

Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church

Volume LXIX

January 1, 2023

No. 1



Welcome to Alexanderwohl!

Happy New Year! This morning our worship will be accompanied by a beautiful children's book and carols of the season. May the Spirit move among us through the story, the poignant artwork and our voices lifted together in word and song.

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

Gathering *O Little Town of Bethlehem* ~arr. Tonioli Mary Schmidt
 Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne ~arr. Hayes
 I Wonder As I Wander ~arr. Hayes
 Behold That Star ~arr. Hayes

Welcome Pastor Lois Harder

Opportunities for Celebration and Service

Call to Worship (Melody Zimmerman, The Soil and the Seed Project)

All: Sing to the Lord a new song! Glory to God in the Highest!

Leader: A child has been born. A child has been born for us. A son has been given and authority rests upon his shoulders;

All: He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Jesus.

Leader: Don't be afraid; this is Good News, full of joy for all the people! The Savior has been born. The Messiah, the Lord.

All: He was wrapped in cloth, lying in a manger, bringing hope and peace.

Leader: Jesus.

All: Sing to the Lord a new song! Glory to God in the Highest!

Invocation Prayer

***Hymn of Praise** *To Us a Child of Hope is Born* VT 259

Lighting of the Christ Candle and Peace Lamp+

Peace Prayer Kris and Nathaniel Schmucker

Hymn of Response *Hope Is a Candle* (v. 1, 2, 5) VT 211

Morning Prayer Pastor Lois

Worship with Our Tithes and Offerings First Fruits Giving

Offertory *Humbly I Adore Thee* ~arr. Warner Mary Schmidt

***Prayer of Dedication** Pastor Lois

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:1-7

Hymn of Response

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

VT 243

THE CHRISTMAS MIRACLE OF JONATHAN TOOMEY

We meet Jonathan Toomey

What Can I Leave Behind

VT 154

Ms. McDowell and her Son, Thomas

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks (v. 1, 2, 5, 6) VT 253

The Woodcarving Lessons Begin

Angels We Have Heard on High (v. 1, 4)

VT 249

Love Breaks Through

Love Has Come

VT 258

Healing Begins

SENT AS GOD'S PEOPLE

*Song of Sending

Joy to the World

VT 240

*Benediction

Pastor Lois

*Postlude

Deck the Halls ~arr. Tonioli

Mary Schmidt

*All who are able are invited to stand.

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

This service made use of the book *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey* by Susan Wojciechowski, illustrated by P.J. Lynch.

A note about the worship table: Restoration is near and this year the Advent table is progressive. Restoration is a process. Each week the display will change slightly as we prepare for the birth of Jesus. It serves as a visual reminder that we are moving from darkness toward light (illumination) helping us to see more clearly.

Song Leader: Marcia Brubaker

Greeters: North – Darla Banman and Gary Lyndaker
South – Elaine Banman

Visual Arts: Tina Schrag

Christmas Decorations: Friends and Followers Sunday School Class

Nursery Staff: Tina Schrag, Levi Schrag, Liz Schmucker

Worship Technology: Myron Goertzen, Lynel Unrau, Delton Voth

December 24 Attendance – Christmas Eve: 270; 18 Zoom households

December 25 Attendance: Worship -- 108 in person, 12 Zoom households, 6 YouTube views

December 25 Offering: First Fruits – \$11,201.00

Praying for our Congregation and Beyond

- ❖ God, we thank you for these High Holy Days in our Christian tradition – the twelve days of Christmas when we celebrate the gift of Jesus' birth, and the coming of the Magi to worship him.
- ❖ We're grateful for this past year, for all that has been learned and accomplished, for difficult times that have passed and challenges that have been met.
- ❖ God, we pray for your continued presence and mercy for this new year. May we learn daily to be more faithful disciples of Jesus.
- ❖ We pray for those who may be feeling isolated or lonely through this Christmas season.
- ❖ We ask for continued comfort and blessing for the families and friends of Dan Bergen and Milton Duerksen.
- ❖ Be with any who may be travelling, including Caleb, Beth, Austin and Josiah. We ask for safety and travel mercies.
- ❖ We give thanks for the wedding reception and time to celebrate with Erin Brubaker and Dylan Slabach. Bless them in this new covenant.
- ❖ We pray for those in Buffalo, NY and other places who are grieving the loss of loved ones in weather-related incidents.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, January 1 - New Year's Day

No Sunday School
10:20 am -- Prelude
10:30 am – Worship

Monday, January 2

Church Offices Closed

Tuesday, January 3

9:30 am – Staff Meeting

Wednesday, January 4

No Regular Midweek Activities
6:30 pm – Children's Ministry Team (Conference Room)
7:30 pm – Gathering for family and friends of Milton Duerksen – Fellowship Hall

Thursday, January 5

10:30 am – Milton Duerksen Memorial Service

Sunday, January 8 - Epiphany

9:30 am – Sunday School
10:30 am – Worship
4:00 pm – Service at Bethesda – Pastors Caleb and Lois

COMING EVENTS

Jan 11 Midweek Activities Resume
Jan 20 2022 Annual Reports due in Church Office
Jan 22 Q & A on 2023 Spending Plan

Feb 5 Annual Meeting

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Caleb and Beth are on vacation in Iowa and South Dakota from *December 26-January 2*. During this time, you may contact Pastor Lois or one of the deacons for any pastoral concerns.

As you have updates (addresses, emails, cell phone or land line numbers) for the 2023 Church Yearbook, turn them in to the church office.

If you would like a printed paper copy of the 2022 annual reports, please sign up in either lobby by Sunday, January 22, 2023. Reports will be emailed to those who have email.