

**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:** Although 2025 is ending with much suffering and violence in our communities and around the world, join Mennonite Mission Network in praying that we will not tire of proclaiming our hope in Jesus, who has overcome evil and injustice. May we continue to "be the Gospel" wherever we find ourselves.

**Western District Conference Prayer Request:** Pray that during this Christmas season the emerging congregations in WDC experience Christ's light and hope as they welcome neighbors and share God's love. — WDC Church Planting Commission

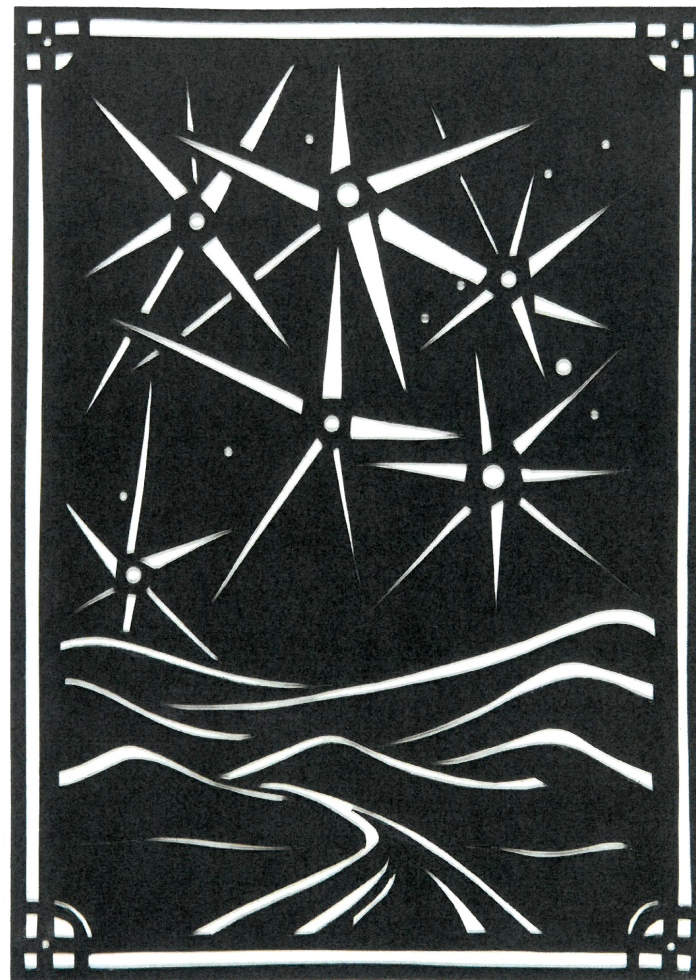
Bethel College Mennonite Church, 2600 College Ave., Box 364, North Newton, KS 67117  
Phone: 316-283-3667—Fax: 316-283-2079 Email: [office@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:office@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)  
Website: [bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](http://bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)

- Pastor Joanna Harader, Day off: Monday; **on vacation from Dec. 26-Jan. 1**  
Cell phone: 407-201-0503; Email: [joanna@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:joanna@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)
- Pastor Nathan Koontz, Days off: Mondays and Wednesdays  
Cell phone: 316-212-4593; Email: [nathan@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:nathan@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)
- Office/Facilities Manager: Monica Lichti, Email: [office@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:office@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)
- Faith Formation Coordinator: Jill Robb—Email: [jill@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto:jill@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org)
- Youth Coordinator: George Leary—Email: [george@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org](mailto: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 28, 2025

### Christmas Sunday



**MARY'S BLESSING**

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 28, 2025—10 a.m.**  
**Christmas Sunday**

Christ Candle Lighting

Centering Music Meghann Rogers

Welcome & Prayer Nathan Koontz

\*Hymn VT 241  
*O Come, All Ye Faithful*  
 (Michael Claassen, trumpet)

Children and Youth Conversation Tim Hodge

Worship Music Abby Koontz  
*O Holy Night* (Adolphe Adam)

Reading Dianne Epp  
*One* (Luci Shaw)  
 Luke 2:1-7 Dale Schrag

\*Hymn VT 245  
*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Reading   
*Descent* (Luci Shaw)

Hymn VT 243  
*Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

Reading   
 Luke 2:8-14

\*Hymn VT 247  
*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*  
 (Michael Claassen, trumpet)

Reading   
*Breath* (Luci Shaw)  
 Luke 2:15-19

\*Hymn VT 267  
*What Child Is This*  
*Helpless and Hungry* VT 268

Reading   
*Star Song* (Luci Shaw)

\*Hymn VT 249  
*Angels We Have Heard on High*  
 (Abby Koontz & Emma Gering, bells)

Offering Invitation and Prayers of God's People

\*Hymn VT 240  
 Joy to the World  
 (Michael Claassen, trumpet)  
 (Those with December birthdays please come forward during the hymn)

\*Birthday Blessing & Benediction

Postlude Meghann Rogers  
*God With Us* (Rogers)

\*You are invited to stand VT—*Voices Together*  
 Keyboard—Meghann Rogers Audio visual—Ken Lamp

**Mary's Blessing**

My fellow travelers—  
 you who flee danger,  
 and you who return home;  
 you who make a faithful pilgrimage,  
 and you who search for what is lost:

I cannot tell where the road will lead,  
 who will accompany you,  
 or what stars might guide you.

I cannot promise ease or safety.  
 I cannot say whether you will have to turn around  
 to go back for something left behind.

I cannot guarantee that every blessing you receive on the way  
 will be a blessing you want.

But I hope this blessing is one you will carry,  
 a blessing to ride comfortably in your pocket,  
 or rest softly in your hands;  
 a blessing to accompany you, whatever the journey brings:

May you know God in your own heart  
 and in the heart of your faith community.

May you be brave toward your fear  
 and persistent through deep difficulties.

May you hold your responsibilities faithfully  
 and lightly—with grace and joy.

May you teach well  
 and learn well.

May you give attention and compassion  
 to the lives that surround you,  
 and to your own hard and beautiful life.

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

**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](mailto:newtonchorale@gmail.com)

**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](http://bluestemu.org) for more information, including dates, times and locations.

**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!

**Greetings from Western District Conference!** We are writing to share with you a message from Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, which has recently called new pastoral leadership: Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, a WDC congregation in Newton, is pleased to announce that Alva Pérez, Mario Rocha and their young son Santiago will be arriving in Newton in early January to begin their new pastoral role. We are also celebrating Mario and Alva's recent graduation from the AMBS Spanish-language Graduate Certificate in Theology online program. They are coming from Mexico on a religious worker visa and Casa Betania welcomes help from area congregations in supporting them. The biggest need at present is a reliable vehicle. If you have a vehicle you are willing to donate or sell at an economical price, or are willing to help search for options, please contact the WDC office a [wdc@mennowdc.org](mailto:wdc@mennowdc.org) or 316-283-6300, or Linda Shelly, Casa Betania Treasurer, at [Lindajs81@gmail.com](mailto:Lindajs81@gmail.com) 316-734-5947. Financial donations can be sent to: Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, Box 102, Newton, KS 67114. Your prayers and support for Casa Betania are greatly appreciated!

**The Week at BCMC: December 28, 2025—January 4, 2026**

**Sunday, December 28, 2024—Christmas Sunday**

**10 a.m.** Worship followed by Christmas goodies, treats, and snacks in the Gathering Place—No Sunday School

YouTube Link for the worship service this Sunday:

<https://youtube.com/live/640qQqdiRg0?feature=share>

**Monday, December 29, 2025—January 2, 2026**

**Holiday office schedule:** The BCMC office will be closed Dec. 29-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. 28-Jan. 1. The office will open again as normal on Monday, Jan 5, 2026.

**Sunday, January 4, 2026—Epiphany**

Worship returns to 9:30 a.m.; sermon by Joanna Harader; music by Marshall & Lindsay Anderson

**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.

**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 21:** General \$8,860.28; Library Reserve Fund \$5; Kitchen Fund \$35; Women's Fellowship \$322; Larry Penner Mem. \$100.

**Karen Penner and family wish to thank you for your sympathy, support, and prayers** during this difficult time following Larry's passing. Your kindness has brought us comfort, and we are grateful to be part of such a caring community.

**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).

**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](mailto:megleary28@gmail.com)

**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](mailto:essc@bethelcollegemennonitechurch.org), preferably at least 4 weeks before the event. Thank you, ESSC (Karen Ediger, Brad Kohlman and Margaret Toews)

## **Bethel College/Kauffman Museum Announcements**

- **Kauffman Museum at Bethel College invites you to visit during the holidays**, with two items of special interest available to view for a limited time: a 17th-century Bible from the family of the late Jake T. Friesen of North Newton and a medallion made by John P. Klassen to commemorate Mennonite Central Committee's war and famine relief in Ukraine in the early 1920s. Both have been at the Ford Conservation Center at the Nebraska State Historical Society in Omaha for restoration and preservation. The Bible is normally at the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel and is seldom on public display. **Holiday hours: closed Mondays and New Year's Eve, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; New Year's Day, closed; non-holiday weekdays, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; weekends, 1:30-4:30 p.m.** The two artifacts can be seen (until the first of the year) just inside the museum's front entrance with no admission charge. There is a small fee for non-museum members to see the current special exhibit, "Voices of Conscience: Peace Witness in the Great War," and permanent exhibits "Of Land and People," "Mirror of the Martyrs" and "Mennonite Immigrant Furniture." The museum store is also open during those hours. For more information, visit [kauffmanmuseum.org](http://kauffmanmuseum.org) or the museum's Facebook page.
- **Sat., Jan. 3 – Kauffman Museum bird walk, 8 a.m. start time** in the museum parking lot at the corner of Main and 27th streets (2801 N. Main St., North Newton 67117). Experienced birders lead a walk of 1-1.5 hours in Chisholm Park and on Sand Creek Trail (terrain is mostly wood-chip path and sometimes uneven/sloping).
- **SAVE THE DATE: Sun.-Mon., Jan. 18-19 – Bethel College and Hesston College collaboration for the annual celebration of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, including historic listening event, Jan. 19, 6 p.m., with program at 7 p.m.;** see [bethelks.edu/MLK](http://bethelks.edu/MLK)

**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](mailto:arboretum@hesston.edu).