



**December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023 9:30 a.m.**

***How Will We Know?***

**Prelude** Annie Schulz

**Gathering Thoughts** Darrell Winger

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

**Call to Worship & Prayer**

Leader: Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God, saying,  
“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace;  
for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

At that moment, Anna, a widow who worshiped  
at the temple with fasting and prayer night and day,  
began to praise God and to speak about the child  
to everyone who was looking for the redemption  
of Jerusalem.

The child’s father and mother were amazed at what  
was being said about him.

**People: Our long wait is finally over!**

**All: Together we rejoice.**

**Carol** *Joy to the world* HWB #318,vv.1,2,4

**Passing of the Peace**

**Offertory Prayer**

**Musical Reflection**

**Prayers of the People** Darrell Winger

**Carol** *Oh, how joyfully* HWB #209

**Scripture Reading** Galatians 4:4-7 (NT p.189)

**Carol** *Love came down at Christmas* HWB #208

**Scripture Reading** Luke 2:22-40 (NT p.59)

**Meditation** “Happy Christmas (Year is Over)” Mac Plunkett

**Hymn of Response**      *Song of Simeon:*

*Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace (Luke 2:29-32)*

*Lord, bid your servant go in peace; your word is now fulfilled.  
These eyes have seen salvation's dawn, this child so long foretold.*

*This is the Savior of the world, the Gentiles' promised light,  
God's glory dwelling in our midst, the joy of Israel.*

**Benediction**

Mac Plunkett

**Sending Hymn** *Good Christian friends, rejoice* HWB #210,vv.1,2

**Postlude**

***It is good to be together in worship this morning!***  
***The ushers are pleased to help any who need assistance.***

[Offering plate is available on table at back of sanctuary]

*Brunch Coffee Time after the service today*

**GRACE NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023** ~ Attendance – 40

**Christmas Eve Service** ~ Attendance approximately – 109

Cider and cookies in the Church Hall were enjoyed by many.

**2023 Offerings:** A huge thank you to all who have given of their gifts and offerings throughout this year of 2023! Grace Mennonite Church is blest in so many ways!

As we end the year on Sunday, December 31, that means that this Sunday is the last day for offerings to be receiptable for 2023. Any cheques dated for January, or e-transfers or cash received in early January will be treated as offerings for January 2024. If you have any questions, please contact Lorraine Sawatzky at 289-929-4772.

**Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Speaker: Darrell Winger

**Scripture Texts** (Focus texts highlighted): **Isaiah 60:1-6;**

**Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12**

♪ **Women's Chorus** ~ January 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.

**Chaplain's Corner** ~ Let us continue to keep in touch with church friends who are not able to attend our Sunday services and who welcome prayers, phone calls, cards and visits. Their contact information is in the Church Directory. These friends include (but are not limited to): Tom B, John B, Erna & Jake B (Ester's parents), Reg F, Agnes G, Abe H, Francine & Theo I, Erika I, Kathy & Jake H, Hertha J, Mary L, Helene M, and Marlene W. Have I missed anyone? Let me know. Would you like a friendly visit? Let me know. With love from your community chaplain, Jan Steven.

## "Jesus, Hope in Bewilderment."

From January 7<sup>th</sup> through February 11<sup>th</sup>, beginning with Epiphany until just before the Lenten Season, the theme for our Sunday morning worship services will be *Jesus, Hope in Bewilderment*.

Epiphany gives us opportunity to celebrate and focus on God manifesting or revealing himself in Jesus Christ. As the wise men or magi from the East were drawn to worship Christ through a unique star or guiding light, so the light of Christ continues to shine even now so that all might believe and find hope in him.

Yet, we find ourselves in dark, confusing, and bewildering times. Inflation, economic uncertainties, war, and increasing division in our own communities contribute to this sense of darkness and bewilderment. However, as followers of Jesus, in this time of Epiphany, we are reminded that God's light and love are present! Jesus truly is the hope of the world and invites us to follow his guiding light just as the magi did so many centuries ago.

Our hope in Christ emerges in us *in the wilds*. As we journey through life we never really get fully beyond times of bewilderment, but our hope in Christ and the company of the Spirit enables us to live meaningfully, takes steps of faith, and to be witnesses of Christ's hope to others. Christ calls us, his church, to be a community of light, life, and hope.

## **ACROSS THE STREET AND AROUND THE WORLD**

### **From Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC)**

**Pray for our world** as people experience grief and pain and live in fear and danger because of armed conflict in areas like **The Gaza Strip, Ukraine, Russia, Myanmar and more.**

*Incarnate God, holding tenderly all things human, you became one of us... may we be gentled into joining you in the hard and holy work of releasing peace on earth. Lord, hear our prayers. (From Take our Moments and our Days)*





## **A Moment for MCC: Helping Orphaned Children and Many Others**

In North Korea,  
MCC works with

First Steps – a Christian humanitarian organization. First Steps seeks to prevent and alleviate childhood malnutrition in North Korea through programs which provide essential nutrients to young children, babies, pregnant, and lactating mothers. First Steps has the rare and privileged

opportunity of continuing our humanitarian aid in the KPRK over many years and through many challenges.

<https://www.firststepscanada.org/soymilk>



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### ***The Lord's Prayer***

*Our Father who art in heaven.*

*Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come.*

*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our trespasses,*

*as we forgive those that trespass against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

*For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.*

*For ever and ever. Amen.*

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Office Hours: 8:30-2:30 ~ Wednesday, Thursday

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