

WD News & Notes

The Newsletter of the
Moravian Church,
Western District
December 2023

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Bruce's Babblings

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

My calendar shows we are in November. It feels like and looks outside like January. But, you will be reading this in December.

As we think of December, it means many different things to different people. When I was a student, it meant cramming to get everything done before the end of the semester. When I was a young father, it meant doing all the things to get the house ready for the Christmas season. When I was a young father and a parish pastor, it was making sure everything was ready for the Sunday School Christmas program and all that needed to be done to prepare for Christmas Eve services was taking place.

Later in December, our thoughts turn to end of the year things. I remember as a parish pastor filling out end of the year reports and tying up the things that needed to be done before the calendar moves to a new year.

We can often get caught up in the “busy-ness” of this season. We want to make sure that we get to the various parties, the school programs and concerts, the church activities, and we have things like baking and decorating to get done.

The longer I live this life, the more I realize that a lot of those activities are not nearly as important as the people who I am doing those activities with.

I would encourage you to take time to enjoy the activities and the people who you are privileged to do those activities with.

I also would mention that this holiday season is difficult for many people as they miss someone who would have been with them last year. Please look to seek out those people who need an extra smile or hug!

Serving Christ with you,
Rev. Bruce J. Nelson

Advent and Christmas resources available at MoravianChristmas.org

Music, images, liturgies and more for your Advent and Christmas services are still available at www.moravianchristmas.org. This site, initially developed to assist with pandemic-era challenges in 2020 and 2021, remains a resource for Moravian congregations. Please contact Mike Riess (mike@mcnp.org) with additional requests (or if see anything that needs updating!

Common Ministries Resources

The Northern Province has produced several resources to help individuals and congregations learn about the work that is made possible through our Common Ministries commitment system. You will find a narrative budget, presentation slides, bulletin inserts, and a short video at www.Moravian.org/Northern/Common-Ministries/

Please Save the Date

The Western District Clergy Retreat will take place from January 15-18 at Mt. Morris. Pastors, we encourage you to join us for this event. Cost this year will be \$250 per person for our active clergy. Once again this year the District Board will cover the costs of our retired clergy. Lay leaders in our churches, we invite you to encourage your pastor to join us for this time of rest renewal and fellowship with colleagues.

Some Updates from Our Churches

Veedum Moravian voted recently, because of financial concerns, to end their formal appointment with Vicki Jens-Page as their pastor. Vicki's last Sunday at Veedum was October 29. We thank Pastor Vicki for her service to the the Veedum congregation. The Veedum congregation is going week to week to fill their pulpit.

Brother Rick Newswanger will conclude his service at Lake Auburn Moravian Church on March 31, 2024. He is currently pursuing other pastoral work. We thank Rick for his time of service at Lake Auburn Moravian.

Church Anniversaries

Dec. 4 th	Berea	149 years
Dec. 21 st	Lake Mills	167 years
Dec. 22 nd	Freedom	157 years

Ordination Anniversaries

Dec. 1 st	Amy Gohdes-Luhman	27 years
Dec. 27 th	Aden Ward	53 years
Dec. 27 th	Staci Marrese-Wheeler	31 years

Clergy & Spouse Birthdays

Dec. 6 th	Nan Nelson
Dec. 13 th	Bruce Nelson
Dec. 19 th	Jon Gehler
Dec. 19 th	James Heroux
Dec. 28 th	John McCarthy
Dec. 28 th	Rose Ullrich
Dec. 29 th	Lauren Schafer
Dec. 31 st	Greg Schafer

Prayer Concerns

Dina Sobek who is recovering from hip surgery to repair an injury from a fall.

The family of Rev. Allen Lenius who passed away peacefully on October 19th.

Meg Newswanger on the death of her father, George Gates, on November 30th.

Churches in the Call Process or Without Pastors

Please pray for the following churches who are without pastors:

Canadian District: The following congregation is not in the call process but is currently without a pastor: Heimtal Church in Edmonton, Alberta.

Eastern District:

Battle Hill, Union, New Jersey
Covenant, York, PA
Egg Harbor City, Egg Harbor City, NJ
First York, York, PA
First New York, NY
Schoeneck, Nazareth, PA
Tremont Terrace, Bronx, NY
Trinity, New Carrollton, MD

Western District:

Freedom Moravian Church in Appleton, Wisconsin

Veedum Moravian Church in Pittsville, Wisconsin and Daggett Moravian Church in Daggett, Michigan are not in the call process but is currently without a pastor.

MCNP Racial Justice Team Announces Pilgrimage Grants

The 2023 Synod of the MCNP encouraged pilgrimages toward racial justice and healing in light of the profound impact of the Provincial Pilgrimage toward Racial Justice and Healing to Montgomery, Alabama for clergy, appointed pastors, and candidates for ordination held in September 2022. The Racial Justice Team is offering Pilgrimage Grants of \$500 to \$1,000 to encourage MCNP congregations to plan and experience pilgrimages toward racial justice and healing in 2024. (Those clergy, appointed pastors, and candidates for ordination who were eligible but unable to attend the September 2022 Pilgrimage may also apply for a grant up to \$500 to participate in a pilgrimage sponsored by another entity.)

Any site(s) or location of significance to/for the work of racial justice and the healing of relationships with Black, Indigenous, People of Color will be considered. Pilgrimage sites may be local, regional, or longer distances. Please see the grant application for additional details.

The deadline to apply for a 2024 Pilgrimage Grant from the MCNP Racial Justice Team is March 29, 2024. Grant applications will be reviewed by the Racial Justice Team by April 15, 2024. Please visit the MCNP Racial Justice Team website for an application: <https://www.moravian.org/northern/category/racial-justice-and-healing/>.

Board of World Mission Advent Calendar

The Board of World Mission is once again offering an Advent calendar that gives each of us the opportunity to count our blessings to be a blessing to others. Each day during Advent, we will learn more about the BWM's Blessings Flow Project and count the blessings that we often take for granted. This Advent calendar is part of the BWM's effort to provide clean water to five villages in La Moskitia, Honduras. Sign up for the Advent calendar and find preaching resources, children's activities, and more at www.MoravianMission.org/Advent



Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller Accepts Invitation to Serve as Ecumenical Officer

The Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller accepted the invitation of the Provincial Elders' Conference to serve as the Ecumenical Officer for the Northern Province. Betsy, who fills this volunteer role after the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Hermann Weinlick, represents the Moravian Church at ecumenical gatherings and nurtures ongoing and new full communion relationships to help fulfill Jesus' prayer 'that all may be one' (John 17).



Christ-centered at Christmas

Someone somewhere once wrote, "Stewardship is a commitment to becoming Christ-centered rather than self-centered."

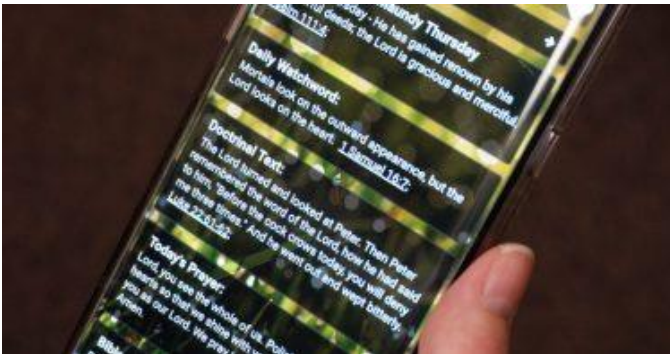
This time of year, it seems like it should be easy to be Christ-centered. We're entering the season of Advent and will immerse ourselves in the stories leading to Jesus' birth. We'll light candles on our Advent wreaths and focus on waiting and preparing to receive the greatest gift ever given.

We'll also shop and buy presents for the people we love. We'll make charitable donations to the places that are important to us. We'll give, not just because it's the season of giving, but because we were created in God's image to give.

But biblical stewardship and being Christ-centered isn't just about giving; it's about living differently. It's that commitment to put Jesus at the heart of any and everything we do, and to follow the example he set for us in how to grow in our relationship with God. Being Christ-centered also means being Christ-like in how we treat others, creation, and even ourselves.

So as we journey together again towards December 25th, let's journey toward being Christ-centered and live generously. Let's keep our eyes, ears, and hearts open to how we can use all we have, our very lives, for God's purposes, just as Jesus did. Let's listen for God's call to us, and let's respond in a way that brings God great joy as we work together as Christ's body, the church, to fulfill his mission in the world.

To learn more about MMFA programs and stewardship services contact Laura Watson, Vice President & Director of Programs, by [email](#) or [phone](#)



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