

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.

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.

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 released 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.

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.



Mennonite Mission Network Prayer Request: Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for Mennonite Voluntary Service and Service Adventure volunteers. Some of these young adults are traveling home for Christmas. Pray for their safety in travel and as they share about their experiences with their home communities. Other participants will celebrate their first Christmas away from their families. Pray that they may experience Jesus coming into this world in a new and deeper way.

Western District Conference Prayer Request: Give thanks for all WDC congregations as they celebrate the birth of Jesus and embody the light of Christ in their communities and the world.

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

- Pastor Joanna Harader, Day off: Monday; **on vacation from Dec. 26-Jan. 1**
Cell phone: 407-201-0503; Email: joanna@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Pastor Nathan Koontz, Days off: Mondays and Wednesdays
Cell phone: 316-212-4593; Email: nathan@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org
- Office/Facilities Manager: Monica Lichti, 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

Fourth Sunday of Advent—December 21, 2025

Advent 2025: Spacious Faith



John's Vision: A Woman, Her Child, and the Dragon (Revelation 12:1-6)

RANDY HORST

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
Advent 2025: Spacious Faith
Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 21, 2025

Prelude	<i>Ode to Joy/Joy to the World</i> <i>Evergreen</i> (Pentatonix)	Ethan Garber, trumpet
	Angelika Donaldson, voice & Ukulele	
	<i>Passacaglia</i> (Handel)	Emerson Gering, piano
	<i>What Child is This/Helpless & Hungry</i>	Faith, Lucy & Suzy Burch
	<i>Twinkle, Twinkle little Star</i>	Gabby Robb
	<i>Drum on the Prairie & We Wish you a Merry Christmas</i>	Jake Robb

Welcome	Dorothy Nickel Friesen
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Advent Candle-Lighting Call to Worship (by Mark Rupp)	Garber Family
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Leader: In this season of waiting, we come with hearts open wide
to wonder, to longing, to paying attention.

**People: We come to make space for God,
and to find that God has already made space for us.**

Leader: As we light the candles of Advent,
we remember the witnesses who told the story of Christ,
each with a unique voice and vision of the good news.

**People: Their faith invites us to live with spacious faith,
trusting that God meets us in many ways,
and that the story of Jesus is still unfolding among us.**

Leader: We light this first candle for Mark's faith,
a faith that runs toward hope,
and finds God on the move.
We light this second candle for Matthew's faith,
a faith that trusts the story is big enough to hold us all,
and honors those who carried the flames of peace.
We light this third candle for Luke's faith,
a faith that rejoices in God's justice
and makes room for wonder.
John's gospel begins with the widest space of all:
The eternal Word, an everlasting light.
Echoes of the Word made flesh,
John's witness reverberates through all Creation.

**People: We light this fourth candle for John's faith,
a faith that sees God shining in every face
and knows that love is always stronger than death.**

Leader: Come, Christ of spacious faith.
Widen our hearts, deepen our hope,
and make us ready to receive you again.

People: Come, Light of the World.

Prayer	Dorothy Nickel Friesen
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*Hymn	<i>Come Away From Rush and Hurry</i>	VT 9
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Children and Youth Conversation	David Kreider
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Worship Music	<i>Sussex Carol</i> (arr. David Willcocks) Chancel Choir; Joel Garber, director; Will Wiebe-Friesen, accompanist
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First Scripture Reading	Genesis 1:1-5	Lois Preheim
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*Hymn	<i>From the Parent's Heart, the Firstborn</i>	VT 418
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Second Scripture Reading	John 1:1-5, 10-14	VT 235
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Silence

Sermon	<i>The Word Be With You</i>	Nathan Koontz
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*Hymn	<i>Savior of the Nations, Come!</i>	VT 214
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Offering Invitation and Prayers of God's People	Dorothy Nickel Friesen
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*Hymn	<i>Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus</i>	VT 218
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*Benediction

Postlude	<i>O Come All Ye Faithful</i> (arr. Hustad/Smith)
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* You are invited to stand

VT— <i>Voices Together</i>	Keyboard—Will Wiebe-Friesen
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Audio visual—Ken Lamp	Hymn Leader—Payne Claassen
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Bulletin Image from *Drawing Near*—"John's Vision" *used by permission*

The Newton Chorale invites new members to participate in its 50th anniversary concert. Rehearsals begin in January, culminating in a performance March 1. Interested singers should contact the Chorale at newtonchorale@gmail.com

In this season of Advent, we are reminded of Mary, Joseph and Jesus moving from place to place in search of safety and a home. Immigrants in our own community are also seeking these things for themselves and their families. Casa Betania Mennonite Church in Newton is ministering to many of these people and has established a fund to help with legal and documentation expenses. Our BCMC Immigration Task Force invites you to support local immigrants by sending a check to Casa Betania at Iglesia Mennonite Casa Betania, Box 102, Newton, KS 67114, and designate immigration/documentation fund on the memo line. (If you would like to be added to the email list for the Immigration Task Force, contact Ron Flickinger or Wes Schmidt-Tieszen.)

Bluestem U, the lifelong learning program of Bluestem Communities for individuals age 55 and better, is kicking off the new year with three new classes. Courses, at \$50 each, are: "Life Upon the Wicked Stage: Classics of Western Theatre" taught by Lauren Friesen, "Health, the Human Face of Climate Change" taught by Dwight Krehbiel, and "Biblical Literature (Bib Lit) Crash Course" taught by Kevin Wilder. See bluestemu.org for more information, including dates, times and locations.

Kauffman Museum at Bethel College invites you to visit during the holidays. There is a recently restored 17th-century Bible from the Jake T. Friesen family on display, through the end of December. The museum is closed Mondays, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day and open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve; Regular hours are 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. weekdays, 1:30-4:30 p.m. weekends. The current special exhibit is "Voices of Conscience: Peace Witness in the Great War." Permanent exhibits are "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 for sale (see <https://www.kauffmanmuseum.org/museum-store>).

Church-specific matching challenges have been formally issued by anonymous supporters of Camp Mennoscah within the Faith Mennonite - Newton, Shalom Mennonite Church, and Lorraine Ave. congregations, with similar challenges being considered at Eden, Bethel College, New Creation, Hope Mennonite, Whitestone, and others. Will YOU be the first to step-up in YOUR congregation? These \$5,000 - \$10,000 matching challenges - if met within their respective congregations - would allow the retreat center to hit its fundraising goal for project completion by the end of March of next year, and would be a HUGE milestone in the financial stability of Camp Mennoscah. Please contact camp's Director of Development at 620.755.2583 to discuss a match within your church!

The Week at BCMC: December 21—28, 2025

Sunday, December 21, 2025—9:15 a.m. Prelude

9:30 a.m. Worship service live-stream link:

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

6 p.m. Longest Night Service—Chapel

Do you need some space for quiet, for contemplation, even for grief in this Advent season? Plan to join us for a **Longest Night Service today at 6 p.m. in the chapel room.** Let us ground ourselves in God's peace and goodness as we navigate this complicated season.

Advent Sunday School: Pastors Nathan and Joanna will lead an elective Sunday School class this last Sunday of Advent using the book *With God in Every Breath* by Whitney R. Simpson. Join us in the chapel after worship!

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

5:30 p.m. All Age Christmas Eve Worship—Sanctuary

9 p.m. Candlelight Lessons and Carols—**Note the new time**

Thursday, December 25, 2025—Merry Christmas!

Friday, December 26, 2025—Office will be closed

Sunday, December 28, 2025—First Sunday of Christmas—Note: Worship Begins at 10 a.m.—There is no Sunday School
Fellowship Time After Worship: Bring snacks and treats to share!

Holiday office schedule: The BCMC office will be closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2. While pastors and staff will be working some of these days, they will not hold regular office hours. Please be in touch by phone or email if you need to contact the office during this time. Note that Joanna will be on vacation Dec. 26-Jan. 1.

The Deacon Commission has a table under the dove banner in the Gathering Place with pages for your comments to members of our church whom we haven't been able to see for a while. Stop and write a short greeting or sign your name to let them know we are thinking about them. The letters will remain on the table during the week for anyone to write a note before we send them out. Thank you!

Service of Remembrance

As this holiday season 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 2025. In order to recognize and mourn the loss of our loved ones from 2025, Bethel College Mennonite Church is hosting a Service of Remembrance on January 4, 2026 at 4 p.m. in the BCMC sanctuary. During the service we will light candles for those from our congregation who have passed in 2025. You are also welcome to light a candle for others in your life whom you are mourning.

Thank you to Jake and Gabby Robb, Ethan Garber, Angelika Donaldson, Emerson Gering, and Suzy, Lucy, and Faith Burch for bringing us the prelude this morning! **Thank you also to the Chancel Choir** for their worship music this morning!

Advent Banners

Last week during worship Adam Robb pointed out the growing light each week as the Advent banners progress towards Christmas. We give thanks for Robert Regier who designed the banners, Matt Koontz who sets them up, and for all who help to make our sanctuary a beautiful and meaningful visual experience.

We have an Advent puzzle! Stop by the round table in the gathering place and help put together our new Advent puzzle. We hope to finish it before Christmas Eve.

The Bethel College Mennonite Church Faith Formation Commission has been experimenting with a new format for our Wednesday night gatherings this semester. We welcome your feedback! Surveys are available in the Gathering Place and can be returned to the church office or Brad Kohlman (Faith Formation Commission chair).

Birthday calendars - with photos of art at BCMC by Weldon Schloneger - are available in the back of the sanctuary for a suggested donation of \$10. Checks may be written to BCMC with Women's Fellowship written in the memo line. Birthday calendars stay current in subsequent years.

From the Finance committee

We continue to offer gratitude for the generosity shared in donating monetary offerings toward our annual budget. Each gift is important to the process of fulfilling our mission. As the fiscal year end is approaching on December 31, we are offering information on a monthly schedule to offer insight into the financial picture. A brief report is listed below.

The following is a BCMC financial report of the general fund income and expenses on November 30, 2025 (91.7% of the year).

Total income	\$ 454,080	81% of budget
Total expense	\$ 480,831	86% of budget
Net income/expense	-\$ 26,750	

BCMC Offering for December 14: General \$20,193; Gen Fund 2026 \$50; MCC Infant Kits \$50; Caring Fund \$200; Library Reserve Fund \$5; Kitchen Fund \$13.76; Florine Eitzen Mem. \$45; Wed. Supper \$172.

The majority of our Advent books are now displayed in the library! Those of you that have family members coming for the holidays may want to check out our holiday books for visiting relatives. We have quite the selection for all ages. Also, we have very generous congregational members that donate books to our library. Sometimes these books don't quite fit our library needs or we may already have that book. We are now using these books as a fundraiser, just like our donated puzzles. If you find a book/puzzle you would like to purchase, just put your donation in the little envelope. Come check us out!

Are you new(ish) to Bethel College Mennonite Church? Interested in learning more about the congregation? Curious about membership at BCMC? Pastors Nathan and Joanna will lead two elective Sunday School sessions early next year in the chapel. Anyone is welcome to attend either or both of these classes. **–January 18:** Introduction to Bethel College Mennonite--This session will provide a brief history of the congregation and an orientation to the church mission and structure.

–February 1: Membership at BCMC--In this session we will discuss the membership process and answer questions that people bring.

*Contact a pastor for more information.

Current status on the search for an associate pastor: All our paperwork has been sent to Western District Conference and the job description is posted. The search committee will continue to work with conference minister Kathy Neufeld Dunn, who will share information with us about potential candidates. If you have names of people who may be interested in the position, you can send them to search committee chair Megan Leary at megleary28@gmail.com

The Outreach Team of Hesston Mennonite Church invites your participation at a March 7, 2026 Spring Symposium on the Future of Water in Kansas. We are co-sponsoring this event to be held at Dyck Arboretum (177 W Hickory St), Hesston, from 8:30 to 4:30 p.m., Sat., March 7. Experts and water managers from state, local and municipal agencies will address critical issues that affect our state's water resources and demands. Brad Guhr, Education Coordinator, urges "Let's educate ourselves and work together on solutions now, while water is plentiful, so we never have to face the fight (referring to Mark Twain's quote that 'Whisky's for drinking and water's for fighting.')" Look for registration details coming soon, or contact arboretum@hesston.edu.

The Education and Service Scholarship Committee (ESSC) has updated its application for young adult service grants. For a copy of the application please send a request to essc@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org, preferably at least 4 weeks before the event. Thank you, ESSC (Karen Ediger, Brad Kohlman and Margaret Toews)