

# GRACE HILL MENNONITE CHURCH

December 13, 2015

Whitewater, Kansas

Worship 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School 10:45 a.m.

Musicians: Tara Harms-Becker, David Janzen

Song Leader: Penny Hiebert

Transition Pastor: Randy Smith

## *Third Sunday of Advent* *Freedom Bound: the Path of Trust*

Gathering Music Tara Harms-Becker  
Welcome and Announcements Randy Smith  
Prelude to Worship

Candle Lighting  
Isaiah 11:1-9 Josh Patterson  
*O come, O come Immanuel (verse 3)* Hymnal 172  
Silence

Sung Call to Worship Women's Ensemble  
*The Gift of Love*

\*Spoken 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. We trust in God.**  
Freeing God, sustain us in this wait and keep us  
bound to walking the path of your way.  
Because of your faithfulness,  
today may we be freed to praise you,  
trusting you completely.

**Christ comes to set us free.**  
**Today we wait, and we follow - freedom bound.**  
*We worship God, trusting God's faithfulness and the promise  
of new life.*

\*Caroling  
*O how shall I receive thee* Hymnal 182  
*Infant holy, Infant lowly* Hymnal 206  
*It came upon a midnight clear* Hymnal 195

God's Faithfulness, Our Trust  
Isaiah 12:1-6  
Silence  
Zephaniah 3:14-17

Prayer  
*The Birthday of a King* Women's Ensemble

Offering and Offertory

Children's Story  
*Children to age 5 may be dismissed to the library for child care*  
Scripture K. John Klaassen

Luke 3: 7-18

Sermon  
*Good News? Really?*

Removing the Chains

The light of the Third Candle of Advent reminds us of our hope –  
God is faithful. God is trustworthy.  
We trust in God, confident God has freed us  
from the bondage of sin.

**Come Lord Jesus.**

**As you are faithful to us, because we trust in you,  
may we faithfully follow you.**

Hope, that in the midst of this world of sin, God longs to set us free  
from the chains that bind us –  
The paralysis of fear and suspicion;  
The hardened hearts of reactivity and control;  
Mistrust.

**We will walk in that light –**  
***In the freedom of trust. Bound in Christ. Freed from sin.***

*Peace before us* Sing the Story 16

Sharing and Prayer

\*Benediction Philippians 4:5-7  
\*Sending Song Hymnal 215  
*What Child is this*

Postlude

\*Indicates those comfortable in doing so, please stand.

This morning's offering is designated for Local Church.

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** begins a four Sunday series today in the fellowship hall. We will look at the nativity stories from Matthew and Luke using video and scripture. Everyone with an interest in this study is welcome

### **For Sharing and Prayer**

**Western District Conference:** Pray for joy and wisdom for Jennie Wintermote in her new role as WDC Resource Library Director, a ¼ time position that began December 1.

**Mennonite Mission Network:** Early next year, Moriah Hurst will conclude seven years of MMN ministry in Australia. Pray for her as she leaves with difficult good-byes, and confides her work into the hands of colleagues.

## Church Events

**Monday 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.

**Wednesday at 11:00 a.m.** Wheat State Manor worship service, Randy preaching.

**Wednesday at 3:00 p.m.** Wheat State Manor Bible study, Randy teaching.

**Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.** The Worship Council has planned the Christmas Eve program which will include musicians, carols, children's story and narration. We will have one practice on December 16 at 7 p.m. for those involved in the program.

**Thursday at 6:30 a.m.** Men's Breakfast at Charlies, Newton.



**CHRISTMAS**

**December 24 at 7:00 p.m.** The Grace Hill Christmas Eve Program will be on Thursday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m., followed by refreshments in the Fellowship Hall. Please invite neighbors and friends to be our guests to celebrate the Christmas Story. The offering will be for Community Playschool and Harvey County Health Ministries. The Pursuers Sunday School class will host the reception following the service. Thank you to the Mariners Sunday School class for decorating the church this year!

**January 24** Wes and Deb Bergen will share with us during the worship service.

**January 24** Annual Church Business Meeting

**January 31** Randy's Farewell Reception

**February 7** Weldon Martens' Installation Service

## 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.

**Nursery This Sunday:** Deb Regier and Katrina Regehr

**Nursery Next Sunday:** Kris Janzen and Courtney Nethercot

**Ushers Next Sunday:** Mike Balzer and Kendall Claassen

**Offering Last Sunday:** Mennonite Church USA \$1,076.00

**Offering Next Sunday:** Kidron Bethel Health Care Centre

## 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](mailto:transitionpastor@gmail.com)

**Director of Youth Ministry: Joshua Janzen**

Email: [joshuadjanzen@bethelks.edu](mailto:joshuadjanzen@bethelks.edu)

**Church Secretary: Debbie Claassen**

## Et Cetera

**From Iglesia Casa Betania:** Greetings to you in the name of Our Savior Jesus Christ, We are pleased to invite you to join us for the baptisms that we are having as a fruit of our work here in the community. We are very delighted to conclude this year this way, thanks to the Lord; he is GOOD!!! This afternoon, December 13, we will have a potluck and fellowship time from 2:30-3:30 p.m. at the Newton Rec Center. Baptisms will take place at 3:30 p.m. – Jaime Cazares Jr., Iglesia Casa Betania

**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.

**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.

**Rural Ministry Discussion Group** - AMBS-Kansas Center will host two options for a Rural Ministry Discussion Group (both in-person and online). This discussion group allows for pastors and church leaders to come together and discuss issues pertinent to their own rural setting, such as rural spirituality, decline in attendance, and systemic issues facing rural congregations. Discussion and case studies will seek to explore practical ways for rural congregations to engage in the unique mission opportunities within a rural context. Registration is limited, so please register as soon as possible to ensure participation. The in-person option begins January 12, 2016 and is facilitated by Dorothy Nickel Friesen. The online option begins January 14, 2016 and is facilitated by S. Roy Kaufman. For registration and more information, please see: <https://www.ambs.edu/academics/rural-ministry-discussion-group.cfm>

**Come to Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp** for the annual Mountain States Men's Retreat, February 26-28, 2016. This year Tim Shue (Kidron, OH) will lead the group in choral arrangements during our worship services as we lift our voices together. Mark your calendars now and plan to come. Visit [www.rmmc.org](http://www.rmmc.org) for more details and to register or see the flyer in the foyer.

**Just a short bath house break** - We're taking this opportunity to let you know that work on the bath houses at Camp Mennoscah continues. This warm weather has been great for keeping the work going. The plan/hope/expectation is that the bath houses will be finished before the next camping season. Thank you to all the many people who have supported this project with prayers, gifts, and hard work!

**Syrian Refugee Crisis:** Over 4 million refugees have fled Syria over the course of the nation's civil war. Mennonite Church USA encourages three ways to help extend the love of Jesus to these sisters and brothers: 1. Pray for an end to the violence that creates refugees. Until that time, pray for refugees to be welcomed into places of safety, where they can live in peace. 2. Urge Congress and state officials to support and welcome Syrian refugees. MCC Washington has compiled contact information for national and state officials. See <http://mcc.org/get-involved/advocacy/alert/support-syrian-iraqi-refugees> and <http://washingtonmemo.org/portfolio/support-syrian-and-iraqi-refugees/> for more information. 3. Support organizations that assist with refugee resettlement, and consider how your congregation or community can participate. Church World Service (<http://cwsglobal.org/get-involved/welcome-a-refugee/>) and World Relief (<http://refugeecrisis.worldrelief.org/usa>) are two such organizations.