

Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church

Volume LXVII

November 28, 2021

No. 48



Welcome to Alexanderwohl! We enter our second Advent season since Covid has upended many things for us. As we wait for Christ's coming, this Advent we listen to the biblical prophets who lived before the time of Jesus, to learn what it means to faithfully imagine what God and God's reign are like.

First Sunday of Advent

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

- Gathering Music** Jason Peters
Comfort, Comfort, O My People ~Fedak/Manz (VT 212)
Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying ~Behnke (VT 226)
- Welcome** Marilyn Unruh Flaming
- Opportunities for Celebration and Service**
- Call to Worship** Psalm 25:1-10
- Invocation**
- Lighting of Advent Candles+** Yoder Family
- *Gathering Songs** *O Come, O Come, Immanuel* VT 210
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming VT 216
- Children's Story** Aileen Esau
- Morning Prayer** Pastor Lois Harder
- Prayer of Confession and Assurance** Pastor Caleb Yoder
- Leader: A friend once said children grow taller at night – while at rest -- bones quietly stretch, and bit by bit their bodies grow.
Trees grow silently, too – from deep inside – energy is released.
Branches reach for the light. People grow silently, too.
- People:** **We confess that all too often, we stifle the growth God inspires deep inside of us, preferring the immediate, the good enough, the comfortable.**
- Leader: O God, in this season of waiting, get us up on our tiptoes, make us lean forward, extend our gaze.
- People:** **Surely God, who caused the righteous Branch to spring up, will enliven our imaginations in this season of hope. (Silence)**

Leader: The Kingdom of God is near. Listen – can you hear it?
Look – can you see it? Our God says, “surely the days are coming—they are already here!”

Advent Hymn *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* VT 65

Worship With Our Tithes and Offerings First Fruits Giving

Offertory *O Come, O Come, Immanuel* ~Engel (VT 210) Jason Peters

***Prayer of Dedication** Pastor Caleb Yoder

HEARING GOD’S WORD

Scripture Reading Jeremiah 33:14-16 Megan Duerksen

Message “God’s righteousness” Pastor Caleb

SENT AS GOD’S PEOPLE

***Advent Hymn** *To Us a Child of Hope Is Born* VT 259

***Benediction** Pastor Caleb

***Postlude** *Hark the Glad Sound* ~Leavitt Jason Peters

*All who are able are invited to stand.

+ 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*, Fall 2021

Song Leader: Renae Peters

Greeters: North – Kim Voth; South – John Janzen

Visual Arts: Tina Schrag

Christmas Decorations: Young Adult Sunday School Class

Nursery Staff: Aileen Esau, Cambry Duerksen

Worship Technology: DeAlan Unrau, Levi Schrag, Delton Voth, Steve Unruh

November 21 Attendance: 169 in person, 14 households on Zoom

Questions for Reflection – Jeremiah 33:14-16

1. Can you imagine the grief of the people of Judah in exile?
2. How can you learn to find hope based on God’s faithfulness when it is easy to despair?
3. What does that hope look like (for your life, the people close to you, the church, or the world)?
4. How do you imagine God’s goodness?

This **Advent season** we will reflect on Old Testament prophecies looking to the coming of Christ and modeling faithful imagination of God. Next Sunday’s passage will be from Malachi 3:1-4.

Praying for our Congregation and Beyond

- ❖ We thank you God that Judy Goertzen's mother, Liz Unruh was able to be moved from Topeka, KS to Kidron-Bethel in N. Newton on Monday where she is resting comfortably under the care of hospice. We ask for your continued presence and guidance for Liz and her family.
- ❖ Be with our students and teachers in the coming weeks God, as they bring to a close the first semester of classes.
- ❖ As we head into these holiday weeks we acknowledge that holidays can bring joy and excitement as well as grief and disappointment. Be our rock and our refuge, God as we experience the highs and lows of the season.
- ❖ We pray for those whose mood/mental health is affected by shorter days and colder weather.
- ❖ We pray for time in the midst of busyness and pressure, to rest and to reflect on the meaning of Advent.

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Tuesday, November 30

9:30 am Staff Meeting

Wednesday, December 1

6:30 pm Midweek Activities

6:30 pm Children's Christmas Eve Program Rehearsal

Thursday, December 2

7:30 pm Board of Deacons

Saturday, December 4

9:30 am Daughters of Grace Christmas program/fellowship time

Sunday, December 5 – Advent 2

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Worship Service in person or on Zoom

4:00 pm Bethesda Chapel – Pastor Lois Harder

COMING EVENTS

Dec 6 2:00 pm – Prayer Team

Dec 8 6:30 pm -- Midweek Activities

6:30 pm -- Children's Christmas Eve Program Recording
(Volunteers – 6:15 pm)

7:00 pm -- Board of Trustees

Dec 12 7:30 pm -- Christmas Brass Concert at Goessel High School

Dec 13 1:00 – 6:00 pm - Blood Mobile at Goessel Church

5:45 pm – Board of Mission and Service

7:00 pm – Church Council

Dec 15 6:30 pm -- Midweek Activities

6:30 pm -- Children's Midweek Christmas Party

A reminder to all women, you are invited to join Daughters of Grace for *A Cup of Christmas* Saturday, December 4 @ 9:30 am. There will be a program in the sanctuary, followed by a fellowship time with coffee and tea.

Please sign up in the north or south lobby today, November 28, if you would like to join us.

Children, ages 2 years old through 5th grade, will rehearse for the Christmas Eve program on Wednesday, December 1 from 6:30-7:30 pm. 2 year olds through Kindergarten ages will meet in the sanctuary, while 1st-5th grades will meet in the Fellowship Hall. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Nafziger at 620-367-4623 or nafziger@mtelco.net.

There will be a Sharing Time for children during the Christmas Eve program. This will be pre-recorded in the church sanctuary on Wednesday, December 8 in the evening. If your child/grandchild would like to participate in this part of the program, please respond to the online sign-up form emailed to families or contact Susan Nafziger (nafziger@mtelco.net or 620-367-4623) by Sunday, November 28. Thank you!

The Children & Junior High Youth will be participating in a pre-recorded video for the 2021 **Christmas Eve Program**. As we get closer to Christmas Eve, the church COVID taskforce will be evaluating whether an in-person event is safe to do so, or not. If a decision is made that an in-person Christmas Eve program is safe, we will watch the video in person together, along with the possibility of hymn singing and candle lighting. If the decision is made to not meet in-person on Christmas Eve, this video will be shared to the congregation for viewing. Either way, the recording will be available to all on Christmas Eve, via YouTube, for a 24-hour period. The traditional sharing time section of the Christmas Eve program, featuring performances by various Alexanderwohl children and youth, will also be a part of this recording. All of the actors, singers and performers have been hard at work to get their presentations ready for this recording so that we can all worship together, either in person or virtually.

“Dare to Imagine!”, Mennonite Church USA's annual Advent at Home worship guide, is now available. It follows the worship theme, can be printed or read from a device, covers Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, is flexible (use all or some of the activities), and is for all ages, children through mature adults. Download the free guide here <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/advent-at-home/> or pick up a printed copy from one of the lobbies.

Sunday School – 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service – 10:30 a.m.
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