



Midweek Connection at MCN

Dec. 4, 2019

Worship with us this Sunday, Dec. 8

Scripture: Isaiah 2:1-5 & Matthew 24:36-44

Sermon: "What are you waiting for? IDK" by Dr. Joseph A. Culpepper, Retired Pastor

This is the information age, but how much do we really know? About the world, the church, Christ's coming? How do we handle uncertainty in life and faith as we await our Messiah?

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

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

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. 5-14; Jan. 26-Feb. 2; Feb. 9-16. 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.

Details on signing up will be announced as soon as possible.

Office and Transition Staff Hours and Contact Info

Church Office Hours: Weekdays (except Wednesdays) 9 am - 4 pm

Jim Bortell, Interim Minister (through December); jimbortell@gmail.com or 309.830.5897. Jim is available at the church office at 11 am - 12 pm most weekdays, except Wednesdays.

Ron Ropp, Minister of Visitation (ongoing); rjroppbarn@gmail.com or 309.212.2456. Ron is available for hospital visits, as needed.

Laurie Vial, Office Manager; church@normalmennonite.org or 309.452.6622. Office Hours are 9 am-4 pm every week day, except Wednesdays when Laurie works remotely.

Bryan Oyer, custodian

Lauren Satchwell, Youth Ministry Leader; satchwell.lauren@gmail.com or 309.830.6827.



This Week at MCN

Wednesday, Dec. 4

CANCELLED: Cello Recital

Thursday, Dec. 5

6:15 am Next Man Bible Study

Sunday, Dec. 8

9 am Pre-service Prayer

9:30 am Worship

10:45 am Christian Ed for Children

11 am Christian Ed for Adults

6 pm Junior Choir

6:45 pm Youth Choir

7:30 pm Adult Choir

Monday, Dec. 9

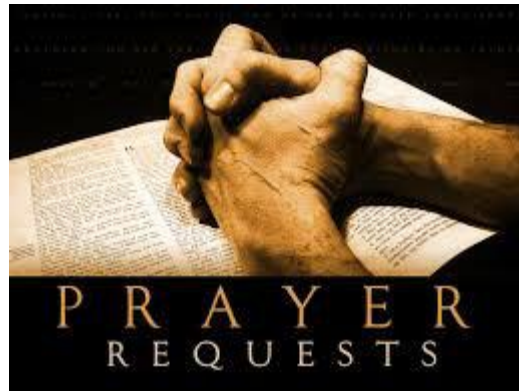
9:30 am Mennonite Women

4:30 pm Financial Stewardship Committee

Tuesday, Dec. 10

9:30 am Staff Meeting

5:30 pm Church Board



From Dec. 1, 2019

-- There was no sharing during the service - please pray for our congregation as we enter the Advent season and during our period of transition.

Visits to Our Members in Nursing Homes

Please remember in your prayers, or with cards or a visit, the following members in nursing homes:

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

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.

Congregational Meeting to vote on TAP set for Dec. 15

On Wednesday evening, Oct. 16, a meeting was held with the congregation to discuss Adult Sunday School strategies as well as an inquiry into renting our former Head Start space by The Autism Project - known as TAP. A presentation was made by the directors of the program and good conversation was had around tables. TAP is an ISU-based program serving the needs of children with autism and their families. The Board has reviewed and discussed feedback received from the congregation and is now ready to bring forward a proposal to you, and it reads as follows:

"The Church Board recommends that Mennonite Church of Normal rent space in the church building to The Autism Project (TAP), a program run by faculty and students at Illinois State University to meet the needs of children with autism and their families, from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2020."

Details of the agreement will be finalized by the Office Manager, the Financial Stewardship Committee, the Church Board, and TAP administration as is our typical process.

There will be a congregational vote taken at the rise of worship two weeks from Dec. 1, on Dec. 15.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to member of the Church Board.

Read in worship by Cindy Ropp on Dec. 1, 2019



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.



Longest Night Service will take place on Dec. 19 at 7 p.m. During this service we recognize that we all have loss, and that for some of us feeling recent loss, the very merry Christmas season can be especially jarring. We gather to recognize on this day, close to the longest night of the year, that God is present in our darkest nights and that Christ the Light has come.

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.](#)

All-church Christmas Caroling Party

The Christian Ed committee is organizing an all-church Christmas caroling party. Here are the details:

When? Friday, Dec. 20 from 5:30-7 p.m.

What to bring? Supper is provided, but bring one to two dozen cookies if you can. We will pass these out to the houses where we carol. Feel free to invite friends!

What will we do? We will eat supper together, re-plate our cookies and go out caroling in the neighborhood.

If you'd like to go, it'd be helpful if you could sign-up using this [link](#). That way we'll have enough food for supper.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Spring Neely (springy20@hotmail.com) or myself. Thanks! Chris Culbertson

Publications to Merge

Please be aware *The Mennonite* and *Mennonite World Review* are merging. Very few details are available at this time. We will publish announcements as they are made.



Shannon Neely is a dedicated Church Board member. In the midst of moving he Skyped into a Board meeting and trusty dog Charlotte got in on the action!

CANCELLED: An Evening with ISU Strings

Dec. 4 at MCN. The ISU Strings event for this evening has been cancelled. We will try again next semester.

BACHS - An Evening of Christmas Music

Hear the Bloomington Area Choir for Home Schoolers, and MCN vocalist, Charlotte Hedberg, perform their Choir Christmas Concert on Dec. 13 at 7 p.m.: The concert features the BACHS' Treble, Cantate and Concert Choirs at Christ Church in Normal. Free admission. Donations are welcome for this not-for-profit organization.

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts
School of Music

Presenting a celebration of the season with

Illinois State University Choirs & Symphony Orchestra

Featuring Steven Fox, Guest Conductor and Madrigal Singers



Music for the Holidays

Saturday, December 7 at 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 8 at 3:00 p.m.

Center for the Performing Arts Concert Hall

Cost: \$15 General Admission, \$12 Faculty/Staff, \$10 Students/Seniors

GROUP RATE AVAILABLE FOR GROUPS OF 20 OR MORE

Free Parking: tickets available at (309) 468-2636 and [ticketmaster](#)

2019



WONSOOK KIM
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS
Illinois State University

WonsookKimFineArts.IllinoisState.edu

If you need special accommodations to participate in this event, please contact the box office at (309) 458-2111 with sufficient time to arrange the accommodations.

**Hear the ISU Choirs & Symphony Orchestra,
and MCN cellist, Lydia Hedberg, perform:**

Music for the Holidays
Saturday, Dec. 7 at 3 pm & 7 pm

Sunday, Dec. 8 at 3 pm
ISU Center for the Performing Arts



Found at MCN on Sunday, if it is yours please
contact Laurie at the office. Thanks!

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!



Surprise! Luncheons. Everyone's invited!

When: Dec. 15, immediately following CE

What happens: Hosts provide soup or sandwiches.

Guests take along a salad or side dish to share.

Everyone eats!

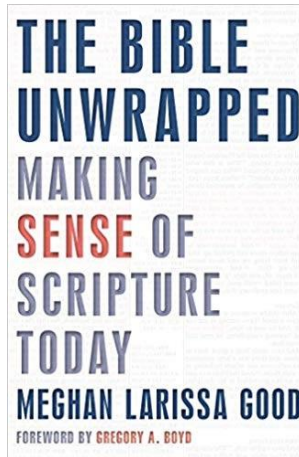
RSVP by Dec. 5: to Kristen Satchwell [kristen.satchwell@gmail.com, call or text 309-838-6319, or place completed form (please sign your name) in Kristen's church mailbox] with info:

Host: _____ guests in my/our home.

Guests: _____ of me/us.

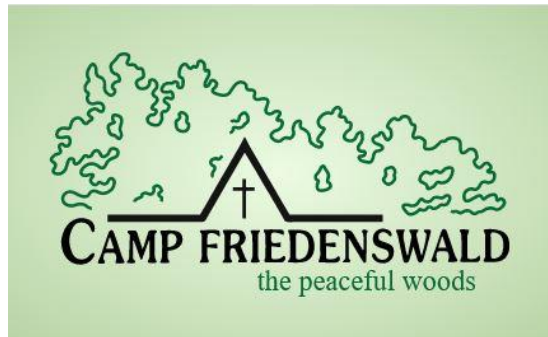
I'm/We're in! Signed: _____

When is the surprise revealed? Sunday morning, Dec. 15, you will find an envelope in your church mailbox giving you the name and address of your host. They will be expecting you/guests, but their guests will only be revealed when you appear at the door! This is a wonderful way to fellowship with folks in our church family. All are welcome to be part of the fun!



New Adult Sunday School Class

A new Adult Sunday School Class started Dec. 1 in Room 4. Randy Zehr will lead the class using the book, *The Bible Unwrapped Making Sense of Scripture Today* by Meghan Larissa Good. Attendees can purchase the book during class. If anyone owns the book and would be willing to lend it please let Randy know.



**Camp Friedenswald Winter Church Retreat will be Jan. 24 - 26.
Sign-up coming soon!**



Midwest Food Bank asks everyone to **STOP** collecting for now. Thanks.

Creation Care Confab

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

The trees in a forest are often interconnected by subterranean networks of mycorrhizae, fungal strands that inhabit tree roots. The mycorrhizal symbiosis enables the fungus to forage for mineral nutrients in the soil and deliver them to the tree in exchange for carbohydrates. The mycorrhizae may form fungal bridges between individual trees, so that all the trees in a forest are connected. These fungal networks appear to redistribute the wealth of

carbohydrates from tree to tree. A kind of Robin Hood, they take from the rich and give to the poor so that all the trees arrive at the same carbon surplus at the same time. They weave a web of reciprocity, of giving and taking. In this way, the trees all act as one because the fungi have connected them. Through unity, survival. All flourishing is mutual. --Robin Wall Kimmerer

Green Thoughts

Jim Bortell writes and publishes a weekly electronic newsletter IGPMN (Illinois Grand Prairie Master Naturalists program) Green Thoughts. Here is a small part of this week's thoughts.

"IGPMN Green Thoughts -a winter thought and thoughts on ethical responsibility

WINTER

Winter is a pause in music, but during the pause the musicians are privately tuning their strings, to prepare for the coming outburst.

Alexander Smith

**

...ON ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY—as individuals and as members of our local and world communities

**

“our little spaceship earth”

We travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil, all committed, for our safety, to its security and peace. Preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work and the love we give our fragile craft.

Adlai Stevenson 1900-1965/ U.N. Ambassador, a native of Bloomington, and one of democracy's most eloquent spokespersons."

To subscribe send Jim an email and ask him to add YOUR email to the list of subscribers. Jim's email is jimbortell@gmail.com. Put Green Thoughts in the subject line.

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.



Anniversaries

Darrel & Lynette Miller (37) Dec. 4

Birthdays

Ruth Marquis Dec. 4

Adam Valverde Dec. 4

Reuben Yoder Dec. 4

Jon Friesen Dec. 6

Avery Harnish Dec. 6

Janell Ulrich Dec. 7

Shari Stalter Dec. 9



Please Wear Your Nametag

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

Messiah Sing-A-Long

Illinois State University invites you to the Messiah Sing-A-Long, a fundraiser for Friends of the Arts in conjunction with the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts. Contact mmosier46@gmail.com with questions. Location is the Center for the Performing Arts, Sunday, Dec. 15 at 3 pm.

GIVE BACK

A Morning of Generosity



THRIVENT®

Thrivent Member Network
Heartland Region



Join us to help the under-resourced in McLean County. Hear exciting generosity updates from the Thrivent Member Network, take a tour of the facility and participate in a super sized service project with Midwest Food Bank.

Event Schedule:

8:30-9:00am | Registration and Light Breakfast

9:00-11:30am | Generosity Update, Food Bank Tour and Service Project

Event Details:

Saturday, December 7, 2019

8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Midwest Food Bank

2031 Warehouse Road

Normal, IL

This event is open to volunteers age 5+ with a guardian.
Please register at MOGBN.Eventbrite.com.

WEAR A LIVE GENEROUSLY T-SHIRT and Thrivent will donate \$3 to Midwest Food Bank.
CONSIDER BRINGING AN ITEM from the "Most Wanted" list on the Eventbrite RSVP page.



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.



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](#).



Office Hours, Deadline

To email Laurie (office manager) use church@normalmennonite.org.

Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9-4 and Friday 9-12, 1-4.

Deadline for Midweek Connection and Bulletin is noon on Wednesday.

Voice of the Day

"It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world."

-Mary Wollstonecraft



Building Use

Thursday, Dec. 5

5:30 pm HAAQG Board Meeting
6:30 pm HAAQG
Friday, Dec. 6
8 am HAAQG Workshop
Saturday, Dec. 7
8 am HAAQG Workshop
10 am Overeaters' Anonymous
Monday, Dec. 9
5:30 pm Al-Anon

Today's Chuckle

Two mice scavenging in an old studio warehouse find some old celluloid film.

Mouse 1: This looks really old! I wonder what film it is?

Mouse 2: The can is right here ... Oh, it's "Gone with the Wind"!

Mouse 1: Well, maybe it's still good - let me take a bite...

Mouse 2: Well? How is it?

Mouse 1: Nothing much. The book was better.



Serving this week

South Greeters: Emmanuel & Tanya Kasongo
West Greeter: Lotus Hershberger
Welcome Table: Mary Jantze
Ushers: David Voegtlin, Roger Clemmons, Ruth & Joe Haney
Sermon: Joe Culpepper
Worship Leader: David Voegtlin
Song Leader: Glenn Wilson
Accompanist: Chris Culbertson
Scripture Reader: David Voegtlin
Children's Time: Darrel Miller
Children's Song Leader: Randy & Holly Zehr
Technology: Caleb Augspurger
Toddler Nursery: Caeli Haab
Preschool Nursery: Duane/Stephanie Nester
Advent Wreath: Clara Ponnou-Delaffon & Jack Brandon