

Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church

Volume LXVIII

December 18, 2022

No. 51



FOURTH SUNDAY OF *Advent*

Welcome to Alexanderwohl!

Advent is a season of hopeful angst, watching for signs of Christ's coming, and waiting for restoration. Preparing the way for Christ's coming means noticing the ways that God is already with us offering faithful presence in surprising or unexpected ways.

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

Gathering *Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying* ~Mallory Handbell Choir

Congregational Meeting # John Fast

Welcome Pastor Lois Harder

Opportunities for Celebration and Service

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

Leader: Into this longest night

All: Emmanuel – God with us

Leader: Into our broken world

All: Emmanuel – God with us

Leader: Into this space and this time

All: Emmanuel – God with us

Leader: Into our loneliness and our fear

All: Emmanuel – God with us

Leader: Into the world you love

All: Emmanuel – God with us

Invocation Prayer

Lighting of the Advent Candles+ Lee and Mary Alice Hertzler
Restore Us ~Seth Thomas Crissman and Greg Yoder

Congregational Response *O Come, O Come, Immanuel* (v.1, 5) VT 210

***Advent Hymn** *Hope Is a Candle* (v. 1, 3, 5) VT 211

Children's Story Suzanne Meier

Worship Music *Away in a Manger* ~Page Handbell Choir

Morning Prayer

Pastor Caleb Yoder

Worship with Our Tithes and Offerings

First Fruits Giving

Offertory

Prepare the Royal Highway ~Behnke

Jason Peters

***Prayer of Dedication**

Pastor Caleb

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Prophetic Reading

Isaiah 7:10-16

EIRoy Wiens

Song of Confession

Come Now, O God (v.1, 3)

VT 143

Gospel Reading

Matthew 1:18-25

EIRoy Wiens

Message

"Hope against all the evidence"

Pastor Lois

SENT AS GOD'S PEOPLE

***Song of Sending**

Savior of the Nations, Come!

VT 214

***Benediction**

Pastor Lois

***Postlude**

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come ~Leavitt

Jason Peters

*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 resources from *Leader*, Fall 2022; and *Vol. 5 Advent-Christmas-Epiphany* of the Soil and the Seed Project.

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: Braden Unruh

Handbell Choir Director: Mary Schmidt

Greeters: North – Kevin and Bonnie Gaeddert; South – Larry Voth

Visual Arts: Tina Schrag

Christmas Decorations: Friends and Followers Sunday School Class

Nursery Staff: Chrystiana Miller, Jayley Schmidt, Beth Yoder

Worship Technology: DeAlan Unrau, Colby Nafziger, Delton Voth

December 11 Attendance: Sunday School – 119; Worship -- 141 in person, 15 Zoom households, 17 YouTube views

December 11 Offering: Sunday School – \$115.93; First Fruits – \$7,581.21

Next Sunday (Christmas Day) there will be no Sunday School. Prelude music begins at 10:15 and worship begins at 10:30 am. Pastor Caleb will preach from John 1:1-14.

Praying for our Congregation and Beyond

- ❖ We thank you, God, for those who have child-like enthusiasm and anticipation of Christmas.
- ❖ We continue to pray for healing for those who are struggling with viruses and other illness.
- ❖ We pray for Dan Bergen as he is a patient at Wesley Medical Center. We ask for wisdom for the doctors and comfort and healing for Dan.
- ❖ We pray for those who are experiencing difficult or destructive weather conditions.
- ❖ We pray for those in Iran, Peru and Haiti who are struggling for human rights and receiving prison time or even death as a result.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 18 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:30 am -- Sunday School

10:30 am – Worship

Tuesday, December 20

9:30 am – Staff Meeting

Wednesday, December 21

No Regular Midweek Activities

6:30 - 8:00 pm – Christmas Eve Program Practice for Ages 2 – 8th Grade

Saturday, December 24

7:00 pm – Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 25 - Christmas Day

No Sunday School

10:15 am -- Prelude

10:30 am – Worship

COMING EVENTS

Dec 25, 26, 27 Serve at New Hope Shelter, Newton

Dec 26 & 30 Church Offices Closed

Jan 1 New Year's Day – No Sunday School – Worship at 10:30 am

Jan 2 Church Offices Closed

Jan 20 Annual Reports due in Church Office

Jan 22 Q & A on 2023 Spending Plan

Feb 5 Annual Meeting

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MOTION: The Church Council moves *“that we set aside the requirement in our constitution prescribing a set number of members for each board for 2023.”*

Everyone is invited to the Christmas Eve program on Saturday, December 24, at 7 p.m. The children and junior high youth will be presenting a drama, *Christmas at the Stable: The Animals Tell Their Stories*,

based on the book written by local author, Kimberly K. Funk. There will also be congregational carol singing, volunteer sharing time, and a candle-lighting service. A Zoom option will be provided. Christmas sacks will be available for all children through 8th grade in the fellowship hall after the program.

There will be a **sharing time for children during the Christmas Eve program**. If your child/grandchild would like to participate in this part of the program, you may pick up a form located in the Sunday School office downstairs. Bring it to the program -- your child will hand it to the person leading the sharing time. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Nafziger (620-386-0469 or nafziger@mtelco.net).

Tis the season for giving our time and food to those in need. **We will be serving at New Hope Shelter, December 25-27**. The meals will be provided by Friends & Followers, Route 15 and Young Adult Sunday School classes. The sign-up sheet for the evening shift (5 -11 pm) is on the south lobby bulletin board. If you cannot serve, consider giving toward their wish list of current needs including: disposable vinyl gloves, coffee, creamer & sugar, Jello & pudding cups, fruit & granola bars, cookies, sliced meat & cheese, laundry pods, pillows & pillow cases, letter sized file folders, Pine-Sol, and Wal Mart or Dillion's Gift Cards. These items can be placed in the large box in the south lobby under the coat rack. Thank you for your support!

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.