

Grace Hill Mennonite Church

December 7, 2008

Whitewater, Kansas

Worship 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School 10:45 a.m.

Pastor: James Voth

Youth Pastor: Katherine Goerzen

Keyboard: Julia Washburn

Chorister: Suzy Burch

Worship Leaders: Rob and Diana Schunn

Second Sunday of Advent

The Comforting Face of God

*Restore us, O God; let your face shine,
That we may be saved. Psalm 80:3, 7, 19*

When we are most vulnerable, God comes to us through a voice offering comfort and direction. We reflect God's face as we heed the voice that unites righteousness and peace.

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

A special welcome to each of our guests! During this time we spend a few moments introducing our guests. We're glad you have come to worship with us. May you sense God's peace and direction as we meet together with our Creator and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- * **Hymn No. 176** *Comfort, comfort, O my people*
Lighting of the God Candle

- * **Call to Worship** Based on Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Leader: Fill your lungs with air, and lift up your voice with strength.

People: Good news is coming! God's love is being revealed

Leader: Get up on a high mountain so you can see the big picture.

Step out into the open plain so you can see all around.

**People: The Lord comes, strong as one who levels hills
and raises valleys, gentle as a shepherd
who gathers the lambs.**

Leader: Here is good news for all creation!

All: *Love and faithfulness are embracing.
Justice and peace are kissing each other.
God's presence is among us today!*

* **Invocation**

- * **Hymn No. 174** *Blesse'd be the God of Israel*
Lighting of the Second Advent Candle by Merrill & Gladys Harms

Offering Mennonite Church USA

Prayers of the Congregation

Leader: Comforting God, we bring to you our concerns

Sharing of concerns by the congregation

Leader: Speak tenderly to us;

Speak to the fading and withering places;

Speak comfort to broken bodies, minds, and relationships.

We long to see valleys lifted up and mountains made low

So we may walk on straight paths,

Confident in your forgiveness,

And ready to hear your words of love and peace.

Comforting God, we bring to you our joys.

Sharing of praise and thanksgiving by the congregation

Leader: We reveal in the joy of your embrace.

When we see good things spring up from the ground,

We say, "Here is our God!"

When we hear voices of comfort and wisdom,

We say, "Here is our God!"

We live in thankfulness,

Knowing that you walk with us. Amen.

Special Music *Helpless and hungry*

Celebration Singers

Children's Moments

Kristine Goossen

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

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 40:1-11 Grant Hill

Special Music *Oh, beautiful star of Bethlehem* Celebration Singers

Gospel Reading Mark 1:1-8 Cody Claassen

Sermon *Speak Softly and Turn up the Amplifier!* Pastor Jim

* **Hymn of Response No. 178** *Come, thou long-expected Jesus*

* **Benediction** Pastor Jim

* **Benediction Hymn No. 182** *Oh, how shall I receive thee*

Postlude

*Indicates those comfortable in doing so, please stand

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.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES BEGIN AT 10:45 A.M.
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

For Sharing and Prayer

Advent Calendars are in your mailboxes today! Please use them throughout the month of December as a devotional guide for reflections on the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Next Sunday December 14 is Harvest of Love Dollar Days. You will find a Harvest of Love envelope in your mailbox. You are invited to donate \$1.00 for each family member and place the envelope in the offering plate Sunday December 14 during worship. Canned and dry goods also make for a helpful contribution to the goal of \$35,000 and 50,000 pounds of food. We will be collecting food throughout December. Be mindful that last year the Salvation Army in Newton was serving 80 families a month. This year they are serving over 200 families a month. Thanks so much for the food and \$510.00 already collected at our Thanksgiving Service! Harvest of Love is a program of the Newton Ministerial Alliance and is serviced by the Salvation Army, 316 North Main, Newton. Thank you.

Thanks to Donna Balzer for the Advent decorations and to the Pursuers S.S. class for the decorating the Christmas tree and sanctuary. The Mariners S.S. class is preparing the Christmas Eve service and the Seekers S.S. class will be serving refreshments.

Thanks to Donna Balzer, Brian Balzer, Ed and Marge Harms and Dean and Rita Patterson for volunteering at the homeless shelter fund raising event this past weekend.

Western District Conference: Pray for Gail Graber, Associate Pastor of Visitation at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, as she is ordained today for Christian ministry.

Mennonite Mission Network: Pray that MMN workers Julie and Phil Bender will experience God's blessing and encouragement as they seek ways to effectively build relationships with students while teaching English in increasingly large classroom settings at Chongqing Medical University. The Benders serve with Mennonite Partners in China.

Church Events

Monday afternoon Quilters - You are welcome to come to the church and quilt on the MCC quilt on Monday afternoon anytime from 1-5 p.m.

Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. Social Council meets at church.
Worship Council meets at church.

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Business Council meets at church.

Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Adult Choir practice in the Fellowship Hall
7:00 – 8:15 p.m. Christmas Program Practice
7:30 – 8:00 p.m. Adult praise, prayer, biblical reflections

Next Sunday Middle school and high school Christmas caroling with the Spiritual Council. Meet at the church at 2:00 p.m. We plan to return to the church by 5:00 p.m. for chili and all the fixins.

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

Sunday, January 4 Farewell for Pastor Jim and Barb

February 22 Bethel College Sunday. The college choir will be coming and to accommodate them Sunday school will be at 9:30 a.m. and the worship service will be at 10:30 a.m. that morning.

high school youth group

This afternoon - Christmas Party at Peter and Katherine's from 1-5.
Bring a White Elephant gift (\$5 or less) to exchange.

Announcements

Mittens/Gloves: We are inviting you to purchase mittens and gloves for the Salvation Army in Newton. Please put them on the Christmas tree in the Fellowship Hall by December 10. Hand of Friendship Committee

The elective Sunday school class on disciple-making using Brian McLaren's book More Ready Than You Realize continues today in the fellowship hall with chapters 14 through 17. The last session of this class will be next Sunday, December 14th.

2008 Newton Area MCC Meat Canning took place October 27-29.

- 8,976 pounds of pork were canned at a cost of \$8,513.37.
- 14,000 pounds of turkey were purchased at a cost of \$14,640.00.
- Total cost \$23,153.37.

You're invited to join "Prayers of the Church" each Sunday morning from 9:00 – 9:10 a.m. in the classroom next to the kitchen. Please feel free to place prayer requests in the prayer box in the foyer.

Special Music Next Sunday: Praise Team

Keyboard Next Sunday: Katherine Goerzen

Nursery This Sunday: Joyce Wedel and Elizabeth Martin

Nursery Next Sunday: Penny Hiebert and Mikayla Hiebert

Ushers Next Sunday: Doug Hiebert and Orville Schmidt

Offering Last Sunday: Local Church \$3,182.00

Offering Next Sunday: Local Church

CHURCH OFFICES

Pastor: James Voth

E-mail: pastor@gracehillmc.org

Youth Pastor: Katherine Goerzen

E-mail: youthpastor@gracehillmc.org

Church Secretary: Debbie

Church Website: www.gracehillmc.org

Et Cetera

All are invited to celebrate with local illustrator Jesse Graber during his signing and release party on Sunday, December 7, from 2-4 p.m. at Faith & Life Bookstore in Newton. Jesse illustrated three Project Play Books, released this week and written by Marlene Byrne of Niles, IL. The three books tell the adventures of the kids of Edgebrook neighborhood, while inspiring readers to play backyard games that use creativity, imagination, and organizational skills.

Help support Offender/Victim Ministries while doing your Christmas shopping! On Thursday, December 11 Ten Thousand Villages will donate 20% of all sales between 5:30-8:00 p.m. to OVM. Please stop by and also enjoy some refreshments.

Support the mission of HOPE Home Repair while doing Christmas shopping! HOPE, a faith-based non-profit organization, does home repairs and handicapped modifications for low-income homeowners. HOPE representatives will be at Ten Thousand Villages, Newton, Sunday afternoon, December 14 to share Christmas goodies and answer questions about HOPE's work. Twenty percent of the store's sales will be donated for needed home repairs for Harvey County's elderly and handicapped residents.

Annual organ vespers at Bethel College, December 14, 4:00 p.m., Administration Building chapel, featuring students, Bethel College Academy of Performing Arts (BCAPA) and alumni players. Free.

Registration for the 2009 Kansas Mennonite Men's Chorus is due December 21. Contact Willard Wiebe with questions or for a registration form.

Camp Mennoscah—Thank you! I have moved into the new director's residence and enjoyed the Thanksgiving holidays with my family in the wonderful house that you built. Thank you for your dedication to Camp Mennoscah and its camping ministry. We look forward to seeing you this coming year! Olivia Bartel, director

Camp Mennoscah Reservation forms for 2009 are being sent to annual groups. Please note that the forms have changed somewhat. We hope that these new forms are easier to understand, but please contact us at 620-297-3290 or campmno@mennowdc.org with any questions. We are happy to help you. Interested in coming out to Camp Mennoscah with your church or family group? There are still a few vacancies—come visit us!