

Introduction to our Advent series

The Advent Season is typically associated with a season of joyful anticipation. As children we may remember the countdown beginning, perhaps with an Advent calendar with a chocolate for every day. Decorations and lights come out of the closets and a whole new repertoire of music finds its way into our ears in anticipation of a season of joyful festivities. We look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus. While this year's pandemic restrictions may keep us all closer to our homes than we would like, preparations for Christmas are nonetheless appropriate.

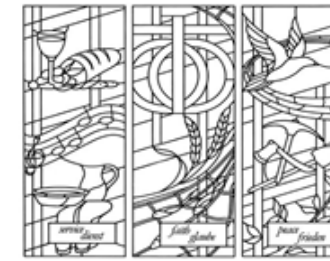
This year's Advent theme, "On the Road . . ." conveys not only a contemplative anticipation but it elicits a sense of movement. It then begs the question: What are we moving towards? Does the movement end at Christmas? The birth of Jesus, Emmanuel—God with us, opens for us a new era of God journeying with us and we journeying with God along the road of faith and faithfulness. In preparation for such a journey, we begin with opening ourselves in **readiness** to new understandings and a willingness to **repent** and leave behind attitudes and priorities that obstruct our movement. This opens us to visions of the possibility of **restoration** and justices in our world as we finally approach the manger with the full **revelation** of the child. Such revelation indeed calls for **rejoicing** on Christmas Day. How will this revelation guide our steps into a new year as we continue our journey on the road? In the midst of this year's pandemic, let's allow prayerful contemplation to prepare us for the revelation of God's love manifest in the child. And then, individually and as a congregation, let's consider how we can continue to make this love manifest in our world, guided on this road by the **radiance** of Epiphany and Emmanuel – God with us!

Love Has Come – VT #258

Love has come – a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it,
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Saviour!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high!

Love is born! Come share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother.
What is the name her hear is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.

Love has come and will never leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!



Altona Mennonite Church

Sunday School – Adults & Children: 10:00 am
Sunday Worship Service: 11:00 am

VOLUME LIX No.47

December 20, 2020

On the Road...to Revelation

Gathering

Prelude
Welcome

Call to Worship (adapted from Psalm 89:1-2, 26)

Leader: We will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever;

People: we will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

Leader: We declare that your steadfast love is established forever;

People: your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

All: You are our Father, our God, and the Rock of our salvation!

Hymn HWB #186 Fling wide the door, unbar the gate!

Scripture: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Lighting of Advent Candles

Hymn HWB #172 O Come, O come, Immanuel

Prayer of Confession (adapted from Luke 1:26-38)

Leader: God, you come to us with the words "Do not be afraid."

People: Yet we cower and live in anxiety and fear.

Leader: We lack faith and trust in your ways.

People: We want to respond like Mary, "I am your servant."

All: Give us humble, willing hearts to follow your call.

AMC Contact information:

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Altona Mennonite Church is on Treaty One Territory.

Hymn SS #5 Open my ears, open my eyes

Listening

Monologue "The Birth of Jesus Revealed"

Hymn HWB #215 What child is this

Old Testament Scripture reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

New Testament Scripture reading: Luke 1:26-38, 46b-55

Sermon On the Trajectory of Revelation Dave Regehr

Hymn SJ#13 My soul is filled with joy.

Responding

Prayers of and for the People

Offering

Benediction: Romans 16:25-27 Paul's doxology

Closing Hymn - VT #258 Love has come

Postlude

Speaker: Dave Regehr

Worship Leader: Andrea Hildebrand

Monologue: Readers from the Neufeld Family

Music: Marilyn Houser Hamm, Edna Zacharias

Sound: Perry Batchelor

Worship & Meeting Events at AMC

Dec. 21 Longest Night – we remember from our homes

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve – listen on-line at 6:30 pm, see announcement below

Dec. 25 Christmas Day – listen on-line

Theme: On the road...to Rejoicing *Speakers:* Pastor Dan Kehler, Dave Regehr *Scripture:* Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40 *Worship Leader:* Lori Hiebert

Musicians: Lori & Loren Hiebert *Sound:* Kevin Neufeld

Dec. 27 no extra service

Jan. 3/21 On-line service

Theme: On the road...to Radiance *Speaker:* Pastor Dave Regehr *Scripture:* Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12 *Worship Leader:* Ray Hamm *Musicians:* Dave & Hildie Regehr *Sound:* Greg Heinrichs

Birthdays: December 19 – Lori Dueck; December 22- Eric Giernaert; December 22 – Robert Martens, Karly Wiebe; December 25 – Don Enns, Taylor Wiebe; December 26 – Mick Mierau Friesen; December 27 – Elfie Krahn; December 28 – Edna Zacharias

AMC ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **AMC's ZOOM Christmas Coffee** - An opportunity to fellowship with church family virtually while enjoying a favorite Holiday Beverage. Two times are available. Wednesday December 23 at 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Email Pastor Dan if you would like to attend. A link will be sent prior to the meeting.

- Join Ray and Marilyn as they weave the Story and Sounds of **Christmas Eve**, the Night of Wonder, through a service of scripture, music -including familiar carols, and silence. Have a candle nearby. Thursday, December 24th, suggested time - 6:30pm on our AMC website.

- When you go to our church website, you will notice that it looks quite different. Thanks to Kevin Neufeld for setting it up!

- Thank you to all of you who have rediscovered the alternative ways of donating to AMC since we've had to cancel in-person worship. Our audio services have been great to keep us connected to AMC, but it's not the same as seeing each other. Our pastors and a few others are working to set up the facility to video record our services, which will add to our connection. Thankfully a Grant will help offset costs, but we still have our regular expenses, and are currently \$9,000 into our Line of Credit, so please give generously. Options to give are online through Access Credit Union, (using your 7-digit phone number as your account number), e-transfer to amchurchdonations@gmail.com, or a cheque mailed it to AMC, Box 1237, Altona, ROG 0B0. Thank you.

WIDER COMMUNITY & MISC. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Christmas at CMU Highlights!** Enjoy the music of the season and be drawn into the spirit of Advent with a curated selection from Christmas at CMU. Go to www.cmu.ca/christmas for more.

- **Mennonite Church Manitoba invites applications for two positions:** Financial Services Assistant (.75 FTE) and Administrative Assistant (0.5 FTE) to start ca. February 1, 2021. These job descriptions are posted on the Mennonite Church Manitoba website. Please submit application letter and resume to Peter Rempel, Interim Administrator, at office@mennochurch.mb.ca by January 10.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

- Pray for Pastor Dan Kehler, and for Dave & Hildie Regehr as they together lead the church.

- Harv Heinrichs is grateful for your prayers. His weekly treatments for lymphoma are now done.

- Pray for Ken & Marianne Braun and Mike Tarnick who are at Eastview.

- Pray for Ken Hamm, who is back at the Altona Hospital. The surgeon is pleased with the latest x-rays. Pray for an appetite and strength. Remember him and his family in your prayers, especially now that visitors are limited or not allowed at all.

- Anne Loewen goes for chemotherapy monthly. Pray for strength, safety and peace.

- Pray for all those for whom mental health makes daily life a struggle. The current situation increases anxiety for many.

- Pray for those who experience physical pain, and for friends and family who help with their care.

- Many of our church family have other family they are concerned about. Pray for healing, strength and calm for all.

Prayer for Our Community

- Pray for ALL the teachers, students and staff as they navigate all the regulations and requirements.

- Pray also for the Health Care Providers.

- Pray for Doug Klassen (MCCanada's Executive Minister) and for church leaders at all levels of our conference.

- Pray for Rick Neufeld and Peter Rempel who are adding the duties of MCManitoba's Executive Minister to their other roles. Michael Pahl will be assuming that position in January 2021.

Prayer for Our World

- **Restorative circles in Chuncheon well received by schools and teachers** - Praise God for response to recent restorative circle processes led by Witness worker Bock Ki Kim in South Korea. Schools have been asking trainers from the Chuncheon Community Peace Center for training in communication and conflict transformation. One teacher responded, "I realize that I haven't been really listening to my students. Today they expressed themselves so well." Pray that God will use this training to bring peace to schools and homes in Chuncheon.

If you would like to add or remove any prayer requests, please contact the church office.