

Midweek Connection for Dec. 24,  
2019

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*Offering Christ's peace to hearts, homes, community and world*

Midweek Connection at MCN

Dec. 24, 2019

### **Worship with us this Sunday, Dec. 29**

**Scripture: Matthew 2:13-23**

**Sermon: The Season of Healing and Hope by Pastor Ron Ropp**

The scripture, often used the Sunday after Christmas, highlights the flight of Mary and Joseph to Egypt to save Jesus from the threat of Herod. Little is ever focused on the horrible tragedy suffered by hundreds of families in the region because of Jesus' presence. It is appropriate to acknowledge that grief also surrounds the Christmas story.

**A reminder about announcements on Sundays:** Send or give your announcements that you want publicly shared during Community Life or Sharing to the pastor.



### **Holiday Office Hours and Early Deadlines**

**The church office will be closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.  
During those weeks the deadline for bulletin and Midweek  
will be noon on Tuesday. Thanks, Laurie**

**From our Transition Pastor, Gary Martin  
The Transitional Period Begins at Home!**

[To Sing Up use this link.](#) If you don't have access to the internet helpers will be at a table in church the first several Sundays in January.

**WHAT?** Gary Martin, our transitional pastor, would like to visit EVERY household, ideally at your residence, but if you prefer, at the church or another location. The visits will take place Jan 5-13; 19-22; Feb, 2-9; 15-23. These dates will be expanded, as needed.

**WHY?** These informal visits are the important first step in the transition process, enabling Gary to understand the congregation by first hearing each individual voice. It also helps him get acquainted and learn names. A composite report of the “congregation’s voice” will be presented to the congregation early in March, along with recommendations for specific transition events through May, and a rough projection for transition priorities for the rest of the year.

**HOW?** To achieve this challenging objective in the limited time frame, we appeal to your flexibility in scheduling a visit in advance. While 100% participation is impossible, getting as close as possible maximizes the many benefits of this effort. Those in warmer climates during winter have the option of scheduling a phone visit.

To stay focused on visit objectives (and on schedule), please “do not feed the pastor” even if it’s meal time. (Be assured, Gary enjoys meals in homes, but that can happen throughout the remainder of the transitional period!)

Visits will be about 90 minutes (or less). Two individuals can schedule a visit together, if that feels more comfortable. Please schedule during weekdays, if you are available then, so evenings and weekends are open for those who work weekdays. When possible, Gary would like to meet when children are home, so he can hear their voices too. They are free to leave after a few minutes. And it’s fine to schedule when children are away, if that’s your preference.

Gary wants to hear whatever you want to share about yourself or the congregation, or any questions about the transition period.

The questions:

1. What brought you to MCN?
2. What keeps you at MCN?
3. Are you aware of your spiritual gift? (1 Cor. 12:1-11; Rom. 12:1-8; Eph. 4:1-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11)
4. When this transition time ends, it will have been worthwhile if MCN \_\_\_\_\_.
5. After prayerful discernment, I believe the Holy Spirit’s most important desire for MCN is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Are there “weighty voices” at MCN? When \_\_\_\_\_ speaks, everyone listens.

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### **Office and Transition Staff Hours and Contact Info**

Church Office Hours: Weekdays (except Wednesdays) 9 am - Noon  
Building hours 9-4 daily except Wednesday

Jim Bortell, Interim Minister is on medical leave. Please contact Ron Ropp for all pastoral needs.

Ron Ropp, Minister of Visitation (ongoing); [rjroppbarn@gmail.com](mailto:rjroppbarn@gmail.com) or 309.212.2456. Ron is available for visits related to health issues and pastoral needs. Wayne and Lois Hochstetler and Barry and Marge Weaver are assisting with visitation including visits with those in care facilities or homebound.

Laurie Vial, Office Manager; [church@normalmennonite.org](mailto:church@normalmennonite.org) or 309.452.6622.

Bryan Oyer, custodian

Lauren Satchwell, Youth Ministry Leader; [satchwell.lauren@gmail.com](mailto:satchwell.lauren@gmail.com) or 309.830.6827.

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## Change in Church Office Hours

With the retirement of two pastors and the imminent arrival of our transitional pastor, life seems to be a bit in flux here at Mennonite Church of Normal. The Board very much appreciates the willingness of church members to step up and offer assistance as it is needed.

This past June, we welcomed Laurie Vial to our church office. She has worked diligently for us, getting used to how we do things, and learning new systems.

Since Pastor Jane's retirement, Laurie has become the sole in-the-office staff person during the week. Many things have come to her that would typically have been handled by one of the pastors. She is now completing month-end, quarter-end, and year-end reports for the first time.

Laurie has communicated to the Board that she is needing assistance in handling the additional demands. Together, we have worked out a plan. Starting Monday, Dec. 23, office hours will be 9-12, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. If you call or come to the office in the morning, there will be a church volunteer who will be greeting people and answering the phone.

In the afternoon, Laurie will still be in the office working, but the office will be officially closed, unless there is an emergency. Laurie will continue to work from home on Wednesdays.

We anticipate that during the first several weeks of Pastor Gary Martin's time with us in January, there may be need for additional help while he is out of the office doing congregational visits. It is our intent for this schedule to be in place until his congregational visits are complete.

Currently, we have arranged for the first three weeks of coverage. If you are interested in volunteering for a morning, please reach out to Melika as soon as possible. Bring something with you to fill your time if it is a relaxed morning and there isn't much for you to do.

Cindy Ropp, Church Chair, and Melika Hershberger, Chair of Pastoral Council, are also available to respond to calls or emails at any time. Do not hesitate to reach out. We want to be as responsive as possible to the needs of our church family during this time of change.



## This Week at MCN

### Sunday, Dec. 29

9 am Pre-service Prayer

9:30 am Worship

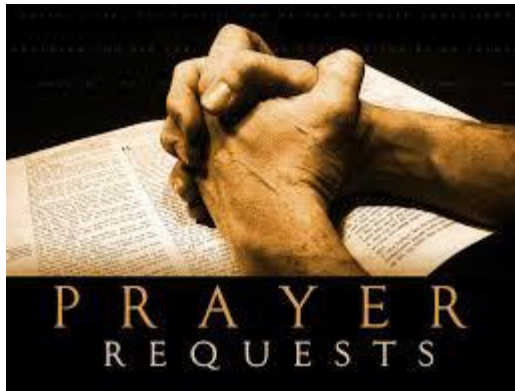
10:45 am Christian Ed for Children

11 am Christian Ed for Adults

### Tuesday, Dec. 31

10 am Staff Meeting

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From Dec. 22, 2019

--A joy is the musical talents of this congregation.

--Another joy is Joe Haney was at church Sunday and is progressing well following neck surgery.

--Jim Bortell appreciates our prayers as he continued to heal from surgery on his broken ankle.

--Prayers are requested for Barry and Marge Weaver following the memorial service for Barry's father.

--Marge Nester is home from the hospital and many tests. Prayers for Marge to determine what is wrong and the correct treatment are appreciated.

--Steve Stenger appreciates prayers as his business experienced a fire and lots of smoke damage.

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### Visits to Our Members in Care Facilities

Please remember in your prayers, or with cards or a visit, the following members in care facilities:

Ruth Marquis - Heritage Health

Lloyd Combs - Martin Health Care

Deborah Spacek - Evergreen

Jo Ropp - McLean County Nursing Home (Ron would appreciate mentioning visits to him.)

Roy Jiles - Evergreen

Joyce Schmucker - Luther Oaks Assisted Living

MCN would also like to develop a list of those who are "shut-ins" in their home. Please contact the church office to add them to this list so we can pray for them and uplift them in other ways.

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### Mennonite Relief Sale

The 2020 Relief Sale is only three months away! You are invited to start thinking about the various ways you support and contribute to the sale. If you are planning to contribute an item to the auction, now is a good time to start working on your project or potentially purchase an item that is on sale for Christmas. Any questions can be directed to Ben Roeschley and Louise Reeser (Board Members) or Gerry Schrock and Marcia Rossi (Sale Promoters).

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Everyone is invited to a fellowship time after the Christmas Eve Service, Dec 24.  
Please bring a plate of cookies to share if you can. The service is at 6:30 pm





MCN Christmas caroling attracted a multi-generational group who enjoyed dinner together and then caroling in the MCN neighborhood.

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### **2019 Moro Moro Scholarship Fund Appeals Letter Shared**

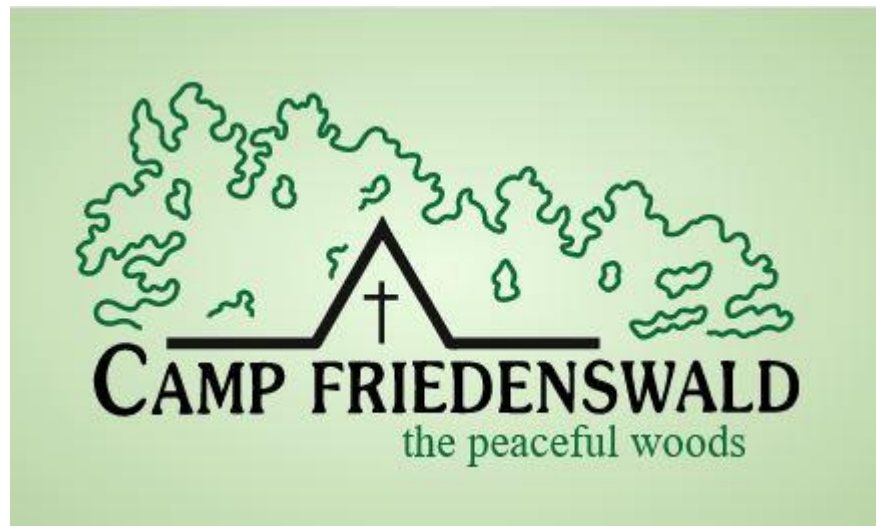
Hi MCN Friends - This is Doug Valverde. I am very happy to present to you the 2019 Moro Moro Scholarship Fund appeals letter. Right now, we support nine full-time students from my father's hometown of Moro Moro, Bolivia. Please take a minute and read about this important work and please donate if you feel moved. Blessings. [Click here for the link.](#)

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### **Library Book Missing**

Someone checked out the book entitled *Christians True in China* by Robert Kreider. Please search your bookshelves at home - if you find it just slip it in the return slot in the church library. Thanks!

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Camp Friedenswald Winter Church Retreat will be Jan. 24 - 26.

Sign-ups were placed in mailboxes.

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### Creation Care Confab

Periodic info and musings to help open conversations about God's amazing Creation

Climate and Community Retreat at Friedenswald: <https://friedenswald.org/retreats/> -

April 17-19, 2020

Presenters: Dr. Sibonokuhle Ncube and Pastor Michael Crosby; Music with Wendy Chappell-Dick and Amy Stauffer-McNutt

Are you passionate about working on the climate crisis and feeling the need for heart-felt, open, and honest conversation about this critical topic? Come be part of this special gathering to replenish your energy, connect with like-minded folks, deepen your knowledge, and vision for next steps in your community. Who should attend? Formal and informal green teams for churches, pastors, interested individuals, youth groups, and families are all welcome!

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### Archivist/Historian needed

MCN is in need of an archivist/historian. If you are a good fit for filling this important role in the church please let a Church Board member know.

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### Anniveraries

Rick & Connie Yoder 42 years Dec. 28

Frank & Lisa Jablonski 18 years Dec. 29

Randy & Holly Zehr 18 years Dec. 29

Jim & Roberta Bortell 52 years Dec. 30

### Birthdays

Deborah Spacek Dec. 24

Mary Kauffman Dec. 25

Paul Watkins Dec. 30

John Gundy Dec. 31

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### **Please Wear Your Nametag**

**Please try to wear your nametag at MCN worship and events.  
During this time of transition, nametags are especially important.**

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### **Mennonite Relief Sale Association 62nd Annual Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale**

#### **“Celebrating MCC’s Century of Global Ministry in the Name of Christ”**

The Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale Board says thank you for all of your assistance in past sales. Our 62nd Illinois Sale will be March 20-21, 2020. **The Annual Distress Supper/organizational meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 6:30 p.m. at First Mennonite Church of Morton.**

Now is a great time to consider a contribution to our 62nd Sale. Donations are welcome year around and may be for Relief Sale general needs or for covering expenses of specific areas such as the auction, baby booth, chicken/fish foods, donuts, Dutch Market, Kiddie Korner, meat, pancake mix, and many other areas. Donations for “My Coins Count” are appreciated too. Checks may be sent to Treasurer Ben Roeschley, 1926 East Taylor Street, Bloomington, IL 61701.

Again this year many volunteers will be needed. Also your prayers on behalf of the 62nd Illinois Relief Sale, MCC, and the recipients of the funds are very appreciated.

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### **Partners in Healing**

MCN has been asked to pray for the Administration at Advocate BroMenn and Advocate Eureka Hospital in 2019. These executives make decisions each day of great importance to patient care. Both the staff who serve, and the patients and families needing those services very much appreciate your prayers.

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## Conference Newsletter

The Central District Conference Focus is now available in this online format. Just click the picture of the newsletter or the title. A copy is available on the Entrance Bulletin Board. Also available is the [CDC Reporter](#).

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## Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9-Noon Building is open 9-4.

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## Voice of the Day

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before beginning to improve the world.

-Anne Frank

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## Building Use

**Saturday, Dec. 28**

10 am Overeaters' Anonymous

**Monday, Dec. 30**

5:30 pm Al-Anon

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## Today's Chuckle

'Twas the night before Christmas & out on the ranch  
The pond was froze over and so was the branch.

The snow was piled up belly - deep to a mule.

The kids were all home on vacation from school,  
And happier young folks you never did see  
Just all sprawled around a-watchin' TV.

Then suddenly, some time around 8 o'clock,  
There came a surprise that gave them a shock!

The power went off, the TV went dead!

When Grandpa came in from out in the shed  
With an armload of wood, the house was all dark.

"Just what I expected," they heard him remark.

"Them power line wires must be down from the snow.

Seems sorter like times on the ranch long ago."

"I'll hunt up some candles," said Mom. "With their light,  
And the fireplace, I reckon we'll make  
out all right."

The teen-agers all seemed enveloped in gloom.

Then Grandpa came back from a trip to his room,  
Uncased his old fiddle & started to play  
That old Christmas song about bells on a sleigh.

Mom started to sing, & first thing they knew  
Both Pop & the kids were all singing it, too.

They sang Christmas carols, they sang "Holy Night,"

Their eyes all a-shine in the ruddy firelight.

They played some charades Mom recalled from her youth,  
And Pop read a passage from God's  
Book of Truth.

They stayed up till midnight-and, would you believe,  
The youngsters agreed 'twas a fine  
Christmas Eve.

Grandpa rose early, some time before dawn;  
And when the kids wakened, the power was on.

"The power company sure got the line repaired quick,"

Said Grandpa - and no one suspected his trick.

Last night, for the sake of some old-fashioned fun,  
He had pulled the main switch



### Serving this week

South Greeters: Roger & Linda Clemmons

West Greeter: Emma King

Welcome Table: Mary Kauffman

Ushers: Adam & Caleb Augspurgen, Kristen Satchwell & Ardys Serpette

Sermon: Ron Ropp

Worship Leader: Deb Stenger

Song Leader: Wayne Hochstetler

Accompanist: Elsa Raab

Scripture Reader: Deb Stenger

Children's Time: Darrel Miller

Children's Song Leader: Melika Hershberger

Technology: Caleb Augspurgen

Toddler Nursery: Amy Reiman

Preschool Nursery: Jordan King

Advent Wreath: Lily Driscoll & Nevaeh Nester