

**Mennonite Mission Network Prayer Request:** SADRA (Southern African Development and Reconstruction Agency) Conflict Transformation is a Mennonite Mission Network partner that offers a Christian response to injustice in South Africa. Pray for the conflict mediators, who train members of their communities to de-escalate situations that could lead to violence.

**Western District Conference Prayer Request:** Pray for generous financial support for WDC congregations, as they seek to meet annual budget goals for mission and ministry.

To request prayer or a visit, or if a family member is hospitalized, please contact the church office or a pastor so that visits and prayer support can be offered. Names of people receiving medical care are printed in the BCMC bulletin only by permission of the patient or a guardian/family-member. This is part of the caring network at BCMC, which includes support among members of Sunday school classes and small groups, as well as the Prayer Network and Caring Fund sponsored by the Deacon Commission.

**Bethel College Mennonite Church welcomes into fellowship and membership all persons who confess faith in Jesus Christ, without regard to their race, ethnic background, gender, age, sexual orientation, education, ability, and other factors which give rise to discrimination and marginalization.**

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Bethel College Mennonite Church, 2600 College Ave., Box 364, North Newton, KS 67117  
Phone: 316-283-3667—Fax: 316-283-2079 Email: [office@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:office@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)  
Website: [bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](http://bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org) Notary public service is available in the church office  
Church office hours: 9 a.m.—12 p.m. Mon—Fri; 1 p.m.—5 p.m. Mon—Thur

**Church office is closed Friday afternoons**

Building is locked weekdays at 5 p.m. unless evening activities are scheduled

**Saturdays—building is locked**

Sundays—building is locked at 2 p.m. unless afternoon/evening activities are scheduled

- Pastor Nathan Koontz, Day off: Wednesday  
Cell phone: 316-212-4593; Email: [nathan@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:nathan@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)
- Pastor Roger Neufeld Smith  
Cell phone: 785-220-1968; Email: [roger@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:roger@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)
- Elizabeth Schmidt, Pastor of Congregational Care  
Email: [elizabeth@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:elizabeth@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)
- Jill Robb, Faith Formation Coordinator—Email: [jill@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:jill@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)
- George Leary, Youth Coordinator—Email: [george@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:george@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)
- Office/Facilities Manager: Monica Lichti, Cell phone 316-249-9652  
Email: [office@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:office@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)
- Music Coordinators: Barbara Thiesen and Verlene Garber
- Chancel Choir Director: Riley King
- Chancel Bells Director: Verlene Garber
- Menno Ringers Director: Suzanne Burch

## Bethel College Mennonite Church

December 17, 2023



Our faith in a God of love leads us, by the power of the Spirit,  
to follow Jesus in doing justice, loving mercy,  
and walking humbly with God.

**BETHEL COLLEGE MENNONITE CHURCH**

**December 17, 2023**

**Third Sunday of Advent: Love**

Prelude	<i>Nocturno, Op. 7</i> (Franz Strauss) <i>Allegro moderato from Horn Concerto No. 1 in C Minor</i> (Franz Strauss) Chris Miertschin, horn; Will Wiebe-Friesen, piano	
*Advent Candle Hymn	<i>Hope Is a Candle</i> , verses 1-3	VT 211
Advent Candle Lighting	Coralee Shenk, Jeanette & Steve Stucky	
*Advent Litany	<i>Love</i>	VT 916
Welcome and Prayer	Esther Kreider Eash	
*Hymn	<i>O Come, O Come Immanuel</i> Verses 1, 4, and 7	VT 210
Children's Conversation	Esther Koontz	
Anthem	<i>Christmas is Here</i> (Dale Wood) Chancel Choir; Riley King, director; Will Wiebe-Friesen, accompanist	
Scripture Reading	John 1:1-9	
*Hymn	<i>The Light Shines in the Darkness</i> Adah Hodge, Mara Oswald, Lily Schloneger sing verses Congregation sings chorus	Bulletin insert
Scripture Reading	I John 4:7-12	
Sermon	<i>God's Love Revealed</i>	Roger Neufeld Smith
*Hymn	<i>Love Came Down at Christmas</i>	VT 255
Prayers of God's People		
*Hymn	<i>Love Has Come</i>	VT 258
Benediction		
Postlude	<i>Toccata on Joy to the World</i> (Brenda Portman) Will Wiebe-Friesen, organ	

\*You are invited to stand ■ VT—*Voices Together*  
■ Keyboard—Will Wiebe-Friesen ■ Audio visual—Francis Toews

**Welcome visitors and friends! May you sense God's presence at BCMC.**

The nursery at the back of the sanctuary is available during worship for families with infants and toddlers.

**We light the Christ candle to welcome God's presence among us. Sent out from worship, we carry the light of Christ with us into the world.**

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**Chris Miertschin, assistant professor of music and director of bands at Bethel College**, is our guest musician this Sunday. He lives in Abilene with his husband Jair and plays horn with the Salina Symphony Orchestra and Theatre Salina.

**Roger's Whereabouts** : Roger will be driving back to Topeka Sunday afternoon (12/17). He will be celebrating Christmas with his Topeka church, then back in Newton on Wed., Dec. 27, to help plan the BCMC worship service for Dec. 31. *He will be available for pastoral care concerns that week.* Whether he's in Newton or Topeka, Roger checks his email and phone regularly, so feel free to contact him via email, text or phone call (785-220-1968).

**The church office will be closed during the week between Christmas and December 30.**

**The library's theme for the month of December is Advent/Christmas.** We have quite a number of fiction/nonfiction choices for all ages. You might want to consider checking out books for visiting family members. We have so many good choices. Also, due to the Advent/Christmas Everybody books in the children's section of the library, all the puzzles are now located in the library on the west wall. There are some wonderful choices for holiday family time. A suggested donation of \$5 for a puzzle helps support the supplies needed to run the library.

**Also on the west wall are a number of new books** that were recently purchased through our budget and sale at Faith and Life Bookstore. Come check out the new selections in all genres. A brief write up of the new books is available by the library computer. Happy Holiday reading!  
— *Library Committee*

**The bulletin covers for Advent** are used by permission from Salt Project, <https://www.saltproject.org/>

**New BCMC directories are available** in the Gathering Place between the mailboxes and in the south entrance on the glass table.

# The Light Shines in the Darkness

John 1:5  
Patricia Shelly

Patricia Shelly

1. The De - cem - ber sun brings a new day in - to view; And the  
 peo - ple of dark - ness have heard the best good news! —

CHORUS: The light shines in the dark - ness, And the dark - ness has  
 nev - er put it out, the light shines in the dark - ness, —  
 and the dark - ness has nev - er put it out! (REPEAT)

2. Those watching sheep in the cold grass all alone  
Have seen the sign and it fills their hearts with hope.
3. Three traveling souls searching near and looking far  
Say the light still shines: for they've seen a brilliant star.
4. The times are bad and we walk into the night,  
But the darkness we feel only helps us see the light.
5. The true light that shines in every person's life  
Is coming into the world. Come and celebrate the sight!

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This Week at BCMC: December 17—24, 2023

Sun., Dec. 17, 2023—Third Sunday of Advent

9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Faith Formation

Worship YouTube Link for this Sunday:

<https://youtube.com/live/Wi3ZHcRxKYA?feature=share>

**The church nursery** is staffed during worship and Sunday School

10:45 a.m. Faith Formation—Intergenerational class (fellowship hall); High School (Room 24) Adult Classes: Agape (nursery); Bible Study (Rm 14); Catcombs (Rm B5); Fellowship (B7); Fine Arts (Rm 22); Issues and Christianity (Rm 23); Open Circle (Room 21) Seekers (Rm 28)

Tues., Dec. 19, 2023

11 a.m. Staff Meeting

7 p.m. Womens' Fellowship Program in Fellowship Hall—Prairie Bronze Ensemble Bell Choir will perform Christmas music—All are invited

Wed., Dec. 20, 2023

7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal in the sanctuary

Thurs., Dec. 21, 2023

5:30 p.m. Pizza followed by the rehearsal at 6 p.m.

5:30 p.m. Rehearsal for Christmas worship service in sanctuary

Sun., Dec. 24, 2023—Fourth Sunday of Advent

10 a.m. Christmas Worship Service with the children and youth in the sanctuary followed by refreshments in the gathering place

No Sunday school

11 p.m. Lessons and Carols and candle-lighting service in the sanctuary

## Preparing for Worship

As we gather for worship each Sunday in the sanctuary, the Worship Commission invites and encourages us to become quiet as the prelude centers us for worship. Conversation is welcome and encouraged in the Gathering Place outside of the sanctuary during the prelude. We invite all who are present in the sanctuary to find their seats and quietly participate in preparing for worship.

**The Prairie Bronze Ensemble will perform Christmas music** Tues., Dec. 19, in Fellowship Hall at 7 p.m. The public is invited so please bring friends and family to enjoy the bell choir sponsored by BCMC Women's Fellowship.

**Congregants are welcome to bring Christmas snacks** to share for our coffee time in the gathering place after the worship service **Dec. 24.** There will be no Sunday School on Dec. 24.

**In a brief special congregational meeting following worship December 10, 2023 there was a vote on the following board recommendation:**

Does BCMC approve the initiation of a pledge drive for the purpose of soliciting funds and support for the solar project? The details of a pledge drive will be worked out if an initial vote indicates significant support.

The purpose of this vote is to determine the level of support from the congregation for a roof-top solar installation on our church. A review of the solar project as presented at the September congregational meeting and in two subsequent Sunday School hour meetings was distributed to mailboxes the week of November 27. **The vote was 68 yes and 5 no.**

**It's about over, in just two weeks we will know for sure how we did financially this year.** So if you haven't gotten all your pledges fulfilled or if you want to give some money to the church or perhaps need an additional tax write-off, it's time to do it. From the Finance Committee we want to thank you for making this a great year and we urge you to help us finish well so that it can be a really great year. **Looking ahead to 2024**, the financial picture is much more cloudy. There is a big gap between the intents and the proposed budget. We and the Church Board are looking for creative ways to deal with this problem. You can help by making sure that you have pledged or that you have pledged your maximum. Also your suggestions are coveted and your prayers for wisdom are coveted. With your help 2024 can be a great year also. — *Finance Committee*

**BCMC Women's Fellowship Birthday Calendars are available from WF Executive Board members:**

Lois Brubacher 620-837-3281; Lois Preheim 316-804-4713

Brenda Turner 316-283-8131; Janet Voth 316-283-1922

The suggested donation price is \$10. This calendar project is designed to help build community and the donation is used to support WF Ministries.

**Registration for the upcoming Kansas Mennonite Men's Chorus** season is at hand. Please consider joining. Some of you are already on the list and we certainly encourage new members. For further details please contact Joe Peters, BCMC contact. Call or text (316) 288-7031 or email joelilp@cox.net

**BCMC Offering for December 10, 2023:** General Fund \$20,891.75; Gen Fund 2024 \$2,125; Caring Fund \$100; Library Reserve Fund \$50; Flower Fund \$20; Kitchen Fund \$17; Women's Fellowship \$110; Solar Fund \$3,000; Gladys Niles Memorial \$270.

## **Bethel College Announcements**

- **TODAY (Sun., Dec. 17) – Kauffman Museum celebration** of the 75th anniversary of the longest running community science project in the world, the Harvey County Christmas Bird Count. Come and go at the museum from 1:30-4:30 p.m. to see the progress of the special exhibit "A Day with the Birds," with brief remarks at 3 p.m.
- **Kauffman Museum at Bethel College invites you to visit during the holidays.** Open hours are Tues.-Fri. 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and weekends 1:30-4:30 p.m. (closed Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve). The permanent exhibits are "Of Land and People," "Mirror of the Martyrs" and "Mennonite Immigrant Furniture," and the museum store is also open during those hours, with books, games, art and other gift items for sale. (see [kauffmanmuseum.org/museum-store/](http://kauffmanmuseum.org/museum-store/)).

**In response to the Credence Report, the Credence Task Group has planted seeds!** Starting in 2024, BCMC will begin organizing some small groups! Several individuals and families have agreed to serve as small group "seeds", which means that if you/your family would like to be part of a small group, this is your chance! Small groups will be informal in nature, as frequent as the group chooses, and designed to promote connection and community within the BCMC congregation. Whether you're new to the congregation or have been here for 80 years, a small group may be for you. If interested, or if you'd like more information, please connect with Adam Robb or Brad Kohlman by the end of the year, as they would like to get the groups organized and going to start 2024. Here's to a new adventure at BCMC!

**The Deacons Commission is working on a "Thinking of You" campaign for people who are isolated due to health concerns.** For the next few Sundays, we will have a table at the back of the sanctuary with pages for your comments to members of our church whom we haven't been able to see for a while. Please stop by and write a short greeting or sign your name to let them know we are thinking about them. For those of you who are unable to attend worship but can stop by the church during the week, these letters will be in the gathering place during the week for anyone to write a note before we send them out. Thank you! — *Deacon Commission*

**Creation Care: While you are active in your Christmas shopping please remember to save plastic bags for recycling.** We have collected 500 pounds with a goal of 1,000 pounds. — *Vern and Jane Goering*