



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

Midweek Connection at MCN

Feb. 5, 2020

Weather Cancellation for tonight: 100 Gifts for 100 Years

Worship with us this Sunday, Feb. 9

Scripture: Ruth 1:19-2:20

Sermon: *God can handle it* by Pastor Gary Martin

Naomi blamed Yahweh for her suffering and pain. Though theologically incorrect, it was appropriate. God desires our emotional honesty. When life seems hopeless, God can not only handle our outbursts, God sends grace and mercy.

**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 call the office to sign up.

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

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

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. 9-12; 16-18; 23-27; March 8-12.

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, Feb. 6

6:15 am Next Man Bible Study

Sunday, Feb. 9

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

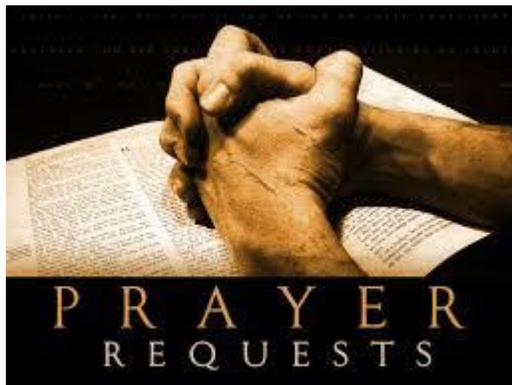
Monday, Feb. 10

9:30 am Mennonite Women

4:30 pm Financial Stewardship Committee

Tuesday, Feb. 11

5:30 pm Church Board



From Feb. 2, 2020

--Please pray for Darin Driscoll and his family - his mother, Sandy Driscoll passed away Jan. 28.

--Please pray for Lois and Wayne Hochstetler as they travel home from their Mennonite Disaster Service ministry. They hope to arrive home late on Feb. 9.

--Prayers are requested for Joe Haney who is experiencing severe back pain.

--Prayers are requested for the Illinois Mennonite Conference delegates as they face challenging decisions.

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 36

What's going on inside?

God told Samuel to anoint a new king for Israel, and that it would be one of Jesse's sons (1 Sam. 16). God had to correct Samuel when he judged by outward appearance:

Samuel, don't think that Eliab is the one just because he's tall and handsome....People judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts" (v. 7).

We also are tempted to put appearance before substance. We can put too much emphasis on what others think. Application to material possessions is obvious. Other applications are less obvious.

We tend to hide our own imperfections and those of our family. Eventually, after putting so much energy into convincing others that all is well, we end up convincing ourselves. It's called denial. If I can make it look like I'm in charge of my life and perhaps even the lives of others, I can convince myself that I'm not insecure or confused or angry.

Christian maturity is about becoming increasingly comfortable with a paradox: the closeness of God (intimacy) and the otherness of God (mystery). Christian maturity is the growing realization of our own brokenness and how much we do not know, and therefore how much we must trust in God's grace. Christian maturity involves the growing recognition of what is really important. When the Pharisees asked Jesus why his disciples didn't ritually wash their hands before eating (Mark 7), he responded in essence: Focus on cleaning up your life, not your hands.

In evaluating health, congregations also tend to focus the visible: attendance, giving, facilities, programming, etc. But the most important indicators of health are less visible. Is there a clear, congregationally owned, and Kingdom oriented vision? Are new disciples being made? Are existing disciples growing? How are decisions being made? Is everyone accountable? Are leaders being developed? Are there unresolved issues from the past?

In the Ruth story, Naomi is clear about what was going on inside! To prepare for worship this Sunday, reflect on the following questions.

1. Who did David blame when life was cruel or unfair? (Psalm 10, 13, 22, 38)
2. Is my relationship with God strained by broken relationships with others?
3. Am I covering up emotional pain with humor, busyness, or criticizing others? Ask someone who knows you well for their opinion! -Gary Martin



Meet Gary & Pat (Mierau) Martin

Gary's roots go back five generations in Elkhart County, Indiana. His father was a plumbing contractor, and his mother taught elementary school. Pat's grandparents emigrated from the Ukraine to Canada. Her parents moved from Saskatchewan to Goshen in 1962; her mother lives in Waterloo, Ontario.

Since 1975, Gary and Pat have lived in Goshen, except for two periods in Chicago (1980-86, 2001-05). They have four children:

Rochelle (Hamilton, Ontario), three children;
Joel (Goshen, Indiana), married to Marita (Chupp), four children;
Carrie (Guelph, Ontario), one child;
Jared (Valemount, British Columbia).

After his first pastorate at Silver Street Mennonite (Goshen), Gary completed a Masters of Divinity at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. During the 1980s he was involved in urban ministry, church planting (Chicago and Goshen), church planting oversight (Central District Conference), and seminary instruction (AMBS). Since 1990, he has focused on congregations in transition through parish ministry, consultation and leadership development. Eighteen transitional assignments in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri and Pennsylvania have included rural, small town, suburban, small city and inner city contexts. He is co-founder of Transitional Ministry Training, an assessment, educational and support program for transitional pastors and conference personnel.

Pat earned a Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy from The Family Institute of Northwestern University, and has a full-time private practice in Goshen as a marriage and family therapist.

Together, they enjoy keeping up with their eight grandchildren (ages 7-19), reading, gardening, biking and the culinary, theatrical, musical and thrift store treasures found in large cities.

Recognition of Marge Nester as Parish Nurse

The Wellness Committee will be recognizing Marge Nestor on Sunday, Feb. 9. Marge has served as MCN's Parish Nurse for many years, caring for our congregation in big and small ways. She has donated her expertise in countless hours of voluntary service. There will be cupcake reception following worship.

As she "retires," we would like to shower her with thank-you cards of appreciation. Monetary donations are also welcome, which will be presented that day, too (make check out to MCN with Marge Nester gift in the memo line). Please drop these off at the church office by Feb. 6th.

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 by Feb. 9.



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!



Meals for the David and Gabriella Harnish Family

David and Gabriella Harnish and their two little guys could use some support from their church family - they have experienced a lot of illness while home on family leave and they are going back to work soon. Here is a [Sign Up Genius link](#) to sign up to provide a meal. If you need help signing up please contact Laurie at the office. And continue to pray for them also! They would appreciate receiving some dinners, particularly on weeknights, to help out during this time of transition. If you are able to volunteer one evening, please sign up. Drop-off time to be between 5 and 6 p.m. Thank you very much!



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

Cancelled for Feb. 5. Will start Feb. 12.

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: knot 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!

IMC Annual Business Meeting

IMC will hold its annual business meeting **Saturday, Feb. 15, 2020** at Camp Menno Haven. One agenda item will be reviewing IMC leadership's current practices regarding credentialing related to same sex marriage. The stated practices from 2017, as well as a proposal from MLT, is posted on the website at www.illinoismennonite.com. Our congregation is allowed to have five delegates plus a pastor in attendance. If you are interested in participating, please contact Cindy Ropp at cropp@ilstu.edu or 309/826-9183 as soon as possible. Register by Feb. 7.

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



Rainbow Confab

Periodic info and musings to help open conversations about God's amazing rainbows
As seen in recent news:

Belated apology for high-profile alumna: [link](#)

The president of Goshen College offered "profound apologies": [link](#)



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.

Mennonite Relief Sale

The 2020 Relief Sale is around the corner! 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).

Creation Care Confab

Periodic info and musings to help open conversations about God's amazing Creation
Baseline survey highlights divergence, convergence in Mennonites beliefs on sustainability & climate change: [link](#)



Birthdays

Gabriella Harnish Feb. 5

Adam Reiman Feb. 6

Shelly King Feb. 9

Teresa Novy Feb. 9

Kenayah Tshiseleka Feb. 10

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](#).



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

True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.

- Martin Luther King



Building Use

Wednesday, Feb. 5

5 pm Overeaters Anonymous

7 pm Back to Basics

Thursday, Feb. 6

5:30 pm HAAQG Board

6:30 pm HAAQG Meeting

Friday, Feb. 7

8 am HAAQG Workshop

Saturday, Feb. 8

8 am HAAQG Workshop

10 am Overeaters Anonymous

Monday, Feb. 10

5:30 pm Al-Anon

5:30 pm Wild Ones Board

7 pm Wild Ones Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 11

7 pm Cantus Novus

Today's Chuckle

A nursery school teacher was delivering a minivan full of kids home one day when a fire truck zoomed past. Sitting in the front seat of the fire truck was a Dalmatian dog. The children fell to discussing the dog's duties.

"They use him to keep crowds back," said one youngster.

"No," said another, "he's just for good luck."

A third child brought the argument to a close. "They use the dogs," she said firmly, "to find the fire hydrant."



Serving this week

South Greeters: Larry and Louise Reeser

West Greeter: Shannon Neely

Welcome Table: Mary Ann Watkins

Ushers: Bess & Leo Desch and Jeremy & Caeli Haab

Sermon: Gary Martin

Worship Leader: Joe Culpepper

Song Leader: Glenn Wilson

Accompanist: Dorothy Loepp

Scripture Reader: Shannon Neely

Children's Time: Holly Zehr

Children's Song Leader: Randy & Holly Zehr

Technology: Adam Augspurgen

Toddler Nursery: Erin & J.B. Ponnou-Delaffon

Preschool Nursery: Jordan King

Please Wear Your Nametag

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

Worship Participants

A spreadsheet of Sunday morning volunteer positions for 2020 is 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. 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 is updated frequently and will soon include more months.

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.



