



The Midweek Wednesday
2020

Mennonite Church of Normal

March 18,

MCN Building Closes

The Mennonite Church of Normal Church Board made the decision Tuesday night to close the church building. Signs are posted on the north and south doors. The church is purchasing a cell phone for Laurie Vial and starting Thursday morning (if all goes well) the church phone will ring on the cell phone.

Midweek

The Midweek will be published three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Watch the Friday Midweek for a link to worship materials for Sunday. In the near future MCN will offer a worship experience over Zoom which is a video teleconferencing platform. Zoom is free and very user friendly. One option is to simply call in from your telephone, punch in a code, press the # sign and listen to the worship experience. Plus MCN volunteers can coach you on Zoom over the phone. Here is a video on how to use Zoom sent by a clergy person [link](#).

Worship

Worship services are cancelled for the next eight weeks. This Sunday is the Fourth Sunday in Lent. Worship readings, songs, children's story idea, scripture and sermon for March 22, will be available via a link shared in the Friday edition. We are working on a video worship experience on Zoom, to hopefully begin March 29. Watch for more details.

Newsletter has New Name

We have dropped the word "connection" from the name of the church's electronic newsletter. Going forward the newsletter will simply be called "The Midweek." It's a bow to the nickname everyone pretty much already uses.



Here is your Church Board following safe distance practices and that's Janet Wilson on the black laptop in the center of the room. Their future meetings will be held on Zoom. The board prayed for the entire MCN church family during this Pandemic.

Coronavirus Response Update, March 18, 2020

Last night, the Church Board made several difficult decisions, based on the assumption that our area will soon have a “shelter in place” order. Even if that doesn’t happen, we should still voluntarily reduce our movement beyond our homes, and in-person interaction with others in the community.

There is so much to communicate regarding how we will function as a faith community during this new reality. We want to be accurate and clear, so only the basics are in this Midweek edition. Much more is forthcoming.

1. The Midweek will be issued three times a week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Please watch for the next edition this Friday.
2. We will now communicate primarily through e-mail, phone, and Zoom (video conferencing.) More information about Zoom is forthcoming—it is user friendly. If you are willing to help many of us who are not acquainted with Zoom—by phone, please e-mail Laurie Vial (church@normalmennonite.org). Some of our youth might want to volunteer for this! Use "Zoom Help" as the subject line.
3. We are working toward offering a modified worship experience on Zoom, beginning March 29. A link to worship materials for this Sunday will be in the Friday Midweek.
4. Please seek public health information from reliable sources only ([cdc click on this link](#)). There is a lot of false, and even some dangerous information circulating on social media, and some broadcast media.
5. The church building is closed. If you need access to retrieve items, contact Laurie Vial. More details about this are forthcoming.
6. We encourage those who are able, to continue your faithful financial support. The Mutual Aid fund is already being used to assist MCN households, so as you are able, give generously to

the Mutual Aid fund. You can mail a check to the church, or use the electronic giving option which is a tab on the website.

7. Pastoral Council meets tonight, to organize new ways of mobilizing MCN people resources to care for everyone in the congregation. Watch for volunteer opportunities in Friday's Midweek. Until this new plan is in place, reach out by phone or e-mail to whomever the Spirit places on your mind. We all need to hear an encouraging word from a brother or sister in Christ in these challenging days.

8. If you have immediate pastoral care or emergency needs, please contact: Gary Martin or Ron Ropp - their contact info is in this newsletter or Melika Hershberger mfkhersh@gmail.com 309-888-6241
Connie Satchwell cssatch@hotmail.com 309-287-6124
Keith Unzicker keithunzicker@gmail.com 309-369-5008
or Steve Stenger ststeng@gmail.com 309-825-2464

Prayer

As we continue in this uncertain time, we also want to share this encouraging prayer written by Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky of B'nai David-Judea Congregation in Los Angeles.

Every hand that we don't shake must be a phone call that we place.

Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern.

Every inch and every foot that we physically place between ourselves and another, must become a thought as to how we might be of help to that other, should the need arise.

So, as we keep a level of social distance, let us all remain spiritually near to each other, by responding to this health emergency with love and care for everyone's well-being.

May Adonai give us the wisdom to continue to react appropriately to this crisis and heal those who have been infected.

Shared by Andy Hedberg



Church Directory Proofreading Deadline Extended

The Directory was published from the church database for the first time. Birthdays and anniversaries will be listed in the back. Even if your listing was correct last year and you have no changes, I need you to proofread your listing.

You can look at the file online using [this link](#) . There are instructions on how to communicate changes and/or let me know it is o.k. as is.

A few of you could be missing entirely - we need to correct that!

If you do NOT proofread your listing a volunteer will call or email you. **Please proofread your listing to minimize the time this step takes.** If you are willing to help with this step please email Laurie at church@normalmennonite.org.

Thanks for your help in making it up-to-date and accurate. Laurie

Staff Hours and Contact Info

Virtual Church Office Hours M-F 9 to 4

Gary Martin, Transitional Pastor gmartin5@comcast.net cell 574.238.5475.

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 with those in care facilities or homebound. This care will be done by phone calls.

Laurie Vial, Office Manager; church@normalmennonite.org or 309.452.6622. (new cell number to be announced Friday)

Bryan Oyer, custodian

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



This Week at MCN

Even though the building is closed, committees and other groups can still meet by Zoom either using a computer with a video camera, microphone and speakers, or by calling in from your phone. Laurie will set up these Zoom meetings. Please stay in touch with Laurie to keep our calendar up-to-date with these Zoom meetings.



Since the last issue.

--Please be in prayer for the entire world as everyone works to limit the spread of the COVID-19 Virus. We covet prayers for those listed below who are in care facilities and their loved ones who can no longer visit in person. Phone calls will be very important during this time.

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.)
Evelyn Bertsche - McLean County Nursing Home
Roy Jiles - Evergreen
Joyce Schmucker - Luther Oaks Assisted Living



Milepost 78 Put your own oxygen mask on first

In an attempt to foster a “we’re all in this together” community approach to the Coronavirus pandemic throughout the nation, I am delighted to hear Jesus’ words being quoted in the secular media: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you...” (Matthew 7:12). That is the over-arching, definitive Word for a time like this! We need to think about the other, not stockpile for ourselves.

Given the unique realities of this crisis, another seemingly contradictory word from the sacred texts of air travel, needs attention. Put your own oxygen mask on first. On the plane, we are of no value to others, if we pass out trying to assist the other who needs our help. While that sounds selfish, it is really putting the community first. Heroic efforts are inspirational, yet in this current crisis, we all need to do what we can to stay healthy. Many of us are taking crucial hygiene and social distancing protocols seriously. But I observe some of us are not! It is urgent for all of us to follow Center for Disease Control guidelines. It is selfish to not do so! But in addition to these protocols, we also need to eat right, exercise as we are able, get adequate sleep and manage our stress. Those of us with healthy immune systems, will find them weakened by fatigue or unmanaged stress.

If the worst-case scenario develops (a majority of the nation contracts the virus), the minority who have avoided it, will need to care for the majority. That is to say, let’s do all we can to care for others now, but without compromising our own health. If it was a tornado or flood or forest fire or great economic depression, we could push the limits on sleep, and keep functioning on adrenaline as we respond heroically to human need. But this is a disaster where sleep deprivation and stress will make matters worse.

If many of us pitch in at this point, the load can be manageable for all. We will soon announce an extensive list of ways many of us can help, in a coordinated effort. Even those who find themselves isolated with weakened immune systems, can encourage others via phone, text or e-mail, or commit to a focused prayer effort on behalf of the congregation, community, nation or world! Gary Martin

Transition Visitation Report

Gary Martin’s Transition Visitation Report is available online in written format (PDF) and an audio recording. To access either [use this link.](#)



Rainbow Confab

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

Myth & Fact

Myth: Transgender people are gay or lesbian.

Fact: There is no direct correlation between gender identity and sexual orientation. Transgender people may identify as gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual or heterosexual.



Creation Care Confab

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



There is nothing at all good about the news climate scientists are sharing with us, even in their more optimistic models, but their news does present a vital space for the work of Christian communities. --Anthony Siegrist

[For the full article, read here: https://mennocreationcare.org/but-we-cant-make-a-difference/](https://mennocreationcare.org/but-we-cant-make-a-difference/)

Menno Haven Youth Summer Camp registration

...is now open at mennohaven.com/summer-camps1 for campers going into grades 3-12. There you will also find camp schedules, descriptions, prices, as well as answers to general questions.

Here are some discounts and dates to be aware of for Menno Haven's youth summer camps:

Free T-shirt: If you pay in full by May 1, 2020, you will automatically receive a free 2020 Menno Haven summer camp t-shirt.

Early Registration Discount: If you pay in full by March 31, 2020, you will automatically receive a free 2020 Menno Haven summer camp t-shirt AND a \$15 discount.

First-Time Camper Discount: If you have never attended a Menno Haven youth summer camp, you can request a \$15 First Time Camper discount.

Sibling Discount: With one full price registration, you can request a \$25 Sibling Discount for each additional sibling.

Information on MCN camperships will be shared in the Friday edition.

MCN Library Update

MCN has a library filled with many interesting and challenging books. In order to promote more usage of the library, here are some short summaries of new books available in the library to look forward to when the building reopens.

Second Forgetting by Dr. Benjamin Mast. When Alzheimer's robs the memory of people, there tends to be a second forgetting on the part of the victim, the caregivers and even the church that the hope and grace of God is stronger than the disease. This book includes counsel and encouragement to plan, care and live with the awareness of a faithful God in the midst of a disease that forgets.

When Faith Fails by Dominic Done. Faith doesn't exist without the presence of doubt but sometimes doubt seems too large to ignore. Done examines strong threats to faith: the veracity of the Bible, the claims of science, evil and brokenness in the world and the silence of God.

Flee, Be Silent, Pray by Ed Cyzewski. A spiritual director introduces spiritual practices that deepen our connection to God, revealing God's deep love for us and the essence of our own souls, altering the anxiety of our being in a turbulent age.

Let the Children Come to Me by Lisa Weaver and Elizabeth Miller. A children's Anabaptist devotional book highlighting 12 topics central to Anabaptism such as Prayer, Community, Steadfast faith, Communion, etc. Each topic includes a story from Martyrs Mirror, as story from the

contemporary global church, questions and activities to do together with your children.

Mennonite Girls Can Cook Celebrations by Louella Shellenberger. A beautifully photographed cookbook with menus and recipes to celebrate the different events of life along with personal reflections on the importance and meaning of celebrations.

Mennonite Relief Sale Cancelled

Due to the ongoing health concerns regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we regretfully announce the cancellation of the 2020 Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale.

The Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale Association is seeking donations to help offset expenses incurred for the 2020 Sale and to support its mission of providing relief to those in need around the world and in our communities. Please consider making a donation in lieu of purchasing food and goods at the sale next weekend. The Relief Sale is accepting online donations, or checks can be mailed to:

Relief Sale Treasurer
1926 E Taylor St
Bloomington, IL 61701

Churches may also consider to hold a special offering for the Relief Sale when worship resumes.

The Relief Sale Board would like to thank the congregations for all of their contributions in preparation of the 2020 Relief Sale. Over the coming weeks, a committee of the Relief Sale Board will be considering alternative fundraising activities that could be held in the future to sell goods that were donated or purchased for the March 20-21 sale. Updates will be shared.

Follow up questions can be sent to Relief Sale Board President Don Litwiller (litwide@comcast.net). Thank you for your ongoing support.

Thank you

As we celebrate our centennial year, on behalf of the 453 partners of Mennonite Central Committee in 53 countries around the world, we thank our friends and supporters at Mennonite Church of Normal for the many ways you assist in the relief, development and peace work of MCC. We recognize the value of your prayer support, your assistance with material resources and volunteering at thrift shops, meat canning, and relief sales - and are grateful for your financial contributions of \$17,279.00 in 2019.

Thank you for all your support as we look forward to the next 100 years of sharing God's love and compassion in the name of Christ. Please visit mcc.org for more inspirational stories of hope provided with by your assistance in this work. - Adam Graber Roth, MCC Great Lakes



Birthdays and anniversaries will be published on Wednesdays.

Birthdays

Gerry Schrock March 19



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](#).



Virtual Office Hours

M-F 9-4

Deadline for Midweek items is noon M-W-F

Voice of the Day

A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. And each one of our thoughts, words, and deeds is like that.



Building Use

Our building is closed until it is safe to be open again.

Today's Chuckle

It was a cold winter day. An old man walked out onto a frozen lake, cut a hole in the ice and dropped in his fishing line. He was there for almost an hour, without even a nibble, when a young boy walked out onto the ice, cut a hole in the ice not far from him. The young boy dropped his fishing line and minutes later he hooked a Largemouth Bass.

The old man couldn't believe his eyes but chalked it up to plain luck. But, shortly thereafter, the young boy pulled in another large catch.

The young boy kept catching fish after fish. Finally, the old man couldn't take it any longer. "Son, I've been here for over an hour without even a nibble. You've been here only a few minutes and have caught a half dozen fish! How do you do it?"

The boy responded, "Roo raf roo reep ra rums rram."

"What was that?" the old man asked.

Again the boy responded, "Roo raf roo reep ra rums rram."

"Look," said the old man, "I can't understand a word you're saying."

The boy spit the contents of his mouth into his hand and said, "You have to keep the worms warm!"
