

WD News & Notes

The Newsletter of the
Moravian Church,
Western District
January 2024

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Bruce's Babblings

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Welcome to the year 2024. I hope you were able to find something that was life-giving during the holiday season. My holidays were different this year. We welcomed a fifth grandchild on December 15. My wife and I were happy to be able to watch the baby's three-year-old older brother while mom and dad and baby were at the hospital. I have a whole new appreciation for parents who have to juggle birthdays and Christmas within two weeks of each other.

As we begin 2024 together, I often have a countdown of how many days before pitchers and catchers report for spring training as well as how many days before the first spring training game and the first regular season baseball game. I can tell you that depending upon when you read this, there are probably around 40 days until pitchers and catchers report and about 85 days until baseball's opening day.



This year we have another countdown to be aware of. Again, depending upon when you read this, we are only about 110-120 days until Western District Synod begins. Synod will be held April 25-28, 2024 at Mt. Morris. This is an

important meeting for the District. It will be the first time we are able to gather in person for a synod in 8 years. The Synod Planning Committee has already met a few times via zoom and will be meeting much more in the coming weeks and months. I would encourage you to be in prayer for our Synod Planning Committee and for our upcoming synod. At this synod, we will be discussing and approving a budget for the District for the coming year as well as electing leaders for our District Board and other District Boards/Committees. We also will be discussing and voting upon legislation that is brought to the synod floor.

In the coming weeks and months, you will be getting much more information about our synod. In the meantime, we encourage our congregations to vote for their lay delegates to synod and to be in prayer.

Serving Christ with you,
Rev. Bruce J. Nelson

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/

A Reminder

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.



The 2024 Mid-Winter Retreat is coming up February 2-4. It will be held this year at the Waconia Moravian Church. This retreat is for Chetek age youth (high school and post high).

Church Anniversaries

Jan. 1 st	Chaska	165 years
Jan. 1 st	Waconia	108 years
Jan. 20 th	Wis. Rapids	134 years
Jan. 30 th	Sturgeon Bay	159 years

Ordination Anniversaries

Jan. 18th Terry Weavil 47 years

Clergy & Spouse Birthdays

Jan. 2nd Greg Behrend
Jan. 4th Karen Krauss
Jan. 6th Holly Weavil
Jan. 7th Bob Volpe
Jan. 10th Larry Christianson
Jan. 12th Bob Smith
Jan. 22nd Jackie Bell
Jan. 23rd Matthew Knapp
Jan. 24th Terry Weavil
Jan. 27th Betsy Miller
Jan. 30th Faith Fliegel

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

Western District:

Freedom Moravian Church near 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.

Ordination

Sister Mikayla Sauerbrey has accepted a call to serve as the next pastor of Calvary Moravian Church in Allentown, Pennsylvania. She will be ordained by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Amy Gohdes-Luhman on January 14th at 6:00 p.m. at the Waconia Moravian Church, Waconia, Minnesota. Her installation at Calvary Moravian will take place on Sunday, February 11th.

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/>.

New Year, New You, New Stew

It's a new year. Time for a fresh start. Resolutions, change....we are naturally resetting, making plans, and looking ahead as 2024 begins.

What does this "new year mindset" mean in our churches? Especially when it comes to stewardship? What does that word even mean? And, more importantly, how do we respond to it?

As 2024 begins, let's reflect on our identities as stewards. How are we reacting to God's gifts? Are we keeping them for ourselves or are we responding with gratitude and generosity of our own? Remembering our own need for grace and how it has been extended to us through Christ, how can we answer God's call to share grace with others?

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

BWM 2024 Watchword

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. James 5:13

Blessed name! the rock on which we build,
our shield and resting place,
our never-failing comfort, filled
with blessings of his grace.
O Jesus, Shepherd, Guardian, Friend,
our Prophet, Priest, and King,
our Lord, our Life, our Way, our End,
accept the praise we bring. (487)

For centuries, Moravians have had a tradition of choosing daily watchwords that are printed in our Daily Textbook and used for daily devotions. Many Moravians also chose watchwords for the year, which is generally done around the new year. Watchwords are scripture texts, randomly selected, that invite us to reflect on how God might be guiding and leading us. For 2024, the Watchword chosen to lead and guide the Board of World Mission staff invites us to pray in times of suffering and sing songs of praise when there is joy. Right now, the BWM staff is seeking to provide clean water where there has been consistent flooding in Honduras, purchasing medical debt to eliminate this burden for families in the US and Honduras who cannot pay, and providing stipends for teachers in Ukraine as the war continues. We are also singing songs of praise for the outpouring of support for these projects from all over the US and Canada. Your giving allows the Board of World Mission to be an answer to the prayers of those who are suffering and to join them in singing songs of praise for God's never-ending love.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

January 18-25, 2024

Resources for this year were prepared by an ecumenical team in Burkina Faso, a country in West Africa between Mali and Niger, about 100 miles east of Sierra Leone. Of the population of about 21 million people, roughly 64% are Muslim, 9% practice traditional African religion and 26% are Christian. These three religious groups are present in every region of the country, and in virtually every family.

Prayers of Intercession

Leader: We have been invited to live the divine call to love God and our neighbor as ourselves. As we renew our commitment to this call, may this love strengthen our unity as Christians. With all our hearts, we desire to dwell in God's love and to have the grace to love our neighbors as ourselves. God of boundless love, we pray that all people may come to know your unlimited mercy

and believe in your desire to fill us with your infinite love.

All: Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

L: We join our prayers to that of Jesus, who prayed for the unity of all who follow him. God of communion, we pray that we may work together for your greater glory and spread the Good News of salvation for all.

A: Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

L Our hearts are broken because of the confusion and division in our world. God, our healer, we who are scattered like sheep without a shepherd, ask you to gather us into one fold. Enliven us by your Spirit and send us again, two by two, to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

A: Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

L: Our world is scarred by terror and violence. Millions are forced to leave their homes in search of refuge and safety. God of welcome, grant us the grace to risk embracing the stranger, tending their wounds and standing in solidarity with them. Strengthen our resolve to be kind and merciful and to act towards our sisters and brothers at all times as you do towards us.

A: Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

L: In our weakness and fear we know that we often pass by on the other side, turning away from those who need our help. God of power, despite our lack of charity, open our hearts to experience the length, width, height and depth of your love, so that we may love you more and love our neighbor as ourselves.

A: Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.