

OMC CALENDAR

- Dec 2 7:00 pm Community Connections Mtg
Dec 5 10:00 am Kirsten Hamm-Epp speaking *Second Advent*
11:00 am Deacons mtg
Dec 10 6:30 p.m. Youth Event
Dec 12 10:00 am Patty Friesen *Third Advent Sunday*
Dec 17 7:00 pm Blue Christmas *In-Person Only*
Dec 19 10:00 am Christmas Program *Fourth Advent Sunday*
Dec 24 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Candle Lighting
Dec 26 No Service
Jan 2 10:00 am Patty Friesen - Communion
Feb 5 9:30 am Annual Meeting Hybrid Zoom/In-Person

December 5 - Kirsten Hamm-Epp, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan Regional Minister of Youth and Development

December 12 - Patty Friesen, Sing for Joy

December 19 - Children's Christmas Program

December 24, 7:00 p.m. In-person and Facebook Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 26 - No service

January 2 - Epiphany Sunday - New Year's Communion

February 5 - Annual Meeting @ 9:30 In-Person and Zoom

Annual Reports are due January 5

- 2 – Oren Bird
2 – Noah Doell
3 – Tree Bird
4 – Rachel Clark
6 – Braden Martens-Funk
11 – Terri Lynn Friesen
15 – Benjamin Doell
19 – Shelley Penner
21 – Charlie Clark
24 – Norman Tataryn
28 – Frieda Rempel
31 – Linda Stucky
31 – Adam Boldt



December Birthdates

The Osler Mennonite Church December 2021 Newsletter

The Magic of
Christmas
is not in the presents
but in *His* 
presence

Our Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Osler Mennonite Church is to be a supportive community in which people can meet God through worship and fellowship.

We seek to teach
an Anabaptist understanding of scripture,
led by the Spirit to imitate Christ in word and deed.

We strive to nurture faith and discipleship,
committing ourselves individually and corporately
to respond to the needs of others.

***We gather on Treaty Six Lands, Nehiyaw Territory,
and the Homeland of the Metis.***

Osler Mennonite Church
oslermcoffice@sasktel.net
<http://www.oslermennonitechurch.org>

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Volume XIV Tenth Edition

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE
Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

Pastor Patty's Ponderings

Our first snow is falling while I am writing this pondering. I can't believe another COVID Christmas is upon us. It feels quite different this year as we will have in-person Children's Christmas Program December 19 and Christmas Eve service. I feel quite thankful for how we have weathered the waves and thankful that we've been able to gather with technology and in-person. Some unexpected blessings have come out of this time, like an amazing number of Facebook followers and new folks coming to church because they feel safe with our masks and vaccines. I would have never expected church growth in a pandemic!

I'm thankful for our Mennonite Church Saskatchewan collaborations: sharing a Lina Refugee Committee with Wildwood Mennonite Church and Voices Together Adult Education with Nutana Park Mennonite Church and a monthly youth event Mega-Menno which was birthed out of an Osler need for a bigger youth group seven years ago. The Mennonite city churches are meeting to share a youth minister and two city churches share an administrative assistant. City churches are starting to share ministers with country churches. These days of decreasing membership and resources are forcing us into creative collaborations that strengthen and encourage us by their cross-fertilization. Unexpected growth in new ways.

Early in the pandemic people asked what was going to happen to the church. I had no clue and for the first time in my ministry have had to give up control of how things would go at church. The unexpected blessings that have risen organically have been out of my control. They've been pure gift and grace and I'm thankful. May we all expect the unexpected this Christmas season.

Patty's Picks

Fire by Night by Melissa Florer-Bixler: Finding God in the pages of the Old Testament. A transformative read on the images of God.

The Last Nomad by Shugri Said Salt is a fascinating memoir of a Somali woman.

All Creatures Great and Small BBC - Husband Patrick likes the old series better than the new but the new is lovely also.

As Time Goes By BBC - with the amazing Dame Judi Dench and Geoffrey Palmer.

Inspector Morse BBC - Going back to the British crime classics. Should keep us going all winter!

LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR DECEMBER

December 5 - Second Sunday of Advent

Baruch 5:1-9 or Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 1:68-79

Philippians 1:3-11

December 12 - Third Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

December 19 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5a

Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7

Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

December 24 & 25 - Christmas Eve, Morn or Mid-Day

Isiah 9:2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20

December 26 - First Sunday after Christmas Day

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:41-52

January 1 - Holy Name of Jesus

Numbers 6:22-27

Psalm 8

Galatians 4:4-7 or Philippians 2:5-11

Luke 2:15-21

Grow Hope

Hello friends,

Thanks to your generosity, 263 acres have been sponsored to date. That's 41 more than our target! Your donations helped increase the yield in a year when the proceeds from the crops were impacted by the hot and dry weather.

Even though the growing season is over, we're still growing hope as we wrap up our fourth year. For those who have not yet sponsored your acres, you can still be a part of this year's record "harvest" until November 26. The totals from Grow Hope's 2021 year will be made known to you in our final update in December.

For now, please check out the latest article, "[Fields of Hope](#)" highlighting our significant milestone in Grow Hope Saskatchewan history, and check out the beautiful Grow Hope Saskatchewan quilt created by the Catholic Women's League. You could make this be a one-of-a-kind Christmas gift for someone you love so we encourage you to put in a bid or two! [Bid on a Grow Hope Saskatchewan quilt from the Catholic Women's League.](#)

And, of course, as you settle in for the winter ahead, try out the new [Pumpkin Spice Granola Bar](#) recipe from Jill Mitchell.

As we close out this year and start planning for the next, we invite your prayers. We want to be faithful stewards of the tremendous generosity and collaboration that this project represents as we endeavor to help end hunger in the world.

On behalf of the steering committee,

Rick Guenther
Communications & Donor Relations Director
MCC Saskatchewan

PS for links to above, go to <https://foodgrainsbank.ca>

God is a Fire by Patty Friesen

Fire has been a special comfort to us all these past months gathering safely outdoors in all seasons with folks around a fire in someone's backyard or at a campground. The warmth, the crackle and sizzle, the mesmerizing calming feel of feeding a fire with twigs to get it started and then split pieces that coax it into a roar. Fire creates a place for us to be silent together and watch or to carefully share inmost thoughts. Our snowshoe group had a fire on Bruce Boldt's dugout that burned through several layers of ice before we put it out with snow. We had a fire in Dick and Kathy's outdoor stove that baked cinnamon buns this summer. We had a fire in Jake's backyard for one of our ice cream socials this summer even though a fire ban was on in the city! We began our fall kick-off with a bonfire in the churchyard burning our losses from the past year. I would say fire has been an essential part of our congregational care this year.

Greek philosopher Heraclitus says, "It ever was, and is, and shall be, ever-living Fire, in measures being kindled and in measures going out."

"God is a Fire," declares Pastor Melissa Florer-Bixler in her new book *Fire by Night: Finding God in the pages of the Old Testament*. She says, "As a fire, God is unwieldly and uncontrollable, common and extraordinary, making light and revealing hidden places, burning up and burning away. The Old Testament smells like smoke."

This Advent season, I invite you to make a lot of fires alone in meditation on God's power and warmth and together with friends and family in celebration. I invite you to follow God as Israel followed through the dark with God the Fire lighting the way. I invite you to keep the fires of your heart for God continuously burning as the priests stoked the fires of the altar in the tabernacle. I invite you to let the Spirit burn the excess chaff of possessions or resentments in our lives that clutter our path to following Jesus. (*Fire by Night*, p.). Let God the Fire be your guide. Let us pray...

God our healer whose mercy is a refining fire, reveal yourself in crackle and comfort, within our own souls and with those around us and to all who you call to gather around your warmth and light. Amen.

Nora's Notes

I have taken courage and hope out of the way that our community and congregation has been holding stewardship of creation as a centre point of our focus over the last month. Community Connections hosted an eco-anxiety zoom workshop that gave us story forming tools to name our place in the climate crisis, the impact it has on us and transform this into a place of hope, conviction, and community to continue entering into this action and holding space for these conversations. In our Memorial service Adeline did a beautiful job of including a lament for the impact climate crisis is having on our world in her liturgy and prayers. we have had sermons highlight these topics including our guest speaker Curtis Wiens. In the youth area we took time at Mega Menno to gather the thoughts and feelings our youth are carrying around this topic to help us form a youth retreat on this Theme in January.

I have often feel quite small and rather ignorant stepping into the big conversation of climate crisis and discipleship. I have felt particularly inspired and encouraged by the “7 Calls to Climate Action” that is being presented to Mennonite Church Canada and continues to have growing support each day. I will include there 7 calls here, along with there webpage where you can sign a petition, pledge funds, or write letters of support. <https://www.7callstoclimateaction.com/>

- 1) Tell the truth. “What we do over the next three to four years, I believe, is going to determine the future of humanity” (Sir David King, former Chief Scientific Advisor to the UK government). That is the hard truth. We need to face it, and with God’s help, tell it.
- 2) Create a Climate Emergency Mobilization Ministry with full-time staff and a fulsome budget. The primary focus would be organizing our people into vulnerable and risk taking collaborative action. Beyond education, greening buildings and individual actions, the aim would be to address systemic evil. (Church members are invited to pledge money toward this.)
- 3) Support Indigenous land defenders by designating 1% of the overall MC Canada budget to support Indigenous land defenders.
- 4) Support climate refugees and displaced people by designating 1% of MC Canada overall budget to help congregational efforts to support people displaced as a result of climate change, both

MC SK UPDATES

Prayer Request, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan: Ryan Siemens (Executive Minister) has recently announced he will be resigning his position at the end of January 2022 to take on the role of Executive Director with MCC Alberta. Pray for Ryan and his family (Sandra, Isaiah, Elliott, Bennett), as well as MC Sask staff and leadership as they navigate and prepare for this transition.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan is seeking an **Interim Youth Worker** to fulfill a one-year parental leave beginning January 17, 2022. Averaging 10 hours/week, this position will focus on coordinating Mega Menno events, including travel to the 2022 MC Canada Youth Gathering. Contact Ryan Siemens, minister@mcask.ca, for more information.

Please continue to be in prayer for all those affected by flooding and storm systems across the country.

RJC Christmas Concert - December 15 | 7:00pm (SK CST).

Join us as we celebrate the Christmas season! Music and performances by RJC students and staff. Livestream for those who wish to enjoy the program at home can be found at rjc.sk.ca. Saskatchewan public health orders will be followed at this event.

Music at CMU information webinar, December 8, 6:00 PM CST. Studying music at CMU provides you with a breadth of skills and depth of knowledge to be a creative and analytical thinker who is prepared to pursue a range of vocations and careers. If you are considering studying a Bachelor of Music, Music Therapy or a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Music, this webinar is for you! To register visit cmu.ca/webinar

Ag Support for SK Projects!

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 YOUNGSEQPT
 NUTRIEN
 BAYER
 CERVUS
 BLAIRS
 MAZERGROUP
 PATERSONGRAIN
 RUDYAGRO
 VITERRA
 SHARPES
 FLAMAN
 CROPPER
 BASF
 PANDH
 SECAN
 CORTEVA

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/2923410/>

through assistance in place and through resettlement to Canada.
 5) Affirm nonviolent civil disobedience to defend creation as a normative expression of Christian discipleship.

6) Divest from all fossil fuel-connected investments. “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Mt. 6:21).

7) Embrace conversion and accountability. Specifically, we call on Mennonite Church Canada leaders to: live lives of simplicity in solidarity with the poor; establish fixed times of prayer, fasting, and study with attention to our ecological crisis, discerning “what the Spirit is saying to the Church” (Rev. 3:22); and participate in preaching and public discourse regarding the ethical and moral choices before us as we seek to address the climate crisis.

When You Meet Someone Deep In Grief

Slip off your needs
 and set them by the door.

Enter barefoot
 this darkened chapel

hollowed by loss hallowed by
 sorrow

Its gray stone walls and floor.

You, congregation of one

Are here to listen not to sing.

Kneel in the back pew. Make
 no sound,

let the candles speak.

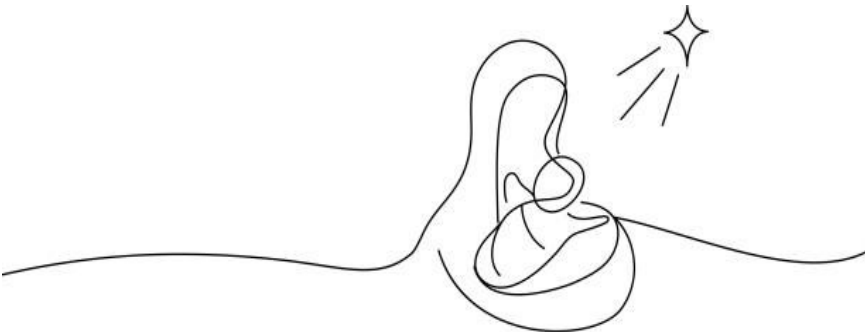
by Patricia McKernon
Runkle Grief's Compass: Walking in the Wilderness with Emily Dickinson



Advent 2021 Theme:

Dare to Imagine by Mennonite Church Manitoba

In the middle of a Canadian prairie winter,
sitting each in our own space, separated.
Bound together by our threads of hope and longing,
we placed ourselves in the ancient texts and waited.
Would the incarnate God come and sing over us?
Could we sing . . . Joy to the World?
Slowing, but surely, the Spirit showed herself;
comforting, wooing, assuring, revealing.
The Word came to life, living among us.
Steadfast love began to hold us, strong winds of righteousness
and glory began to blow over us.
The Lord, our God, was in our midst,
a glimmer had arrived.
Only now could we free our lament and speak of our struggle.
Seeing the salvation of God, our despair could enter the light of
day.
Cracked open by tender mercy, the eyes of our hearts and minds
caught a glimpse of what might be, what will be.
We dared to imagine.
The faces of John, Mary, and the boy Samuel urging us on,
we opened ourselves to holy possibilities.
Images, words, prayers, and even songs
rose over us, among us. We received them. We recorded them.
We slept with them.
We shared them. We invited others to speak into them. We gave
thanks to God.
We now offer them to you, our siblings in faith.
May the Spirit of the living God free you to imagine.
—Kathy Giesbrecht



Lament for a Gathered Community by Cindy Wallace

Creator God, we lift to You the weeping world. Our sisters and
our brothers cry. Creation groans. Rise up, God, and douse the
flaming forests, cool the melting ice, bring home all refugees, and
the beloved in each unmarked grave.

Mend what breaks us
and what our people, even in Your name, have broken. Heal the
cancers in our bodies and in our collective souls. We long for just
peace—justice and peace, just and peaceful flourishing for all of
our relations, animals, including humans, plants and fungi, even
the rocks, we know, cry out to You.

Embolden and strengthen us, God,
to dream Your dreams,
to hold fast to our holy longing for redemption, to do what You
would have us do.

Work through us to make this place
Your kin-dom,
a community of joyful welcome.
In Your strength and love,
do not be silent—
rise up and do what only You can do.
Turn the hearts of rulers:
soften stony hate and greed
in others and in us too.

Encourage us, Creator,
in the bonds of love,
in the body of Christ
who sets us free,
in the tender compassion of the Spirit
who breathes life into our weary bones.
Go before us, God—
that all creation may be saved.

Amen.