.

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