

**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, or age.

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.

**Mennonite Mission Network Prayer Request:** As we enter the week of Christmas and remember Jesus’ birth, millennia ago, in a land crushed by oppression, join Mennonite Mission Network in looking for the surprising ways that the Prince of Peace is being born in our own fractured communities today. Let us continue to pray and act in ways that build peace.

**Western District Conference Prayer Request:** Give thanks for all WDC congregations as they celebrate the birth of Jesus and share the good news of God’s will for peace on earth.

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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  
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 Joanna Harader, Day off: Monday; 1887 Café Hours: Thursday 10 a.m. to 12 noon  
Cell phone: 407-201-0503; Email: Joanna@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Pastor Nathan Koontz, Day off: Wednesday  
Cell phone: 316-212-4593; Email: nathan@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Elizabeth Schmidt, Pastor of Congregational Care  
Email: elizabeth@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Office/Facilities Manager: Monica Lichti, Cell phone 316-249-9652  
Email: office@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Faith Formation Coordinator: Jill Robb—Email: jill@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Youth Coordinator: George Leary—Email: george@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Music Coordinators: Verlene Garber and Will Wiebe-Friesen
- Chancel Choir Director: Joel Garber • Chancel Bells Director: Verlene Garber

# Bethel College Mennonite Church

## December 22, 2024—Advent 4



CHRISTMAS BLESSING FROM MARY

Colored by Jake Robb

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.



**Kauffman Museum invites you to visit during the holidays.** The museum is closed Mondays, Christmas Day and New Year's Day; open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve; open regular hours Thurs.-Sun. (9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. weekdays, 1:30-4:30 p.m. weekends). The current special exhibit is "Unlocking the Past: Immigrant Artifacts and the Stories They Tell." Permanent exhibits "Of Land and People," "Mirror of the Martyrs" and "Mennonite Immigrant Furniture." The museum store is also open during those hours, with books, games, art and other gift items (including from Ten Thousand Villages) for sale; see <https://www.kauffmanmuseum.org/museum-store>

**Music On Site presents *Amahl and the Night Visitors*,** a classic Christmas opera, performed live with singers from around the country. This is a story of a young boy who gives everything to the promised Child. Free admission, ticket required. **Sun., Dec. 22, 2 p.m.** Westwood Presbyterian Church, 8007 W Maple St., Wichita **See the church bulletin board for ticket information. Or go to: <https://www.musiconsite.org/2024-season>** (Music On Site, Inc. is a Kansas-based 501(c)(3) music production company that works to close opera's opportunity gap across socioeconomic divisions by cultivating opera education and appreciation in K-12 students in rural communities, and advancing and promoting the careers of those pursuing a career in opera.)

**Newton Community for Racial Justice will hold its annual anti-racism training Feb. 13-15, 2025.** This is a date change from previous years. Training will be held at the Newton Recreation Center from Thurs. evening, Feb. 13 through Sat. afternoon, Feb. 15. Early Bird registration (until Jan. 3): \$300 per participant. Regular registration (after Jan. 3): \$350 per participant. Some scholarships are available. REGISTER HERE: <https://forms.gle/pXViB4fzH8y3u7WM7> Payment can be made online: [https://www.convergepay.com/hosted-payments?ssl\\_txn\\_auth\\_token=%2Bd%2Fr1xrRRCaZybUyv2z%2FeAAAAZON0fyjV](https://www.convergepay.com/hosted-payments?ssl_txn_auth_token=%2Bd%2Fr1xrRRCaZybUyv2z%2FeAAAAZON0fyjV)

**Hesston College Music Department will host a program called Anabaptism at Five Hundred: Hymn Festival Sun., Jan. 19, 2025, 3 p.m.,** at Hesston Mennonite Church. The Hymn Festival coincides with the 500th anniversary of the first Anabaptist adult baptisms in Zurich, Switzerland in 1525. This event will also celebrate the release of the *Anabaptist Community Bible*. The public is invited to this community wide celebration that involves singers from surrounding churches, as well as audience participation in the singing of hymns, led by Russell Adrian and Karen Unruh. The core of the program will be historical narrative by Ken Rodgers tracing important hymns and texts throughout the past five centuries.

## CHRISTMAS BLESSING FROM MARY

Dear one, I wish you had been there:  
to see the startling light to hear  
Gabriel's brazen promise;  
to journey into the hill country, to  
receive Elizabeth's bold blessing;  
to look with the Spirit's eye,  
to sing of joy and justice that echoes  
through the ages.

Oh how I wish you had been there:  
with sore feet, aching back,  
Joseph's encouraging words,  
and Bethlehem on the horizon;  
with, finally, a place to rest,  
then the pain (the pain!) and the  
pushing,  
and the baby—my baby—bloody  
and perfect in the manger.

I would love for you to have been  
there,  
gathered with the shepherds  
who had somehow found their odd  
sign  
in this scene of me and Joseph and  
my swaddled child,

But you were not there, then.  
You are here, now.  
I cannot offer you the baby to hold  
and rock and smell.  
So I offer you these words to wrap  
tenderly in cloth,  
and to lay in the manger of your  
heart:

In all that God calls you to do and to  
be,  
may you have courage  
to say yes to the mystery.

In times of excitement, grief, joy,  
and fear,  
may you have loved ones  
to offer companionship and blessing.

In the labor of creation,  
may you be strong, may you be  
flexible, may you know joy.

May you, beloved child,  
ponder deeply each divine message  
you hear,  
whether from angel or shepherd.  
May you ponder and treasure  
every gift you receive  
from the holy hand of God.

[Artwork on the bulletin cover by Michelle Burkholder. Blessings by Joanna Harader originally appeared in *Expecting Emmanuel*, © 2022 by Joanna Harader, Distributed by Herald Press, Harrisonburg, VA 22803]

**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 extend a special welcome to those who are visiting Bethel College Mennonite this morning.** Thank you for sharing in worship! If you would like us to keep in touch, please scan the QR code and fill out the visitor form.

## The Week at BCMC: December 22—29, 2024

### Sunday, December 22, 2024—Advent 4

9:15 a.m. Prelude 9:30 a.m. Worship

10:30 a.m. Faith Formation

YouTube Link for the worship service this Sunday:

<https://youtube.com/live/HP6Jtv8dOLI?feature=share>

**Activity bags are available for our littles during the church service!** The 10 bags are filled with a coloring book/page, crayons, and a library book. After using the activity bag, please make sure all the supplies are in the bag and hang on the hook at the back of the sanctuary. Library books will be switched out on a monthly basis. *Jill, Faith Formation Coordinator*

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2024—CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

4:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Community Worship in the Sanctuary

11 p.m. Lessons and Carols Worship in the Sanctuary

### Wednesday, December 25, 2024—Merry Christmas!

#### Sunday, December 29, 2024—Christmas Sunday

10 a.m. Worship (note the later beginning time for the worship service)—No Sunday school—**Please bring Christmas goodies or snacks to share after the worship service!**

**The Church office and building will be closed on Christmas Day. The church office and building will also be closed December 26, 27, 30, and 31.**

**BCMC Offering for Dec. 15:** Gen. Fund \$23,735.46; Gen. Fund 2025 \$10,000; Caring Fund \$225; Library Reserve Fund \$17; Kitchen Fund \$17.

**The following is a BCMC financial report of the general fund income and expenses on November 30, 2024 (91.7% of the year).**

Total income	\$427,969	80% of budget
Total expense	\$454,305	85% of budget
Net income	-\$26,336	<i>From BCMC Finance Committee</i>

**Join Fine Arts Class in the Chapel for Advent sessions following Pastor Joanna's book, *Expecting Emmanuel*.**

#### **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 2024. In order to recognize and mourn the loss of our loved ones from 2024, Bethel College Mennonite Church is hosting a Service of Remembrance on January 5, 2025 at 4 p.m., in the BCMC sanctuary.

**Today's anthem, "Der Friedensfürst," is a favorite of many German-speaking Mennonite congregations, particularly those in Latin America and Canada.** It was composed by an American in English ("The Prince of Peace") and subsequently translated into German in the 1890's. It was written in the popular style of the day and is dearly loved by those who grew up with it. The paraphrased text contains these words: Listen, the angel choirs are singing, to you oh mighty Prince of Peace! To us a child is born today, and his glory fills the wide world. And he is called wonderful, the Prince of peace. Glory to God in the highest, and peace—God's peace—on earth. Sing Hosanna! Amen.

**There will be a congregational meeting on Sun., Jan. 26, during the Sunday School hour in the sanctuary.** The meeting will be available through streaming options. An agenda will be available in the near future. The following items will be included on the agenda: The Church Board recommends the approval of Melanie Mueller to the Witness Commission and approval of the 2025 BCMC Budget.

**The Witness Commission has donated money from the excess funds we were given to use for projects beyond our walls to Max Ediger's School for Peace in Myanmar.** Max joined our church several years ago and was instrumental in the foundation of this school. There is an update on the progress of this school with photos in the BCMC emails.

**The current Library Theme is Advent/Christmas.** Come on in and find ideas for Christmas activities, devotions, even fiction books set around the holidays. And, if you're looking for a unique Christmas gift, our committee always has a Wish List. Why not consider giving a book in their honor/memory or purchase one of our puzzles for a suggested donation of \$5? As always, Happy Reading/Puzzling!

**Night in the Barn December 22:** All are welcome to come and experience the wonder of the Christmas story through its characters, animals, lights, and sounds in an interactive walking tour and live nativity. Come and go from 5-7 p.m. Sun., Dec. 22 at PatchWork Farms (373 E. 70th, Newton). Call 620-345-6867 for more information.

**New Bluestem U lifelong learning courses for winter and spring 2025 are now open for registration.** Courses are available for individuals age 55 and better. This semester's offerings include STEAM, theatre, astronomy, bird watching and a free author's series. See more information and registration at [bluestemu.org](http://bluestemu.org). Bluestem U is a lifelong learning program of Bluestem Communities in partnership with Bethel College and Hesston College.