



Midweek Connection at MCN

Jan. 15, 2020

Worship with us this Sunday, Jan. 19

Scripture: Genesis 18:1-15

Sermon: *This time next year* by Pastor Gary Martin

God's plan to bring abundant life to the world started by asking two 70 year-olds to leave all that was comfortable behind, and take off for parts unknown. Might that be the only play in God's divine playbook? What might be birthed at MCN this time next year?



The Annual Meeting of the Mennonite Church of Normal will be Sunday, Jan. 19, 2020. There will be a potluck after Sunday School followed by the Annual Meeting. The Annual Report is posted on the Drive.

[Please use this link to view it.](#)

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

[To Sign Up use this link.](#) If you don't have access to the internet helpers will be at a table this coming Sunday.

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. 19-22; Feb. 2-4; 9-12; 16.

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.

Those in warmer climates during winter have the option of scheduling a phone visit.

To stay focused, please “do not feed the pastor.” (Be assured, Gary enjoys meals in homes, but that can happen later). Visits will be about 90 minutes. 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.

Office and Transition Staff Hours and Contact Info

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

Building hours 9-4 daily except Wednesday

The office is closed Monday in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Gary Martin, Transitional Pastor gmartin5@comcast.net cell 574.238.5475. In the parish Jan. 19-22; Feb. 2-4; 9-12; 16-18; 22-26.

Ron Ropp, Pastor of Visitation; rjroppbarn@gmail.com or 309.212.2456. Ron is available for visits related to health issues. Barry and Marge Weaver are assisting with visitation including visits with those in care facilities or homebound.

Laurie Vial, Office Manager; church@normalmennonite.org or 309.452.6622.

Bryan Oyer, custodian

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



This Week at MCN

Thursday, Jan. 16

6:15 am Next Man Bible Study

Sunday, Jan 19

9 am Pre-service Prayer

9:30 am Worship

10:45 am Christian Ed for Children

11 am Christian Ed for Adults

Potluck

Annual Meeting

2:30 pm Mennonite Relief Sale Board

Tuesday, Jan. 21

6:30 pm Youth Ministry Committee



From Jan. 12, 2020

--Prayers are requested for Deb Stenger and her family following the death of her brother, Steve Finkenbinder.

--Darrel and Lynette Miller ask for prayers for their daughter, Elizabeth, who is living in Columbia. Elizabeth is having surgery this week on her arm to remove a tumor. Prayers are requested that the tumor is benign and for strength and patience during a long rehab period.

--Devon Tracey shared a joy. Her son Waylon (14 months old) has had reduced hearing in one ear and wore a hearing aid but recent tests showed his hearing is near normal and he can stop wearing the hearing aid.

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.



Milepost

“Milepost” is a weekly item in Midweek Connection. It invites congregants to reflect on the transitional process. Think of it as a scenic lookout where we pull off the highway, to look back on where we have just been, and contemplate what’s ahead. The number is the accumulated days into the journey.

-Gary Martin, Transitional Pastor

Why Transitions?

Milepost 15

Dating and marriage have been used as a metaphor for the relationship between pastor and congregation. Both parties get to know each other first, and then discern whether to enter into a long- term relationship. From there on, both parties need to keep working at the relationship. I believe it’s helpful to broaden the metaphor to any relationship, whether with a friend, physician, lawyer, auto mechanic, nanny or building contractor. For relationships to be most effective, both parties need to have embraced their past, know who they are now, and where they are headed in the future. When all three are in place, one becomes much more attractive to the other. Congregational transition is an ideal time to assess all three areas, as it is for any life transition.

Without transition, a pastoral search committee is tasked with this daunting effort. They may seek counsel from the congregation via surveys, but it is impossible for a committee to do this work thoroughly. Transition involves the entire congregation in the preparation a search committee does before considering candidate profiles. When search begins, the congregation has already supplied what the search committee needs, so profiles can be considered immediately.

Another benefit of transition: potential candidates have advance informal notice of a general time when a search process will begin. Example: if a pastor is contemplating resignation, and is aware that MCN will begin searching in approximately 12 months, s/he may delay resigning for a year, to be available at that point. While transition does delay the start of a search process, it usually shortens the time in, and definitely increases the quality of the search process. Quality candidates place a transitioned congregation above one which has not, in his/her discernment.

Last night, the Church Board affirmed an initial schedule for the next two months:

Feb. 18: Household visit project completed

Feb. 25: Church Board reviews Visit Project Report and Recommendations

March 8: 10:45 a.m. Report/Recommendations presented to the Congregation

March 29 9:30 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. First Congregational Process Event: “Re-memembering MCN”

For now, please make note of these dates. No schedule is ideal for everyone in a large church, so we appreciate your flexibility, so transition work can stay on schedule. More details will be provided soon. I will continue to visit interested households after Feb. 18. But for your input to be included in this initial planning, please sign-up online. If you are away

from Normal, we can visit via phone or Skype.

-Gary Martin,

Transitional Pastor

Next week: specific objectives for the transitional period.

Minutes

The minutes of all committees and the Church Board are available for reading in the white binder in the church library.



Statements

Statements for contributions for 2019 were sent by email on Monday through our church accounting software PowerChurch. If we did not have your email in PowerChurch they were printed and will be in mailboxes late this week. If you have changes please email Laurie at church@normalmennonite.org. A few statements "bounced" Laurie will attempt to update your email address in PowerChurch and re-send.

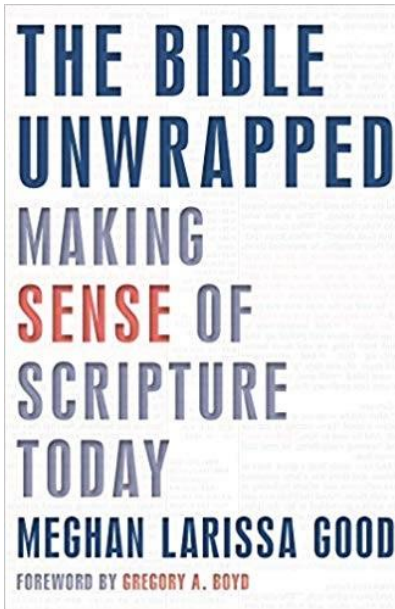
Missing

MCN is missing two eight-foot polymer tables and a dolly. Please bring them back. Bryan



Potluck Lunch

Jan. 19. Please bring one (or more!) of your delicious dishes to share and table service for your household. Beverages provided.



The Bible Unwrapped Adult CE class WILL be meeting this week. Bring your Bibles prepared to look at another scripture in literary and historical context.



Rainbow Confab

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

How to Make Your Church Safe for the LGBTQ+ Community from Ethics Daily
<https://ethicsdaily.com/how-to-make-your-church-safe-for-the-lgbtq-community/>

[Link](#)

Here are a few excerpts from the above article, in case you don't have time to read it in its entirety:

Studies show that youth who grow up in religious communities have lower rates of suicidal ideations than youth who do not. However, for one segment of the population, the statistics are opposite. LGBTQ persons who mature in religious contexts experience higher rates of suicidal ideation and attempts than LGBTQ persons outside the church, according to research by Jeremy J. Gibbs published in 2015.



Wedding Invitation

Leah Roeschley and Jacob Walker will be getting married during a portion of the worship service at Hopedale Mennonite Church on Sunday, Feb. 16. ALL are invited to come to Hopedale Mennonite Church that day for worship and to witness this special event. The service begins at 9:30 a.m.. There will be a cupcake and coffee reception following the

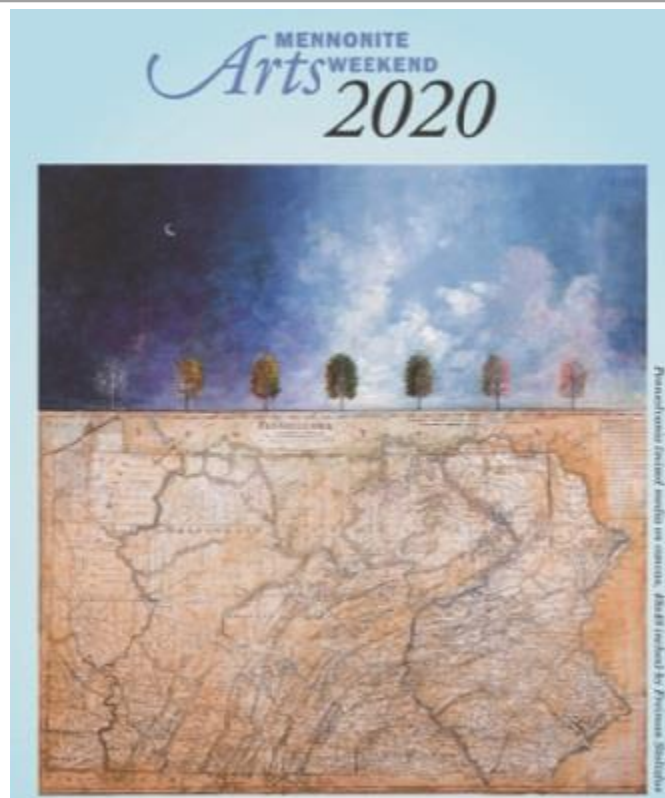
worship service. The church is located at 5192 Hopedale Rd., Hopedale, IL.



Annette and Rick Harnish have a new grandson. Ezra Lynn Harnish was born Dec. 22 at 9:14 a.m. to David and Gabriella. He weighed 7 lb. 8 oz. and was 20 inches long. He joins big brother, Avery, 2.

A note from the Worship Committee

The effects of extreme weather and warming temperatures are being felt all around the world. As Christians, we are called to be mindful of the impact these environmental changes are having in our country and around the globe. On the worship table on the podium, the ceramic tray depicts the elements of wind, water and sky. The plant shows life and growth, and the 100-year-old Bolivian cloth reminds us of our neighbors in other parts of the world. God's word, the Bible, remains a constant and calming presence despite the many changes that surround us.



Mennonite Arts Weekend

Interested in attending the Mennonite Arts Weekend in Cincinnati Feb. 7-9? It is an opportunity to see/hear the faith-based presentations/products of excellent Mennonite artists. Lynn Reha is the local representative for this weekend. She is attending and can

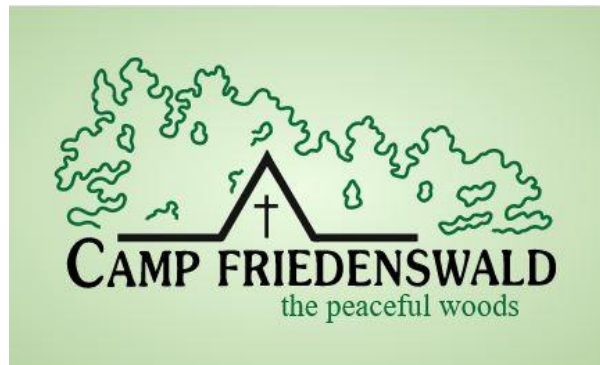
provide three others with transportation. For more information and to register, please go to www.mennoniteartsweekend.org. Please contact Lynn if you are interested in going.

Mennonite Relief Sale

The 2020 Relief Sale is only two 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).

Worship Participants

A spreadsheet of Sunday morning volunteer positions for 2020 was updated and posted on the bulletin board. On the back are tips for ushers and nursery helpers. If you trade a duty with someone please email the office. Thank you to Elsa Raab, Julie Musselman, Spring Neely, Caleb Augspurger and Jenell Ulrich who create these lists. Laurie now keeps the master spreadsheet and works on distribution and publicity. Thank you to all who help with these important Sunday morning tasks. To see the list online [use this link](#). The bulletin board list and the list online will be updated frequently and will soon include more months.



Camp Friedenswald Winter Church Retreat will be Jan. 24 - 26.
Please [visit this link](#) for more details and to sign up.

Creation Care Confab

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

Climate change tends to scramble time, defying our sense of an orderly progression. As Robert Macfarlane, the chronicler of nature, climate, and the environment, has said, "We burn Carboniferous-era fossil fuels to melt Pleistocene-era ice to determine Anthropocene future climates."

source: One Thing You Can Do: Make Your New Year's Resolutions Count.

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.



Birthdays

Carrie Stalter Jan. 15

Joe Mathews Jan. 16

Louise Reeser Jan. 18

Phyllis VerSteegh Jan. 20

Adah Reiman Jan. 21



Please Wear Your Nametag

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

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.



Partners in Healing 2020

MCN has been asked to pray for the **Progressive Care Unit**. PCU is located on the second floor of the patient bed tower and provides care for neurosurgical and other high-acuity patients at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center.



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](#).



The office will be closed Monday, Jan. 20 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9-Noon

Building is open 9-4 on those same days.

Deadline for Midweek and bulletin items is noon on Wednesday.

Voice of the Day

Progress is a nice word. But change is its motivator and change has its enemies.

- Robert F. Kennedy



Building Use

Wednesday, Jan. 15

5 pm Overeaters Anonymous

Thursday, Jan. 16

6 pm HAAQG Sewing Mentoring

Saturday, Jan. 18

10 am Overeaters Anonymous

Monday, Jan. 20

5:30 pm Al-Anon

Tuesday, Jan. 21

7 pm Cantus Novus

Today's Chuckle

A person calls a pet store: "Send me thirty-thousand cockroaches, at once."

Astonished clerk: "What in the world do you want with thirty-thousand cockroaches?"

Caller: "I'm moving out today, and my lease says I must leave the premises in exactly the same condition I found them."



Serving this week

South Greeters: Annette and Rick Harnish

West Greeter: Ardis Serpette

Welcome Table: Nancy Fisher

Ushers: Lotus & Ross Hershberger and Cal & Vivian Hubbard

Sermon: Gary Martin

Worship Leader: Lynette Miller

Song Leader: Barry Weaver

Accompanist: Elsa Raab

Scripture Reader: Erin Ponnou-Delaffon

Children's Time: Holly Zehr

Children's Song Leader: Shelly King

Technology: Adam Augspurger

Toddler Nursery: Janet Wilson

Preschool Nursery: Adam Reiman

