

5/22/22 WORSHIP SERVICE

WELCOME – PASTOR CALEB YODER

Good morning and welcome to Alexanderwohl! It is good to be back after being away.

Last week we had Joe Sawatzky here from Mennonite Mission Network who helped us see how crisis in the early church created an opportunity for the church to become more multicultural, with people of different nationalities embracing Jesus the Jewish Messiah.

Joe also shared a story of someone he knew who was a political refugee, and became a pastor, able to share his gifts with people in a new land.

This week, we have another guest, Brian Bisbee, who is executive director of New Hope Shelter. We are eager to hear from him not only about the ministry of New Hope Shelter, but his insight as he preaches from the message of Acts about God's deep concern for the poor.

Next week we will continue with yet another week asking what it means to join God's mission near and far, and how to allow a sense of mission to permeate what we do and who we are.

PRAYER FOR GRADUATES

God, we celebrate this milestone of graduation or promotion. For each of these age groups, graduation represents a significant accomplishment and a transition from one stage of life to another.

We pray for 8th graders with the transition this fall into high school. We pray for high school seniors with their major milestone of finishing high school. For some may mean leaving home, attending college, or full-time work. For those finishing a college or graduate degree there's also a major transition.

We pray for your presence and your wisdom to be with each one of these young people. We pray for each to find ways to work out what it means to follow Jesus in the new stage of life.

We pray all this in Jesus' name...

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Holy God, you call us together to reflect on your word and our life in your world.

People: Be with us now as we sing and pray together, that we may hear your voice and understand your way.

All: This we pray through Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

INVOCATION

Christ, whose insistent call disturbs our settled lives;

give us discernment to hear your word,

grace to relinquish our tasks,

and courage to follow empty-handed wherever you may lead;
that the voice of your gospel may reach to the ends of the earth. Amen.

RECEIVING NEW MEMBERS

Lois: We've had the privilege of worshipping with Lee and Mary Alice Hertzler for about 3 years already, so this morning it is with great joy that we *formally* receive them into membership! They were both baptized when they were quite young, upon their confession of faith, Lee in the Warwick River Mennonite Church in Newport News, VA and Mary Alice in the Bethel Mennonite Church in West Liberty, Ohio. As some of us heard at Sr. Coffee on Friday afternoon, their faith journey has taken them on many unexpected adventures, including to three different locations in Brazil where they served as missionaries for a total of about 15 years. Most recently their church involvement has been at Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston and the Mennonite Church of Normal, in Normal, IL – which is where they moved from when they came to Goessel in 2019. So their church membership is being transferred from one Mennonite congregation to another; we received a lovely letter of transfer from the folks at the Mennonite Church of Normal, heartily commending Lee and Mary Alice to us, letting us know that they are dearly missed in that congregation and asking for our love and care for them here.

In our new *Voices Together* book there are not only wonderful new songs but also some new litanies and suggested words that we can speak together on important occasions in the church, like, when we receive new members. As you can see in your bulletin, we'll use a couple of those litanies in just a moment. We'll begin with a brief reminder about what church membership signifies and what we're all committing to when we join the church. These words of are at #959.

Caleb: The church is the body of Christ, created by God, and sustained by the Spirit.

Lois: The church embodies Jesus' way of life in the world, revealing God's reign through words and actions.

Caleb: When we choose to become members of the church, we commit ourselves to Christ, to one another, and to God's mission of healing and hope.

Lois: When we fall short of this vision, we commit to turning toward one another with compassion and to turning toward Christ, our strength and our guide. (Please follow along now, in the bulletin and respond with the bold letters, at the top of the second page.)

Caleb: God of covenant, your steadfast love endures forever. In Christ, we belong to you and your people.

L/MA: Today, through the Spirit, we renew our commitment to fellowship and worship, service and witness, as partners in your mission. God, give us grace, in this place and for this time, to live this covenant.

Lois: We have witnessed your commitment to Christ, and we recognize you as members in this congregation.

All: We welcome you with joy as companions on the journey of faith. We commit ourselves to fellowship and worship, service and witness, as partners in God's mission. We receive you as Christ has received us.

MORNING PRAYER – PASTOR LOIS

(Weston, Courtney and baby Haydin came home on Friday!)

Loving God, we take these moments to reflect and remember your faithfulness and goodness to us. We're grateful for your love as we experience it through friends and family, through random kindnesses and acts of thoughtful care. We're grateful for your creative bounty as we experience it through the natural world, watching life and color, crops and flowers spring up out of the rain-soaked soil. We're amazed by your creativity when we see things like a lunar eclipse or a Colorado snow storm in May.

We're grateful, God, for your love for us throughout our whole lives, from beginning to end. This morning we are especially thankful for your presence with Weston and Courtney this past week while they were at Wesley hospital with baby Haydin. Thank you, God for the healing she has had, for the doctors and nurses who cared for her and for all of them. Thank you for little Wyatt and for his grandparents who cared for him. We're grateful for their happy reunion now, at home, resting and re-establishing themselves as a family of four. We're thankful also for another Hiebert baby received safely and happily last week by Brian and Amber and grandparents Vickie and Lynell. Bless their family, God, with health and well-being.

From young to old, we're grateful. And as we read in Isaiah 46 we have this promise from you: Even to your old age and gray hairs

I am he, I am he who will sustain you.
I have made you and I will carry you;
I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

These are your solid promises to which we cling and for which we praise you, God, for the gifts of those among us who have reached old age, whose wisdom is evidenced by gray hairs and witnessed by your sustaining mercy. We thank you for all of our elders and the multitude of life experiences they bring. This morning we're especially grateful for Lee and Mary Alice as they formally and intentionally join us in worship and in community. We thank you also for Lois Janzen and Rannie Schmidt as they mark 90 trips around the sun this week. Thank you for their lives and all the gifts and blessings they bring to us. Continue to sustain and carry them in months and years to come and in this week as we celebrate their birthdays.

O God, we bring to you our prayers for those we know and love who struggle with health concerns. We pray for ElRoy as he continues to recuperate and heal from the brain bleed that he suffered last week. We thank you for the remarkable recovery he has already experienced and we ask for patience as he continues to regain strength. We pray for Diana Schunn and her family as she faces this most unusual heart condition and heads to KS City, away from home and familiarity seeking health and a new heart. Send to her your Spirit of comfort and peace; let her know your presence with her on this journey. We pray, God, for the

millions of people in this country and around the world who are grieving the deaths of those taken by Covid-19. The death toll is heartbreaking and we ask for compassion and mercy as we move forward.

Protector God, we give you thanks for the students and faculty from both Hesston and Bethel Colleges who are traveling abroad, sharing their gifts of music, taking in amazing sights and experiences, having opportunities to learn about different cultures. We pray for safe travels, for wise and humble spirits, for strong health and a safe return for everyone. We pray for the Junior High students who will go to Camp Tawakoni next weekend for Camp 412. And be also with the adults who will be counselors and leaders at this retreat. May they all encounter the gentle goodness of your Holy Spirit during their time away. O God, we pray for John Fast, Megan Duerksen and Marilyn Unruh Flaming, the delegates from our congregation to the Special Assembly of Mennonite Church USA in KS City next weekend. Give them – and all who are gathered – a deep and abiding sense of your presence as they worship, listen carefully to one another, discern and search for a wise way forward for our denomination. You have been faithful through the generations, O Lord, and we trust your leading and your faithfulness now.

God, we are especially grateful for the presence of you servant Brian with us here this morning. Give us open and compassionate hearts to hear his message. Grant your blessing to the work being done by Brian and everyone involved at the ministry of New Hope Shelter. Bless the staff, the volunteers and particularly the residents as they seek stability, security and lives that use the gifts you've given them to bring the fullness of your joy. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION – PASTOR CALEB

Merciful God,
 who is more than we can ever imagine,
 give us a wider vision of the world;
 give us a broader view of justice;
 give us dreams of peace
 that are not defined by boundaries of geography
 or race or religion,
 or by the limitations of worldly structures and systems.

Open our eyes and our ears
 that wherever we go,
 we may hear your voice calling us by name;
 calling us to serve,
 calling us to share,
 calling us to praise,
 so that we never give up on the promise of your kingdom,
 where the world is transformed,
 and all can enjoy life in all its fullness.
 Amen.

~ posted on the Monthly Prayers page of the Christian Aid website. <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

BENEDICTION

We are Christ's church

We came together to worship.

We came together to be filled.

Now we go:

To share our lives

To share God's goodness

To share the love and compassion of Christ. Amen