

**Mennonite Mission Network Prayer Request:** Although 2023 is ending with much suffering and violence around the world, join Mennonite Mission Network personnel in proclaiming our hope in Jesus, who has overcome evil and injustice. May each of us continue to “be the Gospel” wherever we find ourselves.

**Western District Conference Prayer Request:** We lift up our church mission before God, seeking His divine intervention and guidance. We pray for the success of our church planting efforts, that hearts may be touched, and lives transformed by God’s love. Bless our church planters, provide resources, and strengthen the commitment of all involved. May Your light shine through our mission, bringing hope and healing to those we serve. In Jesus’ name, we present these requests. Amen. -WDC Church Planting Commission

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 31, 2023



• EMMANUEL: •  
• GOD WITH US •

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 31, 2023**  
**First Sunday After Christmas**

Prelude *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (arr. Mark Hayes)  
Verlene Garber & Ben Lichti

Welcome and Prayer Roger Neufeld Smith

|       |                                      |      |
|-------|--------------------------------------|------|
| *Hymn | <i>Come Away from Rush and Hurry</i> | VT 9 |
|-------|--------------------------------------|------|

\*Advent Candle Hymn      *Hope Is a Candle*      VT 211  
Verses 1-5

Advent Candle Lighting Elizabeth, Gabby, Jake, Jill & Adam Robb

|                |               |        |
|----------------|---------------|--------|
| *Advent Litany | <i>Christ</i> | VT 916 |
|----------------|---------------|--------|

|        |   |        |
|--------|---|--------|
| *Hymns | <i>O Come, All Ye Faithful</i> (verses 1, 3, 4) | VT 241 |
|        | <i>Hark! The Herald Angels Sing</i>             | VT 247 |

Scripture Reading                      *Isaiah 11:1-6*                      Roger Neufeld Smith

|       |                                  |                 |
|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Hymns | <i>Helpless and Hungry</i>       |                 |
|       | <i>What Child is This</i>        | VT 267 & VT 268 |
|       | <i>Holy Night, Blessed Night</i> | VT 262          |

Scripture Reading                      Luke 2:22-40                      Roger Neufeld Smith

Children's Conversation (based on Luke 2:22-40) The Robb Family

Hymn *Come, Join in Mary's Prophet-Song* VT 246

Meditation Roger Neufeld Smith

|       |                         |        |
|-------|-------------------------|--------|
| *Hymn | <i>Joy to the World</i> | VT 240 |
|-------|-------------------------|--------|

## Prayers of God's People

\*Hymn                      *Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light*                      VT 269  
People with December birthdays come forward for a blessing,  
please bring a hymnal

Benediction VT 1064

|          |                                 |                                  |
|----------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Postlude | <i>In Dulci Jubilo</i> (VT 261) | Verlene Garber<br>and Ben Lichti |
|----------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|

\*You are invited to stand ■ VT—*Voices Together*  
 ■ Keyboard—Verlene Garber ■ Trumpet—Ben Lichti  
 ■ 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.**

## 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.

**Roger's Whereabouts :** Roger will be driving back to Newton on Sunday, December 31. He will be back in Newton on Wednesday, January 10. 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 bulletin covers for Advent and after** are used by permission from Salt Project, <https://www.saltproject.org/>

**BCMC Offering for December 24, 2023:** General \$29,197.61; MCC \$25; Gen Fund 2024 \$1,500; Library Reserve Fund \$10; Living Stones \$900; Women's Fellowship \$513; Caring fund \$1,020.16.

**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!

#### **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!

**Mennonite Central Committee Material Resources Center in North Newton is critically low on inventory:** An MCC kit cannot be distributed until each item for the kit is assembled, but some supplies in the Material Resources Center are so low that kits cannot be processed for shipping. You can help by filling the following needs: new infant onesies and sleepers (6-12 month sizes); new bath towels (dark colored, light to medium weight); new hand towels (dark colored). Locally, MCC distributes prisoner care and returning citizen care kits, for those kits we currently need: men's shirts (sizes XL, 2XL, 3XL -- any color) and men's underwear (sizes 2XL, 3XL -- any color). Buy online and ship it to MCC or bring items to MCC in North Newton (121 E. 30th St, North Newton). Questions: contact [brociamueller@mcc.org](mailto:brociamueller@mcc.org) or 316.283.2720. A full list of MCC kit contents can be found at [mcc.org/kits](http://mcc.org/kits).

**Creation Care: Even though you are finished with 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*

#### **This Week at BCMC: December 31, 2023—January 7, 2024** **Sun., Dec. 31, 2023—First Sunday After Christmas**

10 a.m. Worship No Sunday School

Worship YouTube Link for this Sunday:

<https://youtube.com/live/eiX9SC9zi6U?feature=share>

#### **Mon., January 1, 2024—Happy New Year!**

Church will be locked; church office closed for the holiday

#### **Wed., Jan. 3, 2024**

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

#### **Thurs., Jan. 4, 2024**

6:30 p.m. Chancel Bells Rehearsal in Room B7

7 p.m. Church Board meets in Room 14

#### **Sun., Jan. 7, 2024—Epiphany**

9:30 a.m. Worship with sermon by Trent Voth; music by the Chancel Choir

10:45 a.m. Faith Formation

**Trent Voth is Bethel College's Assistant Professor of Bible and Religion.**

He grew up near Bethel's campus (Halstead, KS) but comes to Bethel by way of Toronto, ON where he obtained his PhD in Theology in New Testament studies. His primary research interests are in the Gospel of Mark and Anabaptist Theologies.

1:30 p.m. Memorial Service for Jim Banman and Judy Coover in the Kidron Bethel Hall

4 p.m. Service of Remembrance in the sanctuary—All are invited



**The congregation is invited to join Jim and Beaty Robb in celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary** with a cake and punch reception after worship today, December 31. Please join the Robb family in the Gathering Space for fellowship time as we celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary, which was on December 28. All are welcome!

**Be sure to fill out the Solar Project Survey by January 3, 2023. The Church Board meets January 4 and will review those results.**

**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*

**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!