

***MCC Connects:** Give food for Christmas. Your gift of food gives families and communities the power to improve their own lives. \$40 provides garden seeds that will help families in Mozambique, Guatemala or Cambodia grow vegetables. See Christmas Giving at mccsk.ca or call 306.665.2555.

***Mennonite Disaster Service seeking volunteers for rebuilding in High River, AB:** Come and help rebuild High River! MDS is scheduling weekly groups (Tuesday to Saturday work weeks) beginning January 2014 for work in High River. Please call Chantel Runtz in the Winnipeg office to book. Volunteers are also still needed in Staten Island, NYC and other locations. Call 1-866-261-1274 Food and accommodations provided.

*The **RJC Alumni Bulletin, November/December 2013 edition** is posted on the RJC website www.rjc.sk.ca (direct link <http://www.rjc.sk.ca/images/stories/pdf/13.12abulletin.pdf>). If you are an RJC alumnus and have been receiving paper copies of the Alumni Bulletin (or have moved and are not receiving the Bulletin at all), please let us know if you would like to switch to an electronic copy/link (email office@rjc.sk.ca).

Worship Leader: Wilf Buhler
Song Leader: Loretta Sawatzky
Accompanist: Melanie Boldt
This week's Nursery Care: Diana Buhler
Next week's Nursery Care: Jan Guenther
Sound: Abe Braun
Ushers: Dick Braun, Carl Martens-Funk

The Osler Mennonite Church, Box 129, Osler, Saskatchewan S0K 3A0		
Vol. LIV	December 15, 2013	No. 51
Gordon Allaby, pastor		
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OSLER MENNONITE CHURCH

Osler, Saskatchewan
A Welcoming Christian
Community for Peace

10:00 a.m. Worship Service
December 15, 2013

*O, the mystery of God's dwelling
Advent Three ...in transformation!*

Welcome & Announcements

INVITING THE MYSTERY

Chiming to worship and silent reflection

Call to Worship

One: Be patient, beloved, until the coming of the Lord.

Many: Let us awake to love!

One: Strengthen your hearts, for the Lord is near.

Many: We will not grumble against one another.

One: Come, rejoice in God our Saviour;

All: O, the mystery of God's dwelling in transformation!

Invocation

***Hymns: Blue/HWB #184 "Hark! The glad sound"**

Blue/HWB #212 "O come, all ye faithful"

Confession and lighting the Advent Wreath

One: In the coming of Jesus, we see God's majesty:

life springs out of death, desperation yields to hope.

Let us pause to consider the redemptive power of God.

Let us confess the desert places in our lives, the ways we

have gone astray, and all that is broken in our world.

The third Advent candle is the candle of love.

Many: In this light, we celebrate forgiveness,

knowing that God dwells with us in the midst of transformation.

Sharing
Discipline of silence and Prayer of the Church

ENGAGING THE MYSTERY

Children's Time Adeline Cox

Hymn: Blue/HWB #189 "To us a Child of hope is born"

Offering and Offertory music
Offertory Prayer

Old Testament: Isaiah 35:1-10
Gospel lesson: Matthew 11:2-11
Dramatic reading

CELEBRATING THE MYSTERY

Hymn: Blue/HWB #178 "Come, thou long expected Jesus"

Sermon: "What do you see?" Gordon Allaby

***Hymn: Blue/HWB #318 "Joy to the world"**

*Benediction

**Please rise*

We welcome all who are worshipping with us today.

To all our visitors: WELCOME. We are delighted that you are worshipping with us.

Nursery care is provided during the worship service for those who desire it (children over 4 years should be accompanied by an adult.)

Children's Worship Binder, an instrument to help children through the worship hour, is available in the foyer.

Advent Three Focus Statement: In God's mysterious ways, the desert springs with life, desperation yields to hope, and all that is broken is transformed by the redemptive power of God. So let us seek the restoration of the house of the Lord – *there is love!*

***TODAY**

- **Beverages and snacks** available after the worship service.
- **Sunday School for all ages** begins at 11:15am.
- **Choir Practice** in the sanctuary, begins at 11:15am
- **Open gym** tonight at 7:00pm - Basketball

THIS WEEK

- **Thursday, Dec. 19th, 8:30pm** - Choir practice
- **Next Sunday, Dec. 22, Noon** – Pizza lunch for Sunday school kids and youth, followed by Christmas program practice.

Remember in Prayer

Tena Friesen, at home, recovering from surgery.
Sarah Hiebert, awaiting medical treatment.
Bob Pauls, Edna Zacharias' brother, who is in hospital.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

* **O, the mystery of God's dwelling!** Our Advent theme is a statement about God's profound act of entering the human world, and it also reflects our confusion and frustration from trying to make sense of this stupendous event. To better grasp the Christmas season, Advent is designed to be a penitential season, instead of a frantic shopping season that ends on the 25th. Each Sunday, through to Epiphany, we will progress in exploring the mystery, as penitence peels away the barriers to understanding.

*Not too late to join **the Christmas choir!** Rehearse today at 11:15am in the sanctuary, and again on **Thursday, Dec. 19th at 8:30pm**. The choir will sing next Sunday during the worship service, and on Christmas Eve as part of the Sunday School program.

*Missions and Service Committee is again collection food for **Christmas hampers**. Please bring your donations to the Serving room by Dec. 22nd. Home baked goods more than welcome!

* Copies of an **Advent-At-Home devotional** resource from Mennonite Church Canada is available in the foyer for families. Please help yourself to a copy of *“The Mystery of God’s Dwelling”*.



Prayer Requests for Sunday, Dec 8:

* We approach you humbly, God, and with gratitude for the mysterious way your love changes us. Help us to recognize and join your loving mission in the world, even as we wait for change. (taken from *The Mystery of God’s Dwelling*, www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2164)

Ministry Note for Sunday, December 15

*By supporting Mennonite Church Canada, you helped to send several workers to Israel on short term assignments. Jerry and Kara Buhler, together with their daughter Laura; and Jeanette Hoepfner are serving at Bethlehem Bible College in Bethlehem. Thank you!

***RJC Choir Concert**, December 15, 7:30 pm at Knox United Church, Saskatoon. RJC Chorale, Women’s choir and guest performer SONRISA will present a Christmas Concert in Knox United Church, 838 Spadina Crescent East. Admission is free; a collection will be taken in support of RJC. Everyone is welcome.

***RJC Christmas Concert** - RJC will present its annual Christmas Concert on Friday, December 20 at 7:00 pm in the school auditorium. Join us as we celebrate the Christmas season with music!

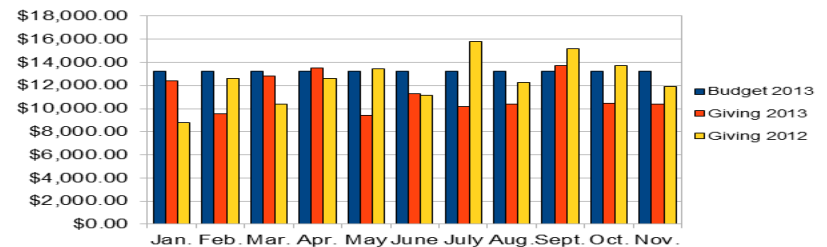
***CMU** will be closed Dec 24 to Jan 1.

*The Sunday School children and youth are busy **practicing for the Christmas Eve service**. Practices are taking place during the regular Sunday School time. Next **Sunday, December 22, there will be an additional practice**. A pizza lunch will be served at noon. The practice will begin immediately after and should be done by 2 P.M. Parents are invited to stay for the lunch as well.

*Our annual **Christmas Eve Pageant and Candlelight Service** will start at **7:00pm** on Tuesday, December 24th.

***Please** do not play in the gym with **street shoes**. **Black marks** are left on the very large floor, generating a lot of unnecessary extra work for the custodian. **Thank you** to the Sunday night floor hockey/basketball participants for putting away all equipment used and not leaving black marks on the floor. Your consistent consideration is greatly appreciated!

*General fund receipts for November were \$10,394.05 bringing the total for 2013 to \$124,076.79. This is 78.0% of our 2013 budget after 91.5% of the year has passed. Thank you for your continuing support of our church’s ministry.



***Giving through automatic withdrawal** – The last newsletter had an article describing an option for having your church offering transferred from your bank account to that of the church on a regular basis to simplify your giving. Please read the article and let our treasurer, Jim Dyck, know if you have any interest in using this method.

***Christmas Giving Project:** Each year at this time the church, through the Education Committee, chooses a Christmas Giving Project. This year's project is through the Canadian Food Grains Bank. It is called the *Christmas Ornament Project*. The aim is to provide food for starving people around the world. We are especially focusing on Syrian refugees who are experiencing severe suffering through the war which is happening in their country. **It takes \$12.00 to feed one person for a month.** For every \$12.00 donated, an ornament will be displayed on the tree in the foyer. Our goal: to feed 100 persons for a month. There is a jar in the foyer for donations and church offerings can be designated. The Christmas Eve offering will go towards this project as well. Thank you for your support!

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE LESSONS:

Isaiah 35:1-10

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.'

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;

the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Matthew 11:2-11

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' ⁴Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you."

¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.