



Midweek Connection at MCN

Feb. 19, 2020

Worship with us this Sunday, Feb. 23

Scripture: Ruth 4; Romans 12:1-8

Sermon: *Three strikes and Ruth's babe* by Pastor Gary Martin

Ruth is defined by the three strikes society called against her: gender, marital status, and ethnicity. If we have not experienced strikes being called on us, we might be self-appointed umpires. Paul reminds us to allow God to change the way WE think. Might the Holy Spirit bring abundant life to us, through outsiders like Ruth and Rahab?



Church Directory Announcement

It's that time of year - time to publish a new church directory of names, addresses, emails, phone numbers and birthdays. If you have corrections from last year please email Laurie at church@normalmennonite.org. Once it is updated we will print a copy for you to proofread - it will be available on a table for several Sundays. You will also be able to look at the file online. We are going to print the directory this year directly from our church database software **for the first time**. Even if your listing was correct last year and you have no changes we need you to proofread your listing. Once these edits are corrected we will be print and publish the 2020 Directory. Thanks for your help in making it up-to-date and accurate.

Staff Hours and Contact Info

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

Gary Martin, Transitional Pastor gmartin5@comcast.net cell 574.238.5475. In the parish Feb. 23-26; March 8-12; 15-19; 29-31; April 5-12.

Ron Ropp, Pastor of Visitation is providing pastoral care for those who are ill or hospitalized. Barry and Marge Weaver and Wayne and Lois Hochstetler 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

Wednesday, Feb. 19

6:30 pm 100 Gifts for 100 Years

Thursday, Feb. 20

6:15 am Next Man Bible Study

5 pm Peace & Justice Committee

Sunday, Feb. 23

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

Tuesday, Feb. 25

4:30 pm Staff Meeting

5:30 pm Church Board



From Feb. 16, 2020

--Laura Dick asked for prayers for John Price, a co-worker, who has stepped down from his position as a driver due to failing health.

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 50

Transition Update

The household visit phase ended last night: 67 households participated, approximately 61% of active MCN households. Profound insights, honest sharing, good questions, and holy moments happened. Some expressed affirmation for this transition opportunity; many were unclear on the what and why of transition; and some expressed lack of support for a transition period. Thanks to everyone who took time to contribute to this essential first step in the transition process.

My focus for the next five days, is to compile and analyze the data, and develop a projected plan for congregational processes for the rest of 2020. The Church Board will review this proposal on Feb. 25, and it will be presented to the congregation on March 8, at 10:45 a.m. It will be recorded for Sunday School teachers, and those who are away that day. Please make this meeting a priority in your schedule. There will be plenty of time for clarification questions, and circle group conversation about the proposal. If you have questions now, please contact me, or any Church Board member.

Since you are reading this, you don't need encouragement to read Midweek Connection regularly. But you can help by encouraging others to do so. It's essential for staying together on this journey.

The first major congregational process event is March 29, 9:30 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.: "Remembering MCN." It will be interactive and an insightful experience. Details are forthcoming. Thanks for making it a priority in your schedule now.

Next milepost: Ash Wednesday and an overview of Lenten worship at MCN.

New: Worship Participants!

A spreadsheet of Sunday morning volunteer positions for 2020 is posted on the bulletin board. Tips for ushers and nursery helpers are included. If you trade a duty with someone please email the office. Laurie 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 list was updated Feb. 18 to include a few more months.

The Bethel College Choir

On Monday, March 23, we have the opportunity to host the Bethel College concert choir. We will have a sign-up for hosting the students. A host simply needs to provide a place to stay on Monday evening following the 7 p.m. concert, breakfast the next morning, and a sack lunch for the bus ride the next day; we will need to find housing for 50 people. We will also have a sign-up for desserts and salads for the choir's Monday evening supper. Thank you in advance for opening your home and hospitality to the students and their conductor. If you have questions, please contact Phil Dick at (309) 824-2551 or Helen Dick Brandon (309) 826-4359.

Hesston College Bel Canto Singers

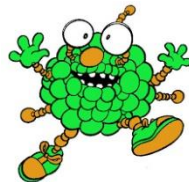
We have the privilege of being included in the tour schedule of the Bel Canto Singers from Hesston (KS) College on Sunday morning, March 22. We are asked to provide Saturday night lodging/hosting (arriving at 9 p.m.) and Sunday breakfast in your home for these 20 folks. After participating in our worship service, they will join us for the annual post-Relief Sale lunch provided before they leave for KS. This is a wonderful chance to connect with students and faculty! Please use the Signup Genius or contact Marge Weaver (309-530-8713, margemartinweaver@gmail.com) to make your reservation to host. Thanks so much for sharing your homes! [Sign Up Genius Link](#)

Food in Kitchen

We are busy people and we all hate to see food go to waste. Lately the rule about labeling all food in the kitchen including the refrigerators and freezers has been largely ignored. Please label ALL food left in the kitchen including condiments. If the food is intended for a certain group please indicate that. If you want anyone to eat it so it does not go to waste, say so. Food left in the frig or freezer unlabeled does not get eaten because no feels they have the right to do so. Therefore, we are wasting a lot of food - especially ice cream.

Encountering Mental Health Challenges

A class, sponsored by the Wellness Committee to provide basic mental health knowledge and training for responding to individuals in distress, will begin March 01, 2020. Individuals are invited to tell their mental health stories. It could be a personal journey or the effect of a family member's or friend's mental health challenge on you. Confidentiality will be stressed. If you are willing to share in the class in this way, please contact Lois Hochstetler, Kristen Satchwell or Bess Desch personally or with an email or note in one of their mailboxes. Questions or concerns can be addressed to any of them. An additional goal for the class is to aid in removing the stigma of seeking help for those with a mental help challenge. You could be instrumental in this effort. Please respond soon.



Cold and Flu Season

It's cold and flu season at MCN. Consider a fist bump instead of a handshake. Let's all wash our hands frequently and make use of the hand sanitizer at the Welcome Desk and other locations. Thanks!



New Compostable Tableware for Relief Sale

If you are interested in supporting this effort to turn the tableware for the dinner and breakfast meals into compost, not landfill waste, please donate to the Compostable Tableware Project. Your donation will save the plates, cutlery, and cups from going into the landfill. Compostable tableware is about 25% more expensive than Styrofoam, so to maintain our funding to MCC projects, we are seeking donations to defray the additional costs. If you wish to contribute, please write a separate check from other contributions. Make it out to Mennonite Church of Normal with Compostable Tableware in the memo line.

100 Gifts for 100 Years

This year MCC will be celebrating one hundred years of service. We begin preparations for the 62nd year of relief Sales. Mennonite Church of Normal is always active in the preparations of the Sale. As we begin preparations Mennonite Women would like to encourage all to come and help make some things for the Relief Sale. The following six weeks will be designated as work evenings every Wednesday to make 100 gifts to sell at the Sale. ALL are invited to come and share their gift. Together we can make 100 nonfood items.

Bring whatever you can to work on or to share. If you aren't sure what to bring come and help someone or learn something new. We want to work as teams or as families. What kinds of things might we do? Some suggestions are: knit a comforter; put binding on a comforter, sew a project on the sewing machine, (sewing machine will be there), crochet a scarf or potholder or dishcloth; make a wreath; make some cards, knit an item like a scarf, sweater or scrunchie or afghan; plant some flowers/seedlings); make some flower arrangements; put together items for silent auction baskets; all kinds of art; painting; crafts; small woodworking items are just some possibilities.

The two weeks before the Sale will be used for some food items.

This is an opportunity for ALL to be involved on the next six Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:30. Come everyone and bring your project or hands to share and help someone. Let's have fun as we prepare for the Illinois sale. Questions: Ask Gerry, Marcia or Roelie

Coming this Sunday...

...on the MCN channel, each Sunday in February, at 9:30 a.m.: *Gleaning Right*, a mini-series on the book of Ruth, with guest appearances by Orpah, Naomi, Obed, Boaz, and Ruth, the star of *Gleaning Right*. Invite family and friends!

Illinois Mennonite Conference Annual Business Meeting Report

The Illinois Mennonite Conference held it's annual business meeting at Camp Menno Haven on Saturday, February 15. Delegates from MCN included: Gary Martin, Cindy Ropp, Rick Satchwell, Andy Hedberg, Connie Satchwell, and Mary Dyck. Darrel Miller, Conference Moderator, led the meeting. Lynette Miller was also in attendance.

Two policy statements IMC leadership's practices regarding credentialing were discussed extensively. The following statement was accepted as current policy:

"Illinois Mennonite Conference (IMC) is a network of churches, and a member conference of Mennonite Church USA (MCUSA). We are called to continually engage and discern faith and life issues together.

Like the Christ-followers who gathered in Jerusalem in Acts 15, we are called to unity, to

engagement with each other, and to be a living witness to the reconciling power of the Good News. The alternatives of continuing to coexist without significant interaction, or separating to reassemble in communities of like mind, only delay further division and separation.

We the Church Life Team call IMC member congregations and leaders to a renewed forbearance¹ with each other, with no expiration date attached. This active forbearance listens to others, looks for common affirmations of faith², and works to understand how we each arrived at positions where we differ. Also, the CLT calls for member congregations and leaders to commit to a year of study, to hear Scripture and the Spirit from each other's perspective, to explore areas of common ground, and understand positions with which we disagree.

IMC, as a member conference of MCUSA, credentials persons discerned and called by member congregations for leadership. IMC will seek to demonstrate mutual accommodation and forbearance toward both viewpoints by following these practices:

1. Local congregations have the freedom and responsibility to discern criteria for membership and participation in their congregations.
2. Local congregations have the freedom and responsibility to discern the specific responsibilities and privileges of their pastoral office concerning same sex marriage. Pastors may officiate same sex weddings with the affirmation of their congregations and pastors may decline to officiate same sex weddings. The CLT will seek to engage in discussion with congregations and pastors who are considering whether or not to host or officiate same sex weddings. A review of credentials will occur if a pastor may have acted outside of congregational discernment and support.
3. In the spirit of forbearance, during this interim period of listening and study, IMC will neither revoke nor confer credentials on pastors in same sex marriages.

These practices seek to demonstrate mutual accommodation and mutual forbearance between conflicting convictions among IMC churches in relation to same sex marriage. The proposals included above commit IMC, and its member congregations and leaders, to active listening and learning together, in expectant prayer that God's Spirit will show us a way forward that demonstrates God's work among us.

If we do this, "...the watching world may see a church that cares deeply about one another and has more to bind it together than its agreement about this one issue – and would need more than disagreement on this one issue to tear us apart.¹"

Our hope and prayer is that we will gain a trust and understanding of each other that will enable us to continue in fellowship and in our common calling to the mission of God in our communities."

The delegate body affirmed the need for engagement and discernment in the coming year. In addition, \$3000 was added to the IMC budget to assist in facilitating ongoing engagement across the conference.

~Cindy Ropp



Rainbow Confab

Periodic info and musings to help open conversations about God's amazing rainbows
Watch for new information next week.

62nd Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale

. . . is March 20-21 at the Interstate Center in Bloomington. The 2020 theme is "Celebrating MCC's Century of Global Ministry in the Name of Christ." The sign-up sheets and supplies will be available on Sunday. The Dutch Market needs more pies, cookies, bread and gluten free baked

items. If you want to order pie crusts put your name on the order form. The **deadline for ordering pie crusts is Wednesday, Feb. 26**. The Outreach Committee will pay for the crusts. If you have any items for the auction, please let us know as soon as possible.

New Booth: There will be a new booth featuring Borscht, Zwiebach and Vegetable Soup. This will offer a meal or snack option for people who are vegetarian, in addition to providing a healthy and historically Russian Mennonite soup. Most of the tableware at the meals will be compostable. Thanks to those who have given generously to support this earth-friendly cause. It is important that no trash go into the tableware which will get ready to be composted. Therefore, some sorting will be needed, so we are asking for trash/composting sorters in the volunteer sign up.

Questions? Ask Gerry Schrock, Marcia Rossi or Roelie Homan; or Ben Roeschley and Louise Reeser (Board members)

Creation Care Confab

Periodic info and musings to help open conversations about God's amazing Creation
Watch for new information next week.



Anniversaries

Loren & Deanna Moshier 49 years

Birthdays

Kristi Stalter Feb. 21

Jozie Yoder Feb. 24

Bess Desch Feb. 27



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](#).



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.



**ILLINOIS
NETWORK HUB**



Come join the MEDA Illinois network hub as it visits a local upstart business: The Proving Ground Bouldering Gym. Our evening will give attendees the opportunity to network and explore one of Bloomington/Normal's newest small businesses and will feature a conversation with Barry and Marge Weaver, co-owners. The Weavers will share about the satisfying and challenging experiences

of starting a small business.

DETAILS

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2020

TIME: 7 PM - 8:30 PM

PLACE: THE PROVING GROUND BOULDERING GYM | 1503 E COLLEGE AVE, NORMAL, IL 061761

COST: \$0 (*If you plan to enjoy the climbing experience after the presentation, the cost is covered, but please fill out a waiver at tpgbouldering.com ahead of time if this is your first time climbing at TPG. The gym is open until 10:00pm*)

Light refreshments will be served.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS: Dr. Barry Weaver practiced pediatrics for nearly 30 years in Bloomington, IL. Recently retired from medicine, Barry and his wife, Marge, have jumped into the world of owning and helping operate a small business: The Proving Ground Bouldering Gym in Normal. Barry's longtime passion for climbing and interest in running a small business have intersected at The Proving Ground, which keeps Barry and Marge busy in post-retirement.

RSVP BY FEBRUARY 25

All are welcome. Please RSVP by calling/texting Eric at (309) 831-6585.

Voice of the Day

When we identify where our privilege intersects with somebody else's oppression, we'll find our opportunities to make real change.

- Ijeoma Oluo



Building Use

Wednesday, Feb. 19

5 pm Overeaters Anonymous

7 pm Back to Basics

Thursday, Feb. 20

6 pm HAAQG Mentoring

Saturday, Feb. 22

10 am Overeaters Anonymous

Monday, Feb. 24

5:30 pm Al-Anon

Tuesday, Feb. 25

7 pm Cantus Novus

Today's Chuckle

There once was a rich man who was near death. He was very grieved because he had worked so hard for his money and he wanted to be able to take it with him to heaven. So he began to pray that he might be able to take some of his wealth with him.

An angel hears his plea and appears to him, "Sorry, but you can't take your wealth with you."

The man implores the angel to speak to God to see if He might bend the rules.

The man continues to pray that his wealth could follow him. The angel reappears and informs the man that God has decided to allow him to take one suitcase with him. Overjoyed, the man gathers his largest suitcase and fills it with pure gold bars and places it beside his bed.

Soon afterward the man dies and shows up at the Gates of Heaven to greet St. Peter. Seeing the suitcase Peter says, "Hold on, you can't bring that in here!"

But the man explains to him that he has permission and asks him to verify his story with the Lord. Sure enough, Peter checks and comes back saying, "You're right. You are allowed one carry-on bag, but I'm supposed to check its contents before letting it through."

Peter opens the suitcase to inspect the worldly items that the man found too precious to leave behind and exclaims, "You brought pavement?!?!"



Serving this week

South Greeters: Jordan & Emma King

West Greeter: Terry Wiebenga

Welcome Table: Mary Dyck

Ushers: Phil & Alexi Hoffmann, Ross Hershberger & Jon & Janelle Friesen

Sermon: Gary Martin

Worship Leader: Wayne Hochstetler

Song Leader: Barry Weaver

Accompanist: Denise Hedberg

Scripture Reader: Wilma Dyck

Children's Time: Chris Culbertson

Children's Song Leader: Phil Hoffmann

Technology: Adam Augspurger

Toddler Nursery: Nancy Fisher

Preschool Nursery: Duane & Stephanie Nester

Missing

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

Please Wear Your Nametag

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

Parking

If you are able-bodied, please do not park on the south side of the church during Sunday worship and other well-attended events. This leaves spaces for people who do not have a handicap permit but would benefit from parking near the door. Thank you.

Fourth Sundays

On the fourth Sunday of each month, one or two members of the Church Board will be available after worship if anyone wants to discuss an issue - a joy or a concern. These opportunities will most likely take place in the middle office. The Board wants to dialogue with you.

Candle Policy

Please remember that "real" candles are not allowed at MCN except during regular and special worship services. If you would like to use a candle or candles during Sunday School, Spiritual Direction or other events please use a battery-powered candle. During a recent fire inspection we were marked down for matches and candles in several Sunday School rooms. Please follow this policy to create a safer environment in our building.

Minutes

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

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.