

Mennonite Mission Network Prayer Request: Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for peace in the land where Jesus was born more than 2000 years ago. Pray, especially, for partners — Bethlehem Bible College, Nazareth Hospital and Nazareth Village — who faithfully work to peel away the layers of fear and hate that distort Jesus' message of peace, in a time of escalating violence in Israel-Palestine.

Western District Conference Prayer Request: Rejoice in the gift of Emmanuel, God-with-us! Give thanks for the many ways that WDC congregations embody Jesus' presence in the world today.

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.

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
Website: 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
- Pastor Roger Neufeld Smith
Cell phone: 785-220-1968; Email: roger@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Elizabeth Schmidt, Pastor of Congregational Care
Email: elizabeth@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Jill Robb, Faith Formation Coordinator—Email: jill@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- George Leary, Youth Coordinator— Email: george@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Office/Facilities Manager: Monica Lichti, Cell phone 316-249-9652
Email: 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 24, 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 24, 2023

**Fourth Sunday of Advent: Joy
Children's Christmas Service**

Prelude	<i>The First Noel</i> (Tufenkjian)	Abby Koontz
	<i>What Child is This</i>	Brett and Collin Gaeddert
	<i>Silent Night</i>	Caleb Koontz
	<i>French Lullaby</i>	Lincoln Kohlman
	<i>Away in A Manger</i>	Lucy Burch and Kenna Graber
	<i>O Holy Night</i>	Naomi Koontz
*Advent Candle Hymn	<i>Hope Is a Candle</i> verses 1-4	VT 211
Advent Candle Lighting	Lawrence, Lincoln, Megan & Brad Kohlman	
*Advent Litany	<i>Joy</i>	VT 916
Welcome and Prayer	Nathan Koontz	
*Hymn	<i>He Came Down</i> 5 verses: Joy, Hope, Peace, Love, Joy	VT 239
Children's Christmas Service	<i>Sing and Tell the Story</i>	
*Hymn	<i>With Mary Sing Magnificat</i>	VT 208
Prayers of God's People		
*Hymn	<i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i>	VT 249
Benediction		
Postlude	<i>Hark, the Herald Angels Sing</i> Lucy Burch and Kenna Graber	

*You are invited to stand ■ VT—*Voices Together*
■ Keyboard—Will Wiebe-Friesen ■ Audio visual— Ben Lichti

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.

YouTube Link for December 24, 10 a.m. Service
<https://youtube.com/live/mmGsiTK1Djs?feature=share>

YouTube Link for December 24, 11 p.m. Lessons and Carols Service
<https://youtube.com/live/r54eKKox2BQ?feature=share>

Sunday, December 31, the worship service will begin at 10 a.m. We will sing a lot of Christmas hymns so come prepared to sing and rejoice!

Roger's Whereabouts : Though the church office will be closed next week, Roger will be back in Newton on Wednesday (12/27) to complete planning for the December 31 worship service and to respond to unexpected circumstances. Feel free to call him at 785-220-1968. He will be celebrating with family in Newton on Friday afternoon and Saturday, but will lead worship on Sunday. Roger will drive back to Newton Sunday afternoon 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).

Pastoral News:

The Board has renewed Roger Neufeld Smith's half-time contract for an additional year (or less if a new regular pastor is found). We are so grateful for his willingness to continue offering his fine work, administrative and communication skills, and wisdom to our congregation in this transitional time. The Board has also renewed Elizabeth Schmidt's half-time contract for an additional year. Since she is now credentialed, her title has been changed to Pastor of Congregational Care. Her job description, although revised, remains fundamentally the same. Feedback from those working most closely with her was overwhelmingly positive and confirmed her pastoral gifts, organizational skills, and caring concern for congregants. Thank you, Elizabeth!

BCMC Offering for December 17, 2023: General Fund \$8,940.33; Plant Fund \$108.33; Caring Fund \$40; Living Stones \$20; Flower Fund \$25; Kitchen Fund \$5.

Save the date, January 28, 2024 for Congregational Meeting and Soup Luncheon prior to the congregational meeting and the next fun-filled congregation and youth activity!

Creation Care: Even though you may be finished with Christmas shopping still please remember to save plastic bags for recycling. We have collected 500 pounds with a goal of 1,000 pounds.

— Vern and Jane Goering

Bethel College Announcements

- **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/).
- **Sun., Jan. 7 – Sunday-Afternoon-at-the-Museum,** "The Western Meadowlark: The State Bird, but Not the Only Exceptional Bird in Kansas," with local birding expert Gregg Friesen, 3 p.m., *Kauffman Museum at Bethel College*.

The WDC Office and Resource Library will be closed for Christmas and New Years from Dec 23 through Jan 1. We will open again on Tuesday, Jan 2. Be sure to stop by the WDC Resource Library prior to this to pick up books for your kids, your grandkids or yourself to enjoy during the holiday break!

Register now for the MCC South Texas Learning Tour, February 4-9, 2024! This immigration-focused learning tour presents a unique opportunity to engage directly with organizations making a positive impact on our neighbors. You won't want to miss this opportunity. Details and online registration can be found at mcc.org/south-texas-lt. Deadline to sign up is Jan. 20. Please contact Abraham Diaz Alonso with questions, abrahamdiazalonso@mcc.org.

SING AND TELL THE STORY!

SCENES AND SONGS

Scene 1—Mary's Home in Nazareth

Scene 2—Elizabeth's Home in Judean Hill Country

Song—*And My Spirit Sings*

Scene 3—Joseph's Carpenter Shop in Nazareth

Scene 4—On the Road from Nazareth to Bethlehem

Song—*From Nazareth to Bethlehem*

Scene 5—Shepherd's Campsite near Bethlehem

Scene 6—Bethlehem

Scene 7—Everywhere!

Song—*Go Tell It On the Mountain*—VT 252

STORY TELLERS AND SINGERS

Faith Burch

Lucy Burch

Payne Claassen

Collin Gaeddert

Brett Gaeddert

Emma Gering

Emerson Gering

Adah Hodge

Lawrence Kohlman

Lincoln Kohlman

Abby Koontz

Ani Koontz

Naomi Koontz

Mara Oswald

Gabby Robb

Jake Robb

Lily Schloneger

Abram Wall

Mabel Wall

Addie Zerger

Justin Zerger

THANKS

Leaders: Judy Harder, Mary Ellen Hodge, Tim Hodge, Jill Robb

Musicians: Will Wiebe-Friesen, Lucy Burch, Suzy Burch, Tim Hodge, Susie Swartley

Back Drop Design and Builders: Lauren Friesen, Ron Peters, Keith Harder

Props: Judy Harder, Glen Ediger, David Kreider, Rose Haury

Intergenerational Sunday School Activities: Deb Gering, Janet Friesen, Doug Miller, Maisie and Miles Brubacher

Others: Ben Lichti, Audio-Visual and Monica Lichti for things behind the scenes

AND PARENTS!

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

Service of Remembrance

As we are in the holiday season that brings joy with the promise of new life and love birthed into our world, there is also grief as we miss those who have passed from this world in 2023. In order to recognize and mourn the loss of our loved ones from 2023, Bethel College Mennonite Church is hosting a Service of Remembrance on January 7, 2024 at 4 p.m., in the BCMC sanctuary.

We offer sympathy to the family of Don Kaufman. Don died December 18 at Kidron Bethel Village. Please pray for Don's children, Kendra Kaufman, Galen Kaufman, and Nathan (and Jill) Kaufman, and their families.

Memorial Service for Jim Banman and Judy Coover

Please remember in your prayers Jim's children, Steven, Susan, Christine, and T.J., and their families as they mourn the death of Jim on December 9. A joint memorial service for Jim and his wife, Judith Coover, who died in 2020, will be held on January 7, 2024, 1:30 p.m. at Kidron Hall, Kidron Bethel Village.

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/>

Changes for your church directories:

- Note that Doug Penner's email address is: dougpen@sbcbglobal.net
- Andrew Thiesen's new address: 309 Davis Street, Garden City, KS 67846

Our next congregational meeting is at 12:45 p.m. , Jan. 28, 2024. The following two items will be on the agenda:

Welcome Statement:

The BCMC board has approved a recommendation from the Inclusion Task Group to revise our congregation's welcome statement which is in the church's constitution. This announcement constitutes the required 30 day notice for a vote on a constitutional change. The revised version follows:

"Bethel College Mennonite Church is an open and affirming congregation centered in the life and teachings of Jesus. Embracing the divine within each person, we warmly welcome any and all into fellowship without regard to race, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, economic status, marital status and age."

Change in Moderator Model:

The Board has proposed a bylaws change to shift church officer positions from Moderator Elect and Moderator, each serving two-year terms with a total commitment of four years, to Moderator Elect, Moderator, and Past Moderator. In the new model, each position would be held for one year with the Moderator Elect moving on to Moderator and Past Moderator in the following years, thus serving a three-year commitment. In summary, the new model shortens the term of commitment by one year and establishes a three-person leadership team.

Changes for the Beginning of Worship

As we begin 2024, the Worship Commission will be experimenting with a new format to begin our time of worship. There will be no prelude, but instead worship will begin with the sound of a bell or chime and lighting of the Christ candle at 9:30 a.m., then will move into a time of gathering/centering music, and will then move to the welcome and opening prayer. As you enter the worship space, we ask that once the chime sounds and the candle is lit, you refrain from conversation so that all can prepare for our time of worship together. The Worship Commission appreciates your flexibility and openness to trying new things in the new year!