

Coaldale Mennonite Church

2316 – 17 St., Coaldale, Alberta

***“Rooted in Jesus, Growing in Grace, Connected in
Community, Branching into the World”***

Keeping in Touch – July 2, 2021



- ✓ **As of July 1st, the Alberta Government has lifted all Covid protocols. At CMC, we are taking a more gradual approach to moving forward. We are highly recommending that masks continue to be worn in church. We will continue to physically distance in the sanctuary. Every other bench will be available for seating. Hand sanitizing stations will remain throughout the church. Registration ahead of time is no longer required.**

Please do not attend in person if you are experiencing the most common symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat).

- ✓ **The Live Stream of the Sunday Service will begin at 11am. You will be able to find the Live Stream on **You Tube** and searching **Coaldale Mennonite Church**.**
- ✓ **Sharing and Announcements via Zoom** will be at 10:30am on Sunday. The Zoom invite is below:
Topic: Sharing & Announcements
Time: Jul 4, 2021 10:30 AM Edmonton

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82555137043?pwd=a1FDRGQ2T0dMS3FYMDhsM0dGUHI4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 825 5513 7043

Passcode: 623847

- ✓ **If you are attending Sunday morning service and would like to participate in the Zoom Sharing & Announcements, you may join us in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30am.**
- ✓ **Ministerial Meeting** – Monday, July 5th at 7pm at church.
- ✓ **Men’s Prayer time** – Wednesday at 8:30am at church.
- ✓ **Church Council Meeting** – Monday, July 12th at 7:00pm
- ✓ **Amanda will be on vacation from June 25th – July 5th.**
- ✓ **Jodi will be on vacation from July 17th – 26th.**
- ✓ **Gary will be on vacation from July 23rd to August 15th.**
- ✓ **The church office will be closed on Tuesday, July 20th, Friday, July 23rd and Monday, July 26th due to Jodi’s & Gary’s vacation time overlapping.**
- ✓ **Givings for June 27, 2021: \$2763.00 Budget \$2563.00 Food Grains \$200.00**
 - **E-transfer** is available for your donations to the church email:
cmchurch@telusplanet.net

Leading us in Worship this Sunday:

Worship Leader: Eric Giesbrecht

Music: Jodi Reed

Speaker: Gary Giesbrecht

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 55:6-12, Acts 15:22-35; II Peter 1:3-10,

Sermon: “On becoming less religious and more spiritual.”

Sound: Bill Chapman

Media: Nic Groenheide

Usher Team: Team 3



PRAYER FOCUS



Pray for:

- † **The family of Katharina (Katie) Klassen** as they mourn her passing. A graveside service will be held on Wednesday, July 14th at 11:00am at the Coaldale Cemetery.
- † **Peter Janzen** who is recovering from Covid.
- † **David Giesbrecht** who is recuperating at home.
- † **Our seniors at the various lodges and those in their homes.**
- † **Coaldale Food Bank**
- † **Safety as people travel for vacation and summer adventures.**

(If you would like to have a prayer request in this weekly update, please contact Jodi at cmchurch@telusplanet.net or 403-345-3363.)

Note from Pastor Gary

On Becoming less Religious and More Spiritual!

Now that the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted in Alberta we can start to embrace life as normal – or can we? First of all, we are not sure there won't be a fourth wave with the Delta variant. Secondly, something has happened in the last 18 months that have impacted us both negatively or positively and to move forward without looking at these issues may be difficult. Today I would like to start on a different note.

In the last 18 months, a new 'religion' has been forming. I am using 'religion' in very broad sense. Let me explain. The covid-19 virus has become the prevailing evil. If one would look at those who have become ill and lost their lives, we could say that the virus is evil. The virus cannot be seen by the human eye and the only way we know that it exists is through the number of infections and the number of deaths. In tracking the infections and deaths, we can also see where the virus is most active and so on. If the virus is evil then the governments through the health measures act have become the 'savior' to this evil in trying to mitigate the infections and the death rate. The basic expectations in this 'religion' are to "social distance, wear a mask, wash hands and limit the number of persons who can gather at any given time (according to the rate of infection at the time), and get two doses of the vaccine." These measures have been applied across the spectrum of business, education, health services, and churches to mention a few. There are those who have followed this 'religion' or measures in mitigating the spread of the virus and those who have indicated that the

powers that be (governments) are evil and are trying to control the population through these measures. There is considerable resistance regarding these measures indicating that the mandate of using masks, social distancing and limiting social gatherings are taking away our basic rights and freedoms. In looking at this 'religion', a battle has been heating up about what and who is evil, and the 'spirit' of this religion is one of fear. On one side, the fear of the virus spreading, and the other side the fear of the government controlling our lives. No matter which side of the argument you are on, fear has become the spirit of this 'religion'. And when looking at this issue through the test of "truth" neither side is willing to give in based on what they consider to be true. While I have used the term 'religion' and applied it to the pandemic we have been living, this 'religion' has impacted our churches in a negative way. Divisions between church members and pastors and leaders are showing up in ways that in my mind do not honor the presence of Christ. Personally, I consider the virus to be the evil, and the government is trying to protect its people. Having said that, I realize that the governments have let their political agendas get in the way of how they have tried to administer the 'measures'. As we look at the measures being lifted how are we going to handle the divisions that have flared up in our churches because of this? Going forward do we need "less religion and more spirituality?"

This was a question the early church had to answer. The question they had to answer was, "how much of the Jewish religion could be transferred to the upcoming "Christian religion?" Here I use the term "Christian religion" because their relationship with Jesus, the new church was no longer based on forms and rituals of "Judaism," but rather faith in Christ. And even in Christ there were new forms and rituals. In Acts 15, the issue was that certain members of the Jerusalem church were adamant that non-Jewish believers had to be circumcised and others indicated that in Jesus the "covenant of circumcision" was no longer valid. The early church did not shy away from this matter and Acts 15 had a council meeting to address this issue. While the original agenda included circumcision, the letter to the churches had the following restrictions for non-Jewish believers; (Acts 15:28-29 (NIV)) "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things." While circumcision was out for Gentile believers, there were still some considerations that they were expected to abide by. You can see the tension between Christian spirituality and the Christian religion. They had to determine what faith in Christ meant in terms of expectations to the Gentiles who did not have a background of the Jewish faith. To keep Christian spirituality and Christian religion alive, they had to discern that which was core to their beliefs and practices. They were able to keep the 'spirituality in Christ' which was a living faith, and the Christian religion which included expectations of those who belonged to the church. This decision had profound impact on the early church as it moved beyond the boundaries of the Judaism into the Gentile world. The issue of "less religion and more spirituality" is an issue that we face today especially as we come out of this pandemic.

In "Research releases in Faith and Christianity, March 30, 2017, in an article "Meet those who "Love Jesus but Not the Church" the Barna group indicated "We live in an increasingly secular American culture. In this new age, religion is in retreat from the public square, and traditional institutions like the church are no longer functioning with the cultural authority they once held in generations past. Today, nearly half of America is unchurched. But even though more and more Americans are abandoning the

institutional church and its defined boundary markers of religious identity, many still believe in God and practice faith outside its walls.” (<https://www.barna.com/research/meet-love-jesus-not-church/>)

Ultimately both are needed, if the “Christian religion” loses its Spirit, that which gives life – the church becomes legalistic and when this legalism takes over it also loses its identity of “loving God with all our heart mind and soul and our neighbor as ourselves” (Matt 22:37-40). If “Christian spirituality” loses the “Christian religion” spirituality drifts away from the centrality of Jesus, and a relationship with the living Christ. As we go forward, we need to discern how these factors have impacted our church this past year and how we can embrace both in a way that lets go of that which is not life-giving and embrace that which gives life. John 10:10 says, (NIV) “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Pastor Gary Giesbrecht



To Contact the Church

Admin Assistant: Jodi Reed

Office Hours: 9am – 12noon, Monday – Friday

Church Office: **403-345-3363** & **403-345-5255**

Lead Pastor, Gary Giesbrecht: **403-795-0350**

Pastor to Seniors, Lil Thompson: **403-331-0297**

Lay Pastor, Eric Giesbrecht: **403-345-3946**