

GRACE HILL MENNONITE CHURCH

December 6, 2015

Whitewater, Kansas

Worship 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School 10:45 a.m.

Musicians: Rebecca Schrag, Valerie Klaassen

Song Leader: Matthew Graber

Transition Pastor: Randy Smith

Second Sunday of Advent

Freedom Bound: the Path of Mercy

Gathering Music

Rebecca Schrag

Welcome and Announcements

Randy Smith

Prelude to Worship

Candle Lighting

Isaiah 40:1-11

Josh Patterson

O come, O come, Immanuel (verse 2)

Hymnal 172

Silence

Sung Call to Worship

Choir

O Come all Ye Faithful

*Call to Worship

We are in trouble. We wait for God.

We wait for the Light to burst forth into our darkened world.

We gather. We wait. God's mercy will come.

Freeing God, sustain us in this wait and keep us

bound to walking the path of your way.

In your mercy, free us from the chains of guilt and shame.

Free us from the bondage of sin.

Christ comes to set us free.

Today we wait, and we follow - freedom bound.

We worship God, who comes with mercy and the promise of new life.

*Caroling

Bless'd be the God of Israel

Hymnal 174

Comfort, comfort, O my people

Hymnal 176

Angels we have heard on high

Hymnal 197

God's Mercy: Our Need, Our Hope

Malachi 3:2-5

Silence

Philippians 1: 9-11

Prayer

Anthem

Choir

He Is Born (Schulz)

Offering and Offertory

Children's Story

Children to age 5 may be dismissed to the library for child care

Scripture

K. John Klaassen

Luke 1: 68-79

Sermon

Tender Mercies

Removing the Chains

The light of the Second Candle of Advent reminds us of our hope –

Hope for that day of God's mercy immersing us,

Freeing us from the bondage of sin.

Come Lord Jesus.

Let your mercy wash over us, saturating our lives.

Hope, that in the midst of this world of sin, God longs to set us free

from the chains that bind us –

The bondage of fear and anger, veiling our shame;

Self-righteousness, veiling our guilt;

Hardened hearts.

We will walk in that light –

In the freedom of mercy. Bound in Christ. Freed from sin.

Longing for Light

Sing the Journey 54

Sharing and Prayer

*Benediction

*Sung Benediction

Peace, Peace (Powell)

Choir

Silent Night

Hymnal 193

Postlude

*Indicates those comfortable in doing so, please stand.

This morning's offering is designated for Mennonite Church USA.

At the conclusion of the worship service we invite the adults to be seated and take a few moments to greet one another while the children are dismissed to their Sunday school classes.

The Adult Sunday School classes will begin 10 minutes after the service is over. Everyone is welcome!

“Our vision at Grace Hill Mennonite Church is for a revitalized ministry seeking authentic community that honors Christ by:

discerning our gifting;

developing a leadership team;

deepening our core ministries of

care, education and hospitality.”

Worship services for Advent/Christmas will follow the denominational resources worship theme, “Freedom Bound.” In Christ we are freed. In sin we are bound. In Christ we are simultaneously “freedom bound.” We will celebrate communion on Epiphany Sunday, January 3.

Seminar Sunday school class will conclude the study of John today in the fellowship hall. Next Sunday begins a four week video and scripture study of the nativity stories in Matthew and Luke. Anyone with interest in this study is welcome.

For Sharing and Prayer

Western District Conference: Pray for the WDC Ministerial Leadership Commission as they offer support and accountability for pastors in WDC.

Mennonite Mission Network: Join Mennonite Mission Network in thanking God for the safety of five international workers based in Paris, France, during the November bombings. Pray for wisdom as French Mennonites and others discern how to respond to these tragedies and to the violence that occurs in other countries on a daily basis.

Church Family News

. . . The wall hanging in the foyer was purchased at the MCC sale by **Mike and Kathy Balzer** . . . **Kathy Balzer** has updated the children's activities bags for children to use during worship and are hanging in the foyer by the coat rack . . . **Emma Hilgenfeld** was named KCAC Honorable Mention from the Bethel College volleyball team . . .

Church Events

Today All college students are invited to dinner at John and Valerie Klaassen's home following Sunday School.

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Youth Group meets

Monday, December 14 at 11:30 a.m. Hands of Friendship Christmas Luncheon - All ladies are invited to attend the luncheon and fellowship time. The main dish & rolls will be furnished. Please bring either a salad or dessert. An offering will be taken for a family, sponsored by Salvation Army. The project of mitten and gloves can be placed on the tree in the Fellowship Hall. If you would like to contribute to these projects make donations to *Hands of Friendship* and give to the treasurer Joyce Stuart.

December 24 at 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Program

Announcements

Mittens/Gloves – Hands of Friendship Christmas Project - You may place mittens and gloves on the Christmas tree in the Fellowship Hall until Christmas. They will be distributed by the Harvey County Salvation Army throughout the coming year.

Remember to bring items for the local food pantries during this Christmas Season! A basket for goods is located in the foyer by the front entrance.

Nursery This Sunday: Kaye Penner and Sara Westerfield

Nursery Next Sunday: Deb Regier and Katrina Regehr

Ushers Next Sunday: Doug Hiebert and Russell Janzen

Offering Next Sunday: Local Church

CHURCH OFFICES

Pastor's Office Hours:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00 a.m.-Noon, Thursday 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Transition Pastor: Randy Smith

/Email: transitionpastor@gmail.com

Director of Youth Ministry: Joshua Janzen

Email: joshuadjanzen@bethelks.edu

Church Secretary: Debbie Claassen

Secretary's E-mail: secretary@gracehillmc.org

Et Cetera

30th Annual Lighting of the Green at Bethel College, this evening at 8 p.m., the Green in the center of campus; refreshments to follow in the cafeteria.

Experience a Branson Christmas...in Newton! Five year veterans of the Branson stage, the eleven-member Wissmann Family perform a unique blend of holiday carols showcasing acoustic instruments and tight, vibrant harmonies. Their full production Christmas show is a powerful portrayal of humor, wonderment, and the timeless message at the heart of this festive season. Friday, December 11 at 7:00 p.m. at Bethel College Memorial Hall. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. No admission fee. A free-will offering will be taken. A portion of the proceeds will benefit ministry to widows and orphans in India.

The 14 piece McPherson Community Brass Choir under the direction of Jerry Toews will give a concert of All Christmas Music in the Historic Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church Sunday, December 13 at 7 p.m. Alexanderwohl Church is located one mile north of Goessel on K-15. Come celebrate the season with an evening of exciting brass choir music.

You're invited to the MCC Christmas Open House - bring your friends, family and neighbors to our open house on Tuesday, December 15 from 4-6 p.m. The come-and-go event will feature live music, lots of delicious Christmas goodies and snacks and at 5 p.m. hear MCC alumni reflect on Christmas traditions in Bosnia Herzegovina, Bolivia and Cambodia. Please plan to drop by to enjoy some Christmas cheer! Questions? Call 316-283-2720.

Christmas Gathering for Summer Staff - Over the past 67 years, any number of people have worked at Camp Mennoscah as summer staffers. Summer staffers, their spouses, significant others, and kids are invited to gather on December 19 at Camp Mennoscah in the dining hall at 2:30 p.m. (We're not being picky about the definition of "summer staff" and we're not collecting invitations at the door.) We'll have coffee and other hot drinks to go with some cookies. You're welcome to bring a snack to share. It's a time to gather, catch up with folks and share stories. Questions? Call 620-297-3290.

The Tabor Mennonite Youth Fellowship will share their annual living nativity, *Night in the Barn*, on December 19 and 20 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. The llama that gives kisses, the big cow with her little calf, the sheep wearing bells, and the donkeys that share their love of people—these are a few of the critters who will assemble in the barn of Maynard Knepp and Carol Duerksen between Goessel and Hillsboro. The come-and-go event will feature a program in the barn, Christmas carols around a bonfire, hot drinks and snacks. Admission is free and donations to the youth group will be accepted. Directions: From Goessel: 3 miles north on Hwy 15, 4 miles east on 150th, ¾ north on Falcon. (Follow these directions and not GPS) For more information, call 620-386-0709.

Books donated to library:

Melody Carlson, "Christmas at Harrington's" Lena has had many difficulties but is given a second chance - a secondhand coat - which gives her a new purpose in life.

T. D. Jakes, "The Memory Quilt, a Christmas Story for Our Times" Lela is unhappy but she begins to piece together her unfinished quilt. This brings back many thoughts - some pleasant and some troubling.

If you are not receiving the church group emails from Debbie Claassen or any individual emails from Debbie Claassen and have gmail, please try the following:

1. Sign in to your account on gmail.com.
2. Find one of the group emails from Debbie Claassen in your spam folder on the left side of the screen. (If there is not one in the spam folder look for one in your trash if you happened to delete it from your spam)
3. On the top right of the email next to the date, select the dropdown arrow and then "filter messages like this."
4. Select "Create filter with this search" in the lower right corner
5. Check the box "Never Send it to Spam"
6. Then Select "create filter"