



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

The Midweek

The Midweek Wednesday

Mennonite Church of Normal

April 22, 2020



Worship

Join us for worship each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom followed by four after worship opportunities. This Sunday, Joe Culpepper will bring the message, "Eyes Open to See Jesus," based on Luke 24:13-35, the Road to Emmaus story. On the day after the Resurrection, two disciples were joined by Jesus as they walked toward Emmaus, but they did not recognize him. How do we fail to recognize Jesus in our world today? How can our eyes be opened to seeing our living Lord at work among us on our lives?

New After Worship Option Starts This Sunday

This Sunday the Uniform Series Bible Study class will bravely attempt conducting our class via the Zoom connection after our online worship time. Let's pick up with the April 26 lesson in the quarterly study book which is Isaiah 61. My understanding is that after our worship time just stay in the same Zoom session for this class. **If you do not have your book at home drive by the**

church and take a book from the plastic bag on the bench near the main door. Any brave soul is welcome to join us. All we can do is try to see if this works. - Darrel Miller.

Milepost 113 Whole Wheat or White Wonder?

Flour shelves are empty in some stores, because a lot more bread is being baked at home these days. Each culture has its own unique bread. Modern technology brought us a new and improved, enriched with vitamins bread: light, white, sliced just right and appropriately called “wonder bread.” I wonder what they were thinking!

Bread can be life extending or life shortening. Life giving bread is made from living food in its natural state. 3,000 year-old grain from Egyptian tombs has grown when planted. Life shortening bread is made from processed to death food. It is ironic that these “improvements” have literally taken life out of our foods. That which enables whole grains to reproduce, the germ and the cellulous walls, are removed to make them look nicer, last longer and cook quicker.

God designed our bodies to burn complex carbohydrates (e.g. whole grains, lentils) to produce energy. Complex carbohydrates help regulate blood sugar levels. Much of what is called “bread” today is primarily simple carbohydrates (refined sugar, processed white flour, etc.). Consuming simple carbohydrates causes blood sugar to rise quickly and then fall.

Have we inadvertently removed Life from our faith? Have we been deceived in thinking that the additives (things we do in church which unknowingly distract us from biblical faith) are enriching our faith?

In John 6, Jesus presents himself as “the Bread that gives Life.” He invites his followers to eat this Bread. Of several Greek words for eating, Jesus uses one for taking time to really chew. Taking Jesus into our lives daily, like eating whole grain bread, takes time and energy. The chapter ends on a sobering note: many of his disciples... stopped following him. The cost was too high.

Those who left preferred the addictive white wonder bread miracles that gave a quick burst of feel good spiritual energy, but left them in poor spiritual health, without sustained energy. A few chose the less traveled road of chewing on the natural whole grain bread of Jesus’ words which provided sustained, Abundant Life.

The long-term impact of the pandemic, brings the potential for significant, positive changes in societal values: ending institutional racism; providing health care for all; stewardship of creation; placing relationships above things; and reducing consumption, ideological divides, and economic disparity. In preparation for what is ahead, it would be wise to examine carefully the ingredients label of the congregational diet? Are we eating Living food, prepared and served family style? Or are we ordering unhealthy fast food from a menu, so each of us can have our own preferences? -Gary Martin

MCN Household Profiles



Alice Swift

Alice, that lady with the twinkling eyes and ready smile has had adventures in some of the world's most spectacular places in Africa, including the Serengeti Plains, Victoria Falls, Ngorongora Crater (home of the Maasai people), and St. Elizabeth Park. She even climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro!

Life began as the youngest of ten children on a farm in Shelby County in an Amish Mennonite family. She had some health issues and thinks she got a little special treatment because of it. She enjoyed school in a one room schoolhouse, more than an hour away, but the church did not allow education for anyone beyond the eighth grade.

A woman who knew Alice insisted that she should have more opportunity and connected her with a small medical practice where she cleaned, kept Rx bottles filled, and watched patients recovering from tonsillectomies. She lived at home, but was allowed to save her wages, as she wanted more education. When she had saved \$600, she managed to get to Eastern Mennonite School (now EMU), Harrisburg, VA. She took courses in chemistry, biology, and foreign language, and passed the exam for a GED after only one year. In 1951, Alice completed a three year program in nursing at Lancaster, PA.

She returned home and worked at a hospital in Shelbyville; but got restless and earned her bachelor's degree at EMC. After much consultation she decided to accept a five-year assignment in Tanzania, Africa, for the Board of Missions and Charities. Upon arrival she was handed a book and instructed to teach herself Swahili.

For the next five years she had supervisory duties as an R.N. in a hundred bed hospital, including two years supervising a leprosarium on Lake Victoria. During that time, a school of nursing was established; Alice also taught nursing. A month's annual vacation allowed for travel and exploration of Africa.

Home from Africa, she earned a Master's Degree in nursing at Washington University, St. Louis (Rachel Zehr and Alice lived together for two years; Rachel taught at a school for the deaf).

Alice was searching for a teaching position when Illinois Wesleyan University called and offered her a faculty position. She took that as a sign of Providence and taught nursing at IWU for the next 20 years.

She also found time then to get married. Seth and Alice were married at Mennonite Church of Bloomington and got to spend about 25 years together. She has lots of family in central Illinois.

Today she lives at Luther Oaks, keeps a sharp mind by maintaining her interest in wild birds, cares for her houseplants, and loves to read. She just finished a 1000-page book about the History of Christianity.

Asked about what advice she would give others, she said, "Pray a lot, and ask God to be your

guide.” A life well lived! -Elfriede Massier

Editor’s note: MCN Household Profiles is a new feature in Midweek, designed to help us get to know each other better. Our ambitious goal is three profiles per week, so we’ll cover every willing household by Holy Week, 2021. That’s only possible if we have a team of volunteer reporters to help. You can do one a week, one every other week, or one a month. It doesn’t take long. [Sign up on the volunteer link.](#)



MCN Social Hour Every Wednesday

Every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. the Mennonite Church of Normal will gather via Zoom to socialize with each other. Leroy Loepp said he wishes he could make great coffee for everyone. You will have to provide your own coffee, tea, hot chocolate or whatever but please connect to Zoom and connect with each other. Experiment with different views but gallery view is probably best. Mute your microphone except when you are talking. If you are on a laptop hold down the spacebar while you are talking. The host will break you up into smaller groups to allow more conversation, if recommended.

Topic: MCN Social Hour

Time: Every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. Central Time

God at Work Among Us

Send your submissions to Gary Martin - share how God is at work among MCN members and friends.

New small group

Last call to sign up for this short term (five to six sessions) small group focused on discerning spiritual gifts. This time in uncharted waters created by the pandemic, is a good context in which to “find out what the Lord wants you to do.” (Eph. 5:17). Contact Gary Martin, by April 27.

Two Kinds of Wounds

By Ron Ropp

When the body has wounds
A host of internal forces
Unite in miraculous ways.
Some cells cleanse the debris
While others restore new cells.

But when feelings are wounded
There is no automatic process.
The cleansing of the (debris) hurt

Calls for one's effort to forgive.
And to restore the heart to heal
Calls for the nurturing of love.



Anniversaries

Grant & Dorothy Zehr 51 years April 26

Birthdays

Jim Bortell April 22

Deacon Kauffman April 22

Mary Dyck April 23

Ben Roeschley April 25

Roberta Bortell April 26

David Kennell April 27

Bryan Oyer April 27

Government Stimulus Checks

We are grateful for this government assistance. Many in the MCN family will benefit from it. For those whose income has not been affected by the pandemic restrictions, we invite you to consider practicing mutual aid, by contributing it to a ministry which will bless others. Suggestions include:

- MCN Mutual Aid fund, emergency financial needs within the congregation
- [Mennonite Central Committee](#), relief needs throughout the world
- [Midwest Food Bank](#), food needs in the community
- [Home Sweet Home Ministries](#), food, shelter, clothing needs in the community

We encourage you to donate directly to these outside agencies, while MCN staff are working from home. A way to contribute directly to the most vulnerable in our community – the undocumented or immigrants -- is being explored. If it materializes, information will be in Midweek.



This Week at MCN

Wednesday

7:30 p.m. Social Hour (Zoom)

Thursday

6:30 a.m. Next Man Bible Study (Zoom)

Saturday

3 p.m. Worship Rehearsal (Zoom)

Sunday

9:30 a.m. Worship (Zoom)

10:35 a.m. After Worship Options (Zoom)

Tuesday

5:30 p.m. Church Board (Zoom)



Since the last issue:

--Prayers are requested for area farmers - that they have a safe planting season and for those in the dairy and livestock industries who are struggling with changes in demand and low prices.



Creation Care Confab

Periodic info and musings to help open conversations about God's amazing Creation
Earth Day is April 22 of every year. April 22, 2020 marks 50 years of Earth Day celebrations.

As we eventually come through the pandemic, I hope we can accept the sobering truth: global participation in the sin of destroying God's wonderful creation, is having immediate deadly unintended consequences. Scientists tell us that these viruses have always been there, among wildlife. But as wildlife habitat is destroyed, human interaction with wildlife increases, creating more opportunities for these new viruses to move from animals to humans. --Gary Martin, as shared in the March 25th Midweek



While other factors can give rise to emerging infectious disease, human activities are a driver of many. In fact, back in 2005, my colleagues and I wrote an [article](#) in Science that pointed out: "Habitat modification, road and dam construction, irrigation, increased proximity of people and livestock, and the concentration or expansion of urban environments all modify the transmission of infectious disease and can lead to outbreaks and emergence episodes." -- Dr. Jonathan Foley, Executive Director of Project Drawdown

The Holy Spirit has placed individuals among us, who are passionate about living in ways which sustain the planet. I encourage you folk to lead us! I recycle religiously, reduce consumption of fossil fuels, avoid processed foods, and try to buy more food locally, but that's just the tip of the

proverbial iceberg, which reminds us of the unprecedented melting of real icebergs. I pray for courage to repent, and embrace the more difficult lifestyle changes I need to make. Lord, have mercy. Save us from all of our sins. --Gary Martin, as shared in the March 25th Midweek

What can we do beyond daily habits of recycling, energy efficiency, and water conservation to care for our home planet?

How might our creation care efforts expand into community service or collaboration on a congregational, local, national, or international level?

Churches hold the potential of presenting a total way of life that reflects, among other things, the value of non-human creation and the goodness of living less consumptive lives . . . Churches and their related organizations still serve an important symbolic role. Churches represent concerns held by a diverse collective, not simply that of a special interest group. As far as the net effect on the accumulation of greenhouse gases, it doesn't really matter if a few congregations put solar panels on their roofs. The amount of volunteers we bring to a cleanup might not be overwhelming. However, the fact that we do these things collectively as a church makes a statement. Many churches and faith-based organizations have sat on the sidelines of this issue for a long time. If that were to change, it would send a powerful message about a shift in cultural norms. --Anthony Siegrist, a pastor and theologian who serves at Ottawa Mennonite Church in Ontario



Zoom

If you need training or help call Laurie at 309-452-6622. The following four people have also volunteered to help Ross Hershberger, 309-660-0710; Lydia Hedberg, 309-660-9232, Terry Wiebenga, 309-452-6159 and Glenn Wilson 309-310-5468.

Staff Contact Info

Virtual Church Office Hours M-F 9 to 4

Deadline for Midweek items is noon M-W-F

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 will forward to the new church cell phone 217.255.2119.

Bryan Oyer, custodian

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

Our Members in Care Facilities

Please remember in your prayers, or with cards, the following members in care facilities:

Ruth Marquis

Heritage Manor, Apt 111

700 E. Walnut St.

Bloomington, IL. 61701

Jo Ropp

McLean County Nursing Home, Apt 451
901 N Main St.
Normal, IL 61761

Evelyn Bertsche

McLean County Nursing Home, Apt 329
901 N. Main St
Normal, IL 61761

Deborah Spacek

Evergreen Village, Apt 292
1701 Evergreen Blvd
Normal, IL 61761

Roy Jiles

Welbrook at Bloomington, Apt 122
1402 Leslie Drive
Bloomington, IL 61704

Joyce Schmucker

Luther Oaks Assisted Living, Apt 2110
601 Lutz Rd
Bloomington, IL 61704-8624

Lloyd Combs

Martin Health Center, Apt C130
2025 E. Lincoln Ave
Bloomington, IL 61701

Voice of the Day

Green Thoughts an e-newsletter published by Jim Bortell - to subscribe email

jimbortell@gmail.com

The environmental crisis is, in many ways (throwing in a large amount of greed, indifference, and ignorance) due to a failure to observe (pay attention, notice, live in the now) what human disregard and waste of natural resources is doing to our planet, our health, and future generations. On a strictly human-quality-of life-level, observation of the natural world is a major anecdote for boredom, depression, recovery from illness, stress, a more meaningful life, and more.

Observation enriches what we put into life. Give to life, and get out of life. -Jim Bortell

Passengers on a little spaceship

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.

Today's Chuckle

A teacher was finishing up a lesson on the joys of discovery and the importance of curiosity. "Where would we be today," she asked, "if no one had ever been curious?"

One child quietly spoke up from the back of the room. "Still in the Garden of Eden?"

Menno Haven Work Day

The Menno Haven Work Day has been rescheduled to May 9. If you or anyone you know is planning to come to Work Day, let us know by signing up on the Work Day webpage (this is a new feature), emailing me at sheena@mennohaven.com or calling the Menno Haven office at 815-255-4649. This helps us plan job tasks and lunch needs.

Volunteers

Several people have volunteered to help fill out government forms and apply for the many assistance programs that have been announced at local, state and federal levels. Contact a member of Pastoral Council and they will match you up with someone who can help in these areas.

Next Man Bible Study

The Next Man Bible Study is meeting each Thursday morning via Zoom. You can attend by phone or computer. To receive the Zoom information contact Roger Clemmons or Steve Stenger.



Facebook

The Mennonite Church of Normal has an active, private Facebook page. To join the page simply search for Mennonite Church of Normal in Facebook - you should get two results a public page and the private page (with a photo of the exterior of the church). Click on the blue "join" button and a request will be sent to the page administrator. MCN hopes to post more to the public Facebook page in the future. Shannon Unzicker has suggested we post a challenge on Facebook (private) each Friday and people can submit photos or short anecdotes about the topic. So join the MCN private page and start enjoying this new way to interact with each other. If you have topic ideas send them to Laurie with Facebook in the subject line. Thanks.

Midwest Food Bank Volunteer Opportunity

Friday, May 1 from 6-8 p.m.

Midwest Food Bank is an essential provider during the COVID-19 situation and they are in need of volunteers. As of April 10, they have sent out 18,280 family boxes (basics to help families in need for a few days) and still need 34,320 boxes filled. They are also repackaging some items, generally cereal, to go in the boxes. The week prior to load out week, volunteers are needed to do palletizing (stacking boxes onto pallets so food pantries can quickly pick up the food and leave). Our church will most likely be assisting with one of these three jobs. Following CDC recommendations, they ask that all volunteers at the facility bring and wear a mask. Please join us for an evening of service with your church family. Anyone 15 years and older is welcome. For safety, they limit the number of people in the facility, so please [sign up here](#).