

The Moravian Monthly

Official Newsletter of the Canadian, Eastern, and Western Districts
of the Moravian Church Northern Province.

December 2024

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Please contact
Sylvie Hauser at
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or (920)495-8995
with any questions
or concerns about
this newsletter.

I Didn't Hear It...

Rev. Dave Bennett, PEC President

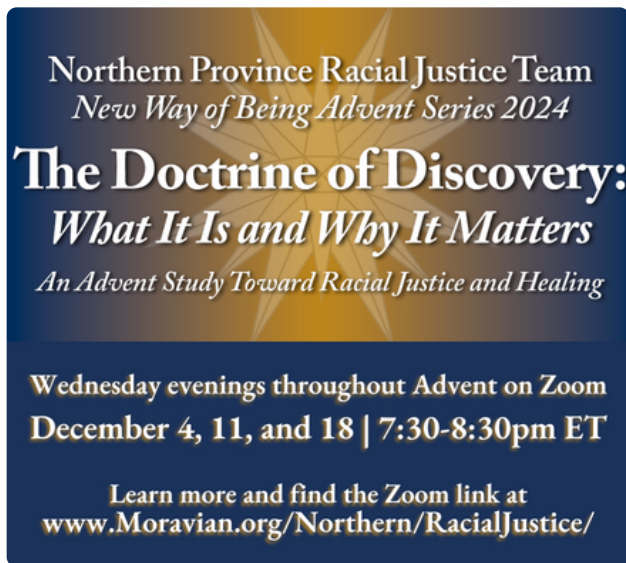
I didn't hear it....at first. I had a grocery list and I was on a mission as I entered our local grocery store. After all, family was coming in and we wanted to have things ready for this wonderful time to renew kinships and celebrate. I sped through the grocery and completed the list in good time. There were lots of people doing the same and so we bumped into one another, with little more than an "excuse me....sorry about that....(and in our better moments)....no, you go first." Carrying multiple bags at a time back to my vehicle, I finally took a deep breath and realized the rush was now over....at least for the moment. And that's when I heard it. The bell. "Ding-da-ding....Ding-da-ding....Ding-da-ding." I've known that sound for years. Without turning around, I knew where it was coming from. The lady dressed in red with her red bucket hanging from a tripod. She sat on her stool at the door of the grocery....ringing that bell. "Ding-da-dingDing-da-ding....Ding-da-ding." 'Tis the season of the Salvation Army bell ringers. And I had missed it.

Please don't get me wrong. Giving to the Salvation Army, which I normally do, is likely money well gifted. However, that's not what bothered me. What bothered me is that I didn't hear the bell...at least at first! In my rush of the season, my mind had totally blanked out the sounds of the season – even that of a small hand bell ringing as I passed.

As I greet you on behalf of the Provincial Elders' Conference, I invite you to enter into this season of Advent with an ear open to the sounds of holiness in our midst as we anticipate, "Emmanuel," God is with us. Those sounds may take many forms. Bells in the background.... children at play....elders reminiscing about simpler days....the holy laughter of family gatheredthe Advent hymns of congregations gathered to sing in the new birth of the Christ Child. The sounds are there. Let us take the time to hear them... to be moved by them. Let us not pass them by...but savor them in this sacred season. Blessed Advent....and Merry Christmas.

Provincewide Updates

ADVENT OFFERINGS



The Moravian Church Northern Province Racial Justice Team is pleased to present its New Way of Being Advent Series for 2024. This year's theme is, "The Doctrine of Discovery: What It Is and Why It Matters." There will be three one-hour sessions on **December 4, 11, and 18 at 7:30pm ET**. All sessions will be held on Zoom. We will welcome a guest presenter each week. The session on December 4 will include a short film on the Doctrine of Discovery from the Episcopal Church's Sacred Ground curriculum. Also included in the sessions will be prayer, scripture readings, and time for reflection. All sessions are open to all. Scan the QR code below to find the Zoom link, learn more about the guest presenters, and find related synod legislation, an accompanying four-week Bible Study on the Doctrine of Discovery, and a devotional resource for those unable to attend the sessions. A recording of each session will also be made available.

Guest Presenters

December 4: The Rev. Canon Debbie Royals, Pascua Yaqui Canon for Native American Ministry, Episcopal Diocese of Arizona

December 11: The Rev. Dr. Winelle Kirton Roberts Moravian pastor serving in the European Continental Province, Caribbean missiologist and church historian

December 18: Mrs. Erica Rios, Member of the Morongo Moravian Church



Join the Board of World Mission this Advent season!



As we approach the close of another year, we find ourselves reflecting on the many ways we have been blessed and the ways we can extend those blessings to others. In our work at the Board of World Mission, we are consistently reminded of a profound truth: when we serve those in need we serve Christ himself. This year, we have created an Advent calendar to encourage Moravians throughout the U.S. and Canada to allow their blessings to be a blessing to those in need.

Follow along with the BWM Advent calendar by downloading the printable version or have the daily prompts sent straight to you through email or text. Follow the Board of World Mission on Facebook and Instagram for daily updates there, too! Learn more at MoravianMission.org/Advent/ (scan QR code).

To receive daily email prompts: Email sylvie@moravianmission.org and include "Advent calendar" in the subject line.

To receive daily text prompts: Text (920)495-8995 and include "Advent calendar" in the text.



NEW: Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

As we approach the Advent season, we are excited to share a special resource – a four-week liturgy for use in lighting the Advent wreath candles. This resource was created as a collaboration between the Board of World Mission, the Moravian Ministries Foundation, and the Southern Province Commission on Congregational Development (with many thanks to the Interprovincial Board of Communications for their assistance in promoting it!). This partnership between Moravian agencies reflects our shared commitment to supporting and strengthening the Moravian Church through collective action, showing that we are stronger when we serve and worship together.

The Advent Candle Lighting Liturgies for 2024 provides a short liturgical guide through the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, connecting these Advent themes with the real-life ministries of Moravian congregations and organizations. Each week's liturgy is rooted in Moravian tradition, offering powerful examples of the Church's work across the world. These liturgies also create space for your congregation to highlight the ways you are bringing these themes to life through your own ministries and outreach.

Through these liturgies, we are invited to remember that Jesus is the Light of the World, and we, as His followers, are called to reflect that light in our communities. We pray this resource will enrich your Advent worship, bringing together your congregation to celebrate and share the hope, peace, joy, and love that comes through Christ's coming into the world.



Scan the QR code to learn more and find updated slides and bulletin inserts.

Additional archived resources for Advent and Christmas are available at www.moravianchristmas.org.

A Note from the MCNP HR & Benefits Department

Reminder for our MCNP Clergy and eligible spouses - there is still time to complete your annual wellness visit for 2024 and earn a reward! You have until **December 31st**.

To learn more about the MCNP Wellness Program, please scan the QR code.



End of Year Notes from the MCNP Finance Department

Your congregation's Monthly Collections Statement for October is now available on the MCNP Online Portal. Please review your congregation's statement and contact us with any questions or concerns.

End of Year Info

As you prepare to make final payments on behalf of your congregation, all payments must be postmarked by **January 15th, 2025**, in order to be credited to 2024.

The 2025 Retirement Benefits Assessments (RBA) form is due to the HR/Benefits Office no later than **January 31st, 2025**.

Common Ministries Resources

Updated Common Ministries resources, including a 2025 narrative budget, a bulletin insert, presentation slides, and more are now available at MCNP.org under the "Resources" tab (scan QR code).

The Northern Province
Moravian Church in America



2025 Narrative Budget



Introducing our Emerging Ministries Coordinators

The Emerging Ministries Committee has hired two new part-time coordinators to support the work of our Northern Province emerging ministries. T. C. Moore is serving as the Leadership Development Coordinator and Evan Taylor is the Ministry Development Coordinator. Read more about each of their roles and background below, and please help us welcome them warmly to the ministry of the Northern Province!



Rev. T. C. Moore is a graffiti artist, circle-keeper, and theology nerd. Since Jesus liberated him from gang-life as a teenager, he's followed God's call to the cities of New Orleans, Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis-Saint Paul. For over two decades he's served youth and families by developing mentoring programs, church-planting, teaching theology, shepherding congregations, and working for justice in community-based organizations. He's a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Center for Urban Ministerial Education in Boston and he currently serves co-vocationally in Saint Paul, Minnesota as pastor of Roots Moravian Church and as a restorative justice practitioner for court-involved youth through the Power in Peace diversion program. He's the author of *Forged: Following Jesus into a New Kind of Family* (Broadleaf, 2024) and he and his wife, Osheta, live in Saint Paul with their three adult children.

In his new role as Leadership Development Coordinator (LDC), T. C. is charged with collaborating with the Emerging Ministries Committee (EMC) and the new Ministry Development Coordinator (MDC) to recruit, train, and assess leaders for service in emerging ministries and new faith communities. T. C. believes there are many called and gifted ministers and lay leaders who are searching for a denominational home like the Moravian Church Northern Province. Like him and Osheta, many are leaving Evangelical denominations in order to embrace God's expansive love and inclusion of all people, regardless of race, ability, gender identity, or sexual orientation. He dreams of a new generation of Moravians embracing our missional roots with Spirit-inspired expressions of contextual ministry that witness to the power of Christ's Gospel and the in-breaking kin(g)dom of God.



Reverend Evan Blaire Taylor is an Itinerant Deacon in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and serves on the ministerial staff at Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, DC. She is equal parts creative & technologist with a penchant for equity, education, and storytelling. Evan uses equity-centered design thinking, coaching, and integrated technology to transform user-centered experiences, ministries, and faith communities. She embraces her calling to serve as a catalyst for equity in education, entrepreneurship, and faith communities. As a coach, Evan accompanies seminarians, founders & ministry leaders as they discover, explore, and articulate their vocation. As a technologist, she has served as the webmaster, communications coordinator, and

assisted with the website design for Metropolitan AME Church; Designed and refreshed the website for Life Change AME Church; and designed landing pages for the Potomac District of the 2nd Episcopal District and Ebenezer AME Church - Charlotte Hall. She hopes to use her vision, talents and her philanthropic investments to connect communities to resources; unearth gifts, skills, and talents; promote healing and reconciliation across lines of difference; and create pathways to leadership in the church, and the world.

She earned her undergraduate degrees in Mass Communications and Political Science from the Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; an MBA from Strayer University; and an M.Div. from Wesley Theological Seminary, both in Washington, DC. She also completed the Institute of Political Journalism program at Georgetown University. While at Wesley Theological Seminary, Evan served as Student Council President, editor of the Wesley Journal and as a Community Engagement Fellow.

As the new Ministry Development Coordinator of Emerging Ministries & New Faith Communities in the Moravian Church Northern Province, she plans to combine her coaching, nonprofit and ministry acumen to meet the needs of current and future emerging ministry leaders. Evan will lead partnering with emerging ministries to grow and scale their ideas and promote sustainability through coaching, resource development and administrative support. She hopes to expand emerging ministry engagement and grow the grant program.

Unity Prayer Watch

The congregations of the Northern Province are in prayer December 1-22, 2024, as part of the Unity Prayer Watch, a practice that keeps Moravians around the world in prayer at all times. You can find more information about the prayer watch, as well as prayer topics on the MCNP website (scan QR code).



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Berea Bethel Goshen Canaan Our Savior's Shepherd of the Prairie Unionville	Christian Faith Common Grace Ebenezer Tricklebee Glenwood London Watertown	Lake Mills Veedum West Side (WI) Wisconsin Rapids You Belong	Daggett Ephraim Freedom Sister Bay Sturgeon Bay	Chaska Waconia Christ's Community Lake Auburn Morongo Roots	Christ Edmonton Good Shepherd Millwoods Heimtal Rio Terrace	College Hill East Hills Nazareth
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
First (Easton) Newfoundland Palmer West Side (PA)	Central	Calvary Emmaus MorningStar	Advent Edgeboro Esperanza	Lancaster Lititz	Covenant First (York) Lebanon Schoeneck	Fellowship John Hus
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Grace (NY) Tremont Terrace	First (NY) New Dawn United	Faith Graceham St. Paul's Trinity	Battle Hill Castleton Hill Great Kills New Dorp Vanderbilt Ave.	Church of the Redeemer First (Uhrichsville) First (Dover) Fry's Valley Gnadenhutzen	Egg Harbor Palmyra First (Riverside) Redeemer (PA) Schoenbrunn Sharon	Hope West Salem
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Peru						

The Moravian Music Foundation Appoints an Executive Director

The Board of Trustees of the Moravian Music Foundation (MMF) is pleased to announce the appointment of **Christopher Ogburn** as Executive Director of MMF. He will assume these duties, while continuing his programming and musicological work. Ogburn, a lifelong Moravian, joined the Foundation in 2022 as the Director of Programming and Resident Musicologist.



He earned his Master of Philosophy in Music and Master of Arts in Music from The Graduate Center, City University of New York, New York, NY. He went on to study and complete his Ph.D. in Historical Musicology, September 2018, at The Graduate Center, City University of New York, New York, NY. His dissertation was *Strauss and the City: The Reception of Richard Strauss's Salome, Elektra, and Der Rosenkavalier within New York City, 1907–1934*. Ogburn earned a Bachelor of Music in Bassoon Performance and Minor in English Literature from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Prior to coming to the MMF, he taught and lectured at Manhattan College and LaGuardia Community College, before joining the faculty of Central Piedmont Community College as Instructor of Music.

He will be replacing Bruce Earnest, who passed away suddenly at the end of July.

Giving season is here! Moravian Ministries Foundation

Did you know nearly 1/3 of charitable giving happens in December? Make an impact and maximize your generosity with tax-wise giving options!



The countdown to year-end giving starts now!

Nearly 1/3 of all charitable giving happens in December. Maximize your impact with smart, tax-wise donations.

DEC 31

Reminder
Make an impact before the year ends! 🌟🌲



Three smart ways to give:

- Stock Transfers: Skip capital gains tax + claim a deduction.
- IRA Giving: Tax-free donations for those 70½+ (counts toward RMD for 73+).
- Donor-Advised Funds: Support your favorite ministries with strategic grants.

Scan the QR code to start the season with purpose! Contact Chris at cspaugh@mmfa.com or 336-725-2589 to learn more.

YOU BELONG



You Belong continues to grow its respite care ministry, offering vital support to families with a loved one living with a disability. This ministry began in response to a need that the You Belong team recognized in the local community. Today, it has become one of the largest programs You Belong offers. The focus of this ministry is on three key groups: 1) individuals living with a disability, 2) their families, 3) community volunteers.

This program provides a meaningful gift to families: over five hours on a Saturday to rest and focus on self-care, knowing their family member is safe and well cared for. Many of the families served by You Belong live in a constant state of survival due to the demands of daily life. This time to relax and recharge is invaluable.

Beyond offering rest, these events create a space where people with and without disabilities can come together to build community. This supports You Belong's mission to transform our communities by fostering greater accessibility and inclusion. True change begins with those who don't live with a disability, and our volunteers play a crucial role in that. Not only are they essential to making these events possible, but they also gain a deeper understanding of disability. This experience helps them feel more confident and informed about connecting with and building relationships with individuals who may see and experience the world differently.



In November, the confirmation class from Lake Mills Moravian Church, along with Jane Berg and Rev. David Sobek, participated in an impactful day of ministry. They learned first hand the work being done at You Belong and they took part in having an impact in the lives of others.

The You Belong team invites all Moravians across the province to consider this kind of outreach in their own communities, or to join us in Green Bay to experience it firsthand with others already engaged in this work.



If you or your congregation are interested in getting involved, contact Pastor Greg Behend at greg@youbelongwi.org, or scan the QR code to learn more or sign up.

Faith in America: A Dialogue on Faith, Politics, and Society in a Trump Presidency



December 4 @ 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm ET | RSVP Required (scan QR code)
Lancaster Theological Seminary – 555 West James Street, Lancaster, PA (and on Zoom)

Join us for a thought-provoking panel discussion featuring renowned theology experts from Lancaster Theological Seminary. Delve into the heart of American faith issues and explore how these diverse religious perspectives can shape or impact our nation's identity under a Donald Trump Presidency. This captivating event will examine the intersection of faith, politics, and culture, offering a unique lens through which to understand the complexities of faith, religion, and the American experiment.

Panelists include:

- The Rev. Dr. Vanessa Lovelace, Associate Dean, Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
 - Dr. Lee C. Barrett, Mary B. and Henry P. Stager Chair in Theology, Professor of Systematic Theology
 - Dr. Greg Carey, Professor of New Testament
-



This year, the **Board of World Mission** has built relationships around the corner and around the world, and responded to the tangible needs of our siblings. We could not do this work without the generosity of Moravians throughout North America. **THANK YOU!** Here are just a few highlights of our work this year...



When was it that we saw you sick and took care of you? In 2024, the BWM supported medical work through gifting medication, sending volunteer clinicians, and offering administrative support at the Ahuas Clinic in Honduras, the Bilwaskarma Clinic in Nicaragua, Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center in Palestine, the Moravian Clinic in Sikonge, and more.



When was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you? In 2024, the BWM provided housing for a Honduran family who lost everything in a devastating house fire, cared for Ukrainian refugees making a new home for themselves, began a Moravian Disaster Response effort to repair housing for those impacted by Hurricane Helene in North Carolina, led a cohort of Moravians learning about the immigration crisis in the U.S., expanded a Moravian exchange camper program, and more.



Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and fed you, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? In 2024, the BWM provided a decade of clean drinking water to four communities in Honduras, served meals to young children in La Moskitia through the Ahuas Clinic Infant Feeding Program, offered seeds and other food staples to global partner areas impacted by changing agricultural patterns, and more.



Colleen Moore Byrnes Craig
FAITH AND ADVOCACY:
Young Leaders for Middle East Peace

Faith and Advocacy: Young Leaders for Middle East Peace

December 4th, 2024 – 11:00–12:15pm ET

Join CMEP 1835 for a panel-discussion about how faith can inform young Christians in advocating for Palestine. Young Christian leaders with diverse denominational backgrounds will join us to discuss how their experience in faith leadership and social justice inform how they practice advocacy for the Middle East in their communities.

Together, we will have a conversation addressing issues such as the importance of youth advocacy, strategies for talking to friends and family from different generations about Palestine, the role of social media in today's work for justice, and balancing the prophetic and the pragmatic. Our speakers will be Byrnes Craig, a pastor and candidate for ordination in the Moravian Church, and Colleen Moore, the director of Peace With Justice at the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church.



Scan the QR code to learn more and register.

Ecumenical News

Lutheran-Anglican-Moravian Commission Meets



The Lutheran-Anglican-Moravian Commission (LAM-C) held its first in-person gathering November 13-15 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The purpose of this commission is to equip all three denominations – the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Moravian Church Northern Province – to live more

fully into the tri-lateral full communion agreement approved by our various legislative bodies in 2023. Goals for this gathering were to get to know one another through our various worship expressions, discuss the orderly exchange of clergy, and explore ways we might bless the world through mutual and shared ministries in our communities. We focused specifically on the places where all three denominations are present in Canada – Edmonton, Calgary, and Toronto. Goals include reaching out to our siblings in the Labrador Province to invite their participation.

The Moravians hosted a worship service and Holy Communion in celebration of Christ the Chief Elder at the Heimtal Moravian Church, where forty-one people filled the sanctuary with the sounds of song and prayer. We also experienced a Smudging Ceremony led by an Indigenous member of the Standing Stone Circle, midday Eucharist in the Anglican tradition, and Holden Evening Prayer in the Lutheran tradition. Moravian members of the commission are Donna Gordon, Matt Gillard, Blair Couch, and Betsy Miller.

One of the gifts of the LAM-C is the development of a Prayer Cycle for use in weekly worship, in which a petition for each of the denominations is lifted up each week. The Moravians have been graciously included in this year's cycle of prayer. Pastors are encouraged to consider including these prayers throughout the year or on special occasions. **Scan the QR code to find a copy of this resource.**



January 2025 – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, held January 18-25, 2025, invites us to pray for unity in the church as a witness to Christ's prayer 'that all may be one.' Consider a pulpit exchange with a neighboring congregation – or a member exchange. Send a dozen members from each congregation to worship in the other congregation, and then hold conversations about worship experiences. Partner with another church on a specific outreach ministry and share a meal together at the end of the event. Pray for the leadership and witness of another congregation. For a host of resources from the World Council of Churches, scan the QR code.



Thriving in Ministry Resources for Clergy

Blog post: "As You Love Yourself" by Rev. Dr. Prince Rivers, editor at Alban at Duke Divinity and senior pastor of Union Baptist Church in Durham, NC (General Baptist State Convention of NC).

Podcast: "Leading and Thriving in the Church," also available on the Alban website. Recent topics by a diverse range of guests representing a variety of denominations: Thriving in Turbulent Times; New Approaches in Christian Formation; The Gift of Immigrant Congregations.

Collection of Resources: "Faith and Leadership" from Leadership Education at Duke Divinity, which is frequently updated with new material in support of ministry leaders.

Blog Post:



Podcast:



Faith and Leadership Resource:



Prayer Concerns

Congregation Closure: MorningStar Moravian Church

With deep gratitude and heavy hearts, we announce that the MorningStar Moravian congregation in Coopersburg, PA will be concluding its ministry on December 31, 2024.

In a day when our congregations must seek partnerships and creative solutions to carry out ministry, we look to this congregation and its brave emergence in 2010. A merging of the Coopersburg and Grace congregations, MorningStar stepped out in faith and collaboration in order to continue in ministry.

The Coopersburg Moravian congregation in Coopersburg, PA, was established in 1883. It served the community for 127 years with vibrant Bible Studies, music ministry, and community outreach that included Moravian sugar cake sales, community yard sales, and a thriving Vacation Bible School. Grace Moravian Church in Center Valley, PA, was established in 1955. It shared more than five decades of ministry that included a ministry of hospitality, demonstrated through famous Easter morning breakfasts and swiss steak dinners, in addition to ministries of music and education.

Together, as the MorningStar congregation, they joined to continue in Christ's service. This took the form of wonderful worship, offering a meeting place for various community groups and activities, providing a safe place for the Providence Hybrid Academy, hosting a monthly community dinner, serving at Betty Lou's Pantry, and so much more. Current pastor, Sister Byrnes Craig, shares her appreciation for the congregation: *"I've been so proud to witness the care and love for music that is a big part of worship at Morningstar. Not only do they love to sing, but they have used their music ministry to help train young musicians throughout the years, offering opportunities for learning and growth for anyone who loved to play and sing. Since 2021, they have done the same with their pastors, inviting in two students from Moravian Seminary to serve the congregation while pursuing their studies. Their support of learning and education has been a part of their congregational ministry for many years."*

It is evident that the witness of the saints of MorningStar Moravian Church has reached far beyond what any of us will ever fully know or understand. Lives have been touched with the love of God through these faithful people. As stated by former pastor, Jay Petrella, *"Whether you were gathered in the sanctuary for worship, around the table for a potluck, or in the kitchen kneading sugar cake dough, MorningStar felt like home. They weren't just people who happened to attend the same church; they were family, through joys and hardships."* Please hold this community of faith in prayer as they celebrate their ministry over the coming weeks and worship together on their final Sunday, December 29th.

Ministry Closure: Esperanza for Bethlehem

On Sunday, November 24th, the Rev. Rhonda Robinson announced to the congregation her retirement from active ministry from the Moravian Church at the end of the year and also, with a heavy heart, the news that Esperanza for Bethlehem will bring its ministry to a close at that same time. Esperanza, led by Rev. Tracy Robinson and Rev. Rhonda Robinson, has been a shining light in the neighborhoods of South Bethlehem for 15 years and has provided not only spiritual inspiration, but also guidance for youth through an after-school program, food for those in need, as well as clothing distributions as a blessing to their community. Pastor Rhonda intends to use Advent as a time to celebrate their ministry over these many years. Please offer your prayers of thanksgiving for the servanthood of the many individuals involved in this ministry and for Pastor Rhonda as she makes this life transition.

Please pray for the following churches who are in the call process or without pastors:

- Battle Hill, Union, New Jersey
- Christ, Calgary, Alberta
- Christian Faith, Deforest, Wisconsin
- Daggett, Michigan
- Faith of the Nation's Capital, Washington, DC
- First, Dover, Ohio
- First, New York, New York
- Heimtal, Edmonton, Alberta
- St. Paul's, Upper Marlboro, Maryland
- Tremont Terrace, Bronx, New York
- Veedum, Pittsville, Wisconsin
- Waconia, Minnesota

Prayer Concerns (continued)

Constance Hazel Marie (Fenske) entered the more immediate presence of her Savior on July 23, 2024, at the age of 91. Born on September 10, 1932, in Wetaskwin, Alberta, she was the third daughter of Helmund and Martha (Rentz) Fenske. After her High School graduation from Camrose Lutheran College, she entered the School of Nursing of the Royal Elexander Hospital in Edmonton. She graduated with an R.N. degree with the highest standing in her class in April 1954. Connie was joined in marriage with Eric Schulze on June 3, 1954, and together they raised four children and served in church ministry in two provinces in Canada, Antigua and St. Croix in the West Indies, and three states. She and Eric travelled during redirection years visiting retired pastors and missionaries for the Reformed Church for 11 years. Her cherished family remaining are: Dan & Elsa in Claremont, CA; Edee in Portland, OR; Dianne and Bill Schlitt in Claremont, CA; Tim and Donna in Lanesville, IN; 9 grandchildren in 5 different states and Australia; 6 great grandchildren; One sister, Marian Stewart, of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She was predeceased by her parents and two sisters.

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

1 Rose Nehring
4 Cynthia Rader Geyer
6 Nancy Nelson
7 Marie Morman
7 Wanda Weidman
9 David Geyer
11 Duane Ullrich
11 Jeffrey Gehris
13 Keith Dague
13 Bruce Nelson
14 Carole Johnson
18 Donald Michaels
18 Nasel Ephraim
19 Jon Gehler
19 James Heroux
20 Rita Schaffstall
21 Timothy Naisby
25 Charles Harewood
25 Frank Barker
26 Cynthia Rice
27 Bonnie Robertson
27 Eileen Edwards
28 Darrell Johnson
28 John McCarthy
28 Ostomy Matthew
28 Rose Ullrich
29 Lauren Schafer
29 Janice Coffing
30 M. Blair Couch
31 Gregg Schafer

Ordination Anniversaries

1 Amy Gohdes-Luhman (28 years)
1 Rebecca Sisley (11 years)
11 Wanda Weidman (41 years)
11 Gerald Harris (47 years)
14 Robert Grey (66 years)
18 William Surber (47 years)
27 Staci Marrese-Wheeler (32 years)
27 Aden Ward (54 years)

Churches Celebrating Anniversaries

4 Berea, St. Charles, Minnesota (150 years)
11 College Hill, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (137 years)
19 Lebanon, Pennsylvania (277 years)
21 Lake Mills, Wisconsin (168 years)
22 Freedom, Appleton, Wisconsin (158 years)
25 Advent, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (162 years)
25 Mount Bethel, Cana, Virginia (172 years)
27 First, Dover, Ohio (276 years)
27 First, New York, New York (276 years)
31 First, Riverside, New Jersey (159 years)
31 Schoenbrunn, New Philadelphia, Ohio (77 years)

Clergy Updates

Rev. Trina Holmberg, who had been serving the Anglican Church of Canada since January 1, 2021, was granted a leave of absence by the Provincial Elders' Conference, effective October 1, 2024.

Sr. Jodie Harney, who had been serving at MountainView Moravian Church in Hellertown, PA, since August 31, 2009, was granted a leave of absence effective December 1, 2024.

Rev. Andy Kilps, who had been serving at Hope Moravian Church in Hope, IN, since August 4, 2014, was granted a leave of absence effective October 28, 2024.

Rev. Walter Bishop, who has been serving under appointment at New Dorp Moravian Church, Staten Island, NY, began serving at New Dorp under call on November 10, 2024.

Rev. Heather Robinson Owens will be installed on December 1, 2024, as the pastor of Egg Harbor Moravian Church in Egg Harbor, NJ. Sister Owens, her husband Jason, and their twins Jasmine and Joshua, have moved from Jamaica to serve Egg Harbor. Sister Owens was ordained at Goshen Moravian Church on September 16, 2012. She has served at the Harbour View Moravian Church, Goshen Moravian Church, Ballards Valley Moravian Church, Bethlehem Moravian Church, and Bethlehem Moravian College as Chaplain. Please welcome the Owenses and hold their family in prayer, as well as the Egg Harbor congregation, as they begin their ministry together.

Rev. Dan Miller has accepted a call to specialized ministry at the Interprovincial Board of World Mission (BWM) as their Director of Mission Service. Dan will be responsible for facilitating mission service opportunities to empower individuals to take part in mission both locally and globally. He will coordinate youth and young adult Convos, resource Moravian youth ministries with mission-related programming, and develop intentional leadership training for Moravian clergy, lay leaders, adult members, and youth. Dan will conclude his ministry with Edgeboro Moravian Church on February 2nd and begin his work with the Board of World Mission on February 18th, serving from the BWM office in Bethlehem. His BWM email address will be dan@moravianmission.org. We invite your prayers for Dan and his family, the Board of World Mission, and the Edgeboro congregation during this time of transition.

Rev. Rhonda Robinson has been granted permission to retire from the active ministry of the Moravian Church, effective December 31, 2024. Sister Robinson was ordained on February 10, 2013, and was consecrated a Presbyter on May 23, 2021. Sister Rhonda has served since 2013 as a church planter with the Esperanza emerging ministry in Bethlehem, PA. Her husband, Br. Tracy Robinson had served with her in this capacity until 2023 when he began serving as Chaplain at Morningstar Senior Living. The Church is grateful to Sister Robinson for her service to the Moravian Church. Please hold Sister Robinson, her family & the Esperanza ministry in your prayers.



Moravian Church in Canada

PRESSING ON TOWARD THE GOAL

Meeting of the Executive Board and the Fellowship of Elders: On Saturday, November 2, 2024, 17 members of Christ Moravian Church (CMC) gathered in the community of Redwood Meadows near Calgary for a one-day Fall Leadership Retreat. The event provided an opportunity for the lay leadership to share about the current and future issues facing the organization. The theme of the event was: • Re-Connect • Re-Imagine • Re-Commit

The event was led by Michael Ward, who currently serves as interim pastor of CMC. Michael presented an analogy from Matthew 9 about old wineskins and new wineskins. This thread guided our discussions throughout the day and allowed the group to re-connect and reflect on our habits, our methods, and perhaps opportunities to improve in the future.

Discovery: The dialogue within the group was sincere and tremendously helpful. Many participants were grateful that our church is still very alive and vibrant, despite the loss of our pastor of 27 years (Rev. Stephen Gohdes retired in January 2024). The initial fear and anxiety associated with Steve's retirement have now subsided, and we are thankful for the new leadership provided by our interim pastor. This resilience speaks to the strengths of our congregation, namely its unity and the care we provide for one another. The discussion also helped us realize that during this long period under the same leadership, the church has developed habits and methods that over time have become ingrained and a bit stiff like an old wineskin.

Highlights from the Breakout Sessions: After each breakout session, the teams were asked to provide a summary of their discussions. The issues raised and the ensuing dialogues provided valuable insights for the group. 1. The congregation is healthy, new members are coming in, and former ones have returned. The children program has been strengthened with new kids and renewed leadership. 2. All groups within the church remain active including Women's Fellowship, Men's Breakfast, Shepherds, Prayer Team, Music Team, Canasta, and the Bible Study group. 3. We continue to reach out to others through our Mission & Outreach program by supporting important causes such as Acadia Food Pantry, Rajpur, Mustard Seed, Refugee Families, Southwood Chapel, and with activities such as Christmas Tea & Craft Fair, Summer Fun Fair & Market and the Caregivers Seminar. 4. We have extended our presence online with our weekly worship live stream videos, our website and our Social Media campaign through the Digital Campus Ministry team. 5. Our congregation is aging. There seems to be an age gap behind our leadership team. Several of our long-time members have served the church for many years in multiple roles, and have expressed a desire to step back. There is a need for succession. 6. Some of our systems and methods are outdated, including software, financial and administrative practices, even our worship style, worship bulletin, overhead presentation, etc. We have a desire to move forward without losing our traditions.

In the end, Pastor Ward reminded us of the importance of re-committing, even as we await the appointment of a new full-time pastor. He described this transition phase not as a waiting period, but rather as an opportunity to re-imagine our church ministry. And as we do so, we trust that God will provide the right pastor at the right time to walk with us into the next phase of ministry! *Submitted by: Bernard Amiot, Elder*

Edmonton Moravian Church Celebrates Advent with our Full Communion Partners:

- **Sunday, December 1 at 5:30pm** - Joint Lessons & Carols at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 10037 84 Ave NW followed by a potluck supper
- **Wednesday, December 4 at 6:30pm** - Joint Advent Evening Prayer at Trinity Lutheran Church 10014 81 Ave NW. Pastor Mark and Pastor Erin Thomas will be co-leading prayer and a Moravian Love Feast.
- **Saturday, December 7 at 2:00pm** - Advent Get-Together in EMC's church basement. We welcome our friends to decorate candles, make stars, craft gifts for the youth shelter, and share goodies.

The Eastern District
Moravian Church in America
Northern Province



Save the Date: 2025 Eastern District Clergy Retreat

Monday, March 31, 2025 - Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Bon Secours Retreat Center, Marriottsville, MD

The Western District
Moravian Church in America,
Northern Province



Youth and Young Adult Retreats

Registration and program information forthcoming at wdcamping.org.

The **Mid-Winter Retreat** for youth grade 9 - age 21 will be held January 31 - February 2 at Lake Mills Moravian Church in Lake Mills, Wisconsin.

The **District Young Adult Retreat** for those age 18-30(ish) will be held March 15-16 at Mt. Morris Camp and Retreat Center. The theme is "Keeping Your Head, Directing Your Heart."

District Clergy Retreat

The annual retreat for our Western District pastors, both lay and ordained, will be held at Mt. Morris Camp and Retreat Center on January 13-16. Our program leader this year will be retired Moravian pastor and certified spiritual director Rev. Rick Beck. All pastors are encouraged to utilize this time for fellowship and retreat, and all congregations are encouraged to help their pastors attend. Registration information will soon be forthcoming. If you have questions, please reach out to retreat coordinator, Rev. Joel Russell, pastor of the Bethel and Goshen Moravian Churches in North Dakota.