



October 15th, 2023 9:30 a.m.

Being Faithful in Grace

Prelude

Annie Schulz

Gathering Thoughts

Darrell Winger

Lighting the Christ Candle

Call to Worship & Prayer

Leader: Lord, you have been our dwelling-place
throughout all generations.

**People: Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

Leader: Your faithfulness continues through all generations.

**All: I declare your strength to this generation,
Your power to everyone who is to come.**

Hymn *Praise, my soul, the King of heaven*

HWB #65

Passing of the Peace

Offertory Prayer

Musical Reflection

Prayers of the People

Darrell Winger

Blessing of Bears and Blankets Ministry

Leader: God's Spirit calls, the church commissions,
and servants of Christ scatter throughout the world.

**All: We join with you in seeking first the reign of God.
We bless this ministry of Bears and Blankets
as part of our congregation's witness,
and pledge our prayers of support for this ministry.
We trust the Holy Spirit's work within you as you serve.
May your work of preparing and sharing these special
bears and blankets reflect the grace, peace, and love
of Christ, and may every person who receives these
special gifts know they are loved and valued by God.**

Grace Singers *Spirit, Open My Heart*

Back of Insert

Scripture Reading Medley of Old Testament Scriptures

Hymn *Help us to help each other*

HWB #362

Scripture Reading Medley of New Testament Scriptures

Meditation	“Of Bears and Blankets”	Jan Steven
Hymn of Response	<i>Move in our midst</i>	HWB #418, vv.1,2
Benediction (Congregation please stand)		Jan Steven
Sending Hymn	<i>Move in our midst</i>	HWB #418, vv.3,4
Postlude		

It is good to be together in worship this morning!
The ushers are pleased to help any who need assistance.
[Offering plate available on table at back of sanctuary]

GRACE NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday October 8th, 2023 ~ Attendance – 43

Sunday, October 22nd – Speaker: Darrell Winger

Scripture Texts (Focus texts highlighted): Exodus 33:12-23;
 Psalm 99; **1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**; Matthew 22:15-22

Coffee Time after the service. Refreshment offerings welcome.

Church Council Meeting ~ October 18th, 1:30 p.m.

♪ **Women’s Chorus** ~ October 19th, 9:30 a.m.

♪ **Grace Singers** ~ October 29th after the worship service

Chaplain’s Corner ~ Laur and I are off to Arizona for three weeks – staying at our friends’ house. ☺ The plan is that we head out Saturday, October 21st and return Tuesday, November 14th. You’ll be able to reach us by email and by phone. laursteven53@gmail.com or janscats@gmail.com / 289-990-4839. We’ll try to bring back some sun! ☀

Grapple With Challenging Issues

An important dimension of congregational life is for people to gather together regularly to grapple with challenging issues, with the Bible as the most important reference point. We call that Adult Sunday School. For a number of years we had a Focus Group. Then came Covid. The congregation would like to offer a study group again after the service shaped by the interests of the people who gather. We will meet on all Sundays except ones that have a coffee hour. I have been asked to convene such a group. Please join us after the service today in the second pastor’s office off the church hall . Bring along what is on your heart; no concern is out of bounds.

John Rempel

ACROSS THE STREET AND AROUND THE WORLD



From Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC)

*Please pray for the **MCEC community of congregations.**

This week we pray for **Centre Béthésda Mennonite de Québec.** Charles Tabena provides pastoral leadership for the congregation. Pray for this church community as they focus on youth and youth leadership.



A Moment for MCC ~ A vaccination clinic and MCC infant care kits help families defy odds in South Sudan.

At the Mary Ward Primary Health Care Centre outside Rumbek, South Sudan, the piercing sound of a choir of nearly 100 crying infants is not cause for alarm. Rather, the wailing signals something amazing. Every Tuesday, local children arrive at a large tent outside the building to receive their vaccines.

The weekly vaccination clinic serves between 80 and 100 infants. Most are on a five-month regimen of immunizations recommended by the World Health Organization, including polio, tetanus, hepatitis B, whooping cough, tuberculosis, diphtheria, and rotavirus.

The clinic provides around 3,000 infant immunizations each year and serves an area of the Lakes State in South Sudan that encompasses around 24,000 people.

In addition to vaccines, Mary Ward offers a fully stocked pharmacy, examination rooms, a recovery unit of hospital beds and a school counselor who can address questions about mental health or puberty.

MCC – Relief, development, and peace in the name of Christ

<https://mcc.org/our-stories/giving-babies-fair-shot>

Groundbreaking – Pleasant Manor Long-Term Care Home

We are finally breaking ground! Please set aside Friday, October 20th to attend the groundbreaking for Pleasant Manor's new long-term care home. The ceremony will begin at 2:00pm, followed by refreshments.

Saturday, October 28, 2:00-3:30pm, Central Library in St Catharines, author event with Clarence Cachagee (Chapleau Cree) and Seth Ratzlaff (raised in Niagara), will talk about their book *North Wind Man*, published locally by Gelassenheit Publications (Jonathan Seiling). The event is free, but you are encouraged to register. Books will be available for purchase (\$25.00) and the authors will be signing copies after a presentation and discussion.



Peace by Chocolate

October 26th, 6:15-7:45, First Ontario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines

Be inspired by the remarkable true story that has captured hearts across Canada of a family of Syrian

refugees who arrived in Nova Scotia and began a chocolate business called Peace by Chocolate. A story of welcoming strangers, starting over and pursuing dreams amidst obstacles, this film is charming and heartfelt. Arrive early and enjoy the Newcomer Small Business Market beginning at 5 pm. **MCC is a partner** organization in making this film available. More info at mcc.org/events.

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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Pastoral Letter from Mennonite World Conference

Beloved Sisters and Brothers,

Over the weekend the world was shaken by Hamas' unprecedented attack on Israeli lives. This crisis quickly escalated with air raids, land battles, random killings, kidnappings and war propaganda.

No one is more disadvantaged by this escalating situation than the civilians who just wish to live a normal life without fearing for their lives and livelihoods. This peaceful and quiet life is a reality many of us take for granted, but it remains a distant dream for them.

While the Anabaptist-Mennonite community does not have church presence in Israeli and Palestinian territories, this is a land that pays homage to multiple faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. As followers of the Prince of peace, as people who do not put trust in earthly rulers, we refuse to take sides with political interests, but mourn with all who suffer.

In a seemingly unending conflict in a place with connection to many people of faith, I want to call the global Anabaptist-Mennonite communion to remember:

Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword. (Matthew 26:52, NRSVUE)

He shall judge between the nations

and shall arbitrate for many peoples;

they shall beat their swords into plowshares

and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation;

neither shall they learn war anymore. (Isaiah 2:4, NRSVUE)

We ask churches and individuals to pray that the violence will end and that conciliation can begin.

- Pray for the hostages to return safely to their homes and families.
- Pray for those who mourn to be surrounded by loved ones as they grieve.
- And pray that peace workers, negotiators and government staff will put people's lives and human dignity above political or military gains.

Although this conflict has been going on for decades, let us unite in asking our God to have mercy on Israel and Palestine, and for a just, peaceful and sustainable resolution to this crisis.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

In the name of Jesus, Prince of Peace, Amen.

Henk Stenvers, President, Mennonite World Conference

Prayer of Lament and Intercession for Palestine and Israel

By Palestine-Israel Network

Since the October 7 Hamas attack near the Gaza Strip and Israel's crushing military reaction, violence and destruction have escalated in the land we often call "Holy." As we lament the carnage among Israelis and Palestinians, let us also pray for those working for a future that ends the deep and longstanding injustices that lie at the root of the crisis.

Prayer of lament and intercession for Palestine and Israel

God of love and justice, our hearts are perplexed, paralyzed and broken at the recent carnage in Palestine and Israel. We lament the loss of life and the suffering of so many innocent people on both sides. We are shocked at the inhumanity of soldiers and militants, especially when they act in the name of God.

We lament that our prayers for peace seem to go unanswered. We wish you would intervene.

We cling to your promise of a different world, but we see so few signs of its fulfillment. Why?

In our feeble faith, we declare your desire for life and for peace.

Holy Spirit, strengthen our resolve to advocate for peace, justice, equality, and compassion for all. Don't let us turn our face away.

Comfort all who are overwhelmed with loss—loss of life, loss of homes, loss of safety and security.

God of the vulnerable and the oppressed, neutralize the power of tyrants in their thirst for domination and control. Renew the strength and resolve of leaders committed to nonviolent resistance and change.

Remember the Christian communities in the land where Jesus walked and where the church was born. May their witness to your love remain bright among their Muslim and Jewish neighbours. May they recognize your hand in their lives, even amidst the suffering.

God of all nations, guide our own government in responding in ways that support the legitimate rights of all, especially those who are most vulnerable, those who continue to suffer after decades of occupation, dispossession, and denial of basic human rights.

May your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Yours is the kingdom, the power, the glory, now and forever. Amen

THE EFFECT OF HOPE

(A Summary of Philip Yancey's Talk on Pain, Suffering, and Hope)

Mr. Yancey's spoke on Sept. 24th at Bethany Community Church in St. Catharines. This was the first stop on a tour to highlight the role of "Effect Hope", a Canadian charitable organization that works to alleviate the plight of those suffering from "Neglected Tropical Diseases", of which leprosy would be the best known.

Yancey is not a stranger to pain and suffering, neither personally nor professionally (as a writer on the subject). His early association with leprosy doctor Dr. Paul Brand informs his thoughts and his hopeful attitude regarding these matters.

Yancey has a reputation for asking tough questions. His very first book (1977) was entitled: "Where is God When it Hurts?" After a life of exploring such issues, Yancey has become very impressed by the resilience, hope and faith of many victims of severe suffering.

His address was divided into three headings, or subject sections, each one profusely illustrated by anecdotes and commentary. First topic: "Health is the ability to adapt to life as it happens". Among other illustrations, Yancey reflected on the hopeful and encouraging aspects of (now elderly) polio survivors who were able to make very positive lives for themselves.

He has written elsewhere: "With some exceptions, those who live with pain and failure tend to be better stewards of their life circumstances than those who live with success and pleasure."

Secondly, Yancey argued: "God is on the side of those who suffer." He cited Jesus as the example par excellence of this axiom. Yancey had the opportunity to address the parents and families of those slain in the Sandy Hook massacre. He noted that those in deepest pain rarely run to atheists for comfort in their time of need.

His third point was: "Pain redeemed impresses me more than pain removed." He cited the example of a woman hideously disfigured by leprosy whom one might expect (in certain cultural contexts) to be a beggar. Instead, she was acting as "greeter" at a leprosy hospital.

Pain and suffering are among the great mysteries of human existence, and Yancey did not claim to give a neat answer to the question. He cited Dorothy Sayer's remark that, "Life is not a problem to be solved, but a work to be made." Yancey concluded with a challenge to the audience to take their part in this great work.

■ Submitted by Kevin McCabe

Spirit, Open My Heart

*Refrain: Spirit, open my heart
to the joy and pain of living.
As you love, may I love,
in receiving and in giving;
Spirit open my heart.*

*God, replace my stony heart
with a heart that's kind and tender.
All my coldness and fear
to your grace I now surrender.*

Refrain

*Write your love upon my heart
as my law, my goal, my story.
In each thought, word, and deed,
may my living bring you glory.*

Refrain

*May I weep with those who weep,
share the joy of friend and neighbor.
As I live from day to day,
love will be my finest labor.*

Refrain