



**Mennonite
Church
of Normal**

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

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

The Midweek

The Midweek Wednesday

Mennonite Church of Normal

Feb. 24, 2021

Worship this Sunday via Zoom at 9:30 a.m.

Lent 2021: Deep calls to Deep

On the Second Sunday of Lent, we engage with Mk 8:31-38 and Romans 4:13-25, with the theme: Deep in the Woods: Called to deep commitment. We are transformed by God as we follow God's voice along the path of life, a voice calling us to deep commitment. Even when our path leads deep into unfamiliar woods, as we lose ourselves, we are found. See the Milepost below, for more about the Mark text. Marge Weaver is planning and leading the service.

After Worship Options

There are three after worship options: Standard Lesson with Darrel Miller (stay on worship link), Fellowship led by Lynn Reha (see invite below) and Lenten Sharing: How is God calling me to deep commitment? (This personal sharing on the weekly Lenten theme, replaces the sermon discussion option.) (see invite below).

This folder contains music from last Sunday [click here](#). Please note that you need to download the music before playing it. Late Saturday afternoon the folder will also include the worship order and sermon slides for this coming Sunday.

Questions for reflection: How is God calling you to deep commitment? What do you sense God calling you to commit to more deeply?

We invite everyone to prepare additionally, by having a bowl with six stones nearby. We are invited to remove a stone each week, to represent a personal response to God's call. You may want to write a word on it, and put it somewhere where it can remind you of your response each day. As Lent continues, we will watch our bowl empty, representing the removal of what is weighing us down and preventing us from seeing what really matters.

Lent Schedule: *Deep calls to Deep*

March 7	Deep in the changing sky: Called to deep wisdom	Gary Martin
March 14	Deep in the wilderness: Called to deep healing	Joe Culpepper
March 21	Deep in the earth: Called to deep growth	Melika Hershberger
March 28	Deep in the current: Called to deep hope	Holly Zehr
Easter, April 4	Deep in the feast: Called to deep living	Gary Martin

Milepost 419 Called to deep commitment

In Mark 8:31-38, Jesus and Peter had creative differences over how the story was supposed to end. Peter believed Jesus was the Messiah, and thus he knew it would eventually be a “and they all lived happily ever after” ending (after a victorious rout of the Romans). That’s how he recalled the Messianic story ending in his tradition. There were some references to a suffering Messiah in his Scriptures, but like us, he read them selectively for what he wanted to hear.

Jesus, on the other hand, knew this story would have a different ending. He knew the political realities in Israel, would not tolerate very long, the proclamation of a status quo upsetting Kingdom of God. The powers that be are quick to recognize threats to their hold on power. In this text, Jesus reveals to the Disciples, an unimaginable ending to the story. Peter stepped out of his disciple role for a moment, to tell Jesus, his Teacher, that he was wrong. Jesus rebuked Peter: Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.

Jesus was clear about his mission: to reveal the realities of God’s Reign to humankind. Jesus was committed to his vision: a strategic plan to teach in the synagogues, heal the sick, and proclaim Kingdom good news to the crowds, and in the process of doing all three, form a small group of disciples to carry on his mission. Jesus could have been distracted by doing many other good things. But he wasn’t. He stayed focused on his unique calling. And because Jesus did, his disciples became laser-focused on the calling he gave them, “As you go, make disciples of all nations.”

MCN is in the process of discerning a vision with several clear priorities for the next three years. It will have specific and measurable objectives which will stretch us and require all-hands-on-deck to accomplish. The proposal to be presented to the congregation for discussion and discernment in mid or late March, should look familiar to those who participated in the January breakout room sessions.

It will be a deep commitment for MCN. May it be an “on earth, as it is in heaven” vision. -Gary Martin

A new small group focused on discerning passion, spiritual gifts, and callings will begin when enough express interest. The group will begin by sharing life stories, and then focus on helping each other discern gifts. It will meet on zoom, for 6-8 sessions, unless other options become available. The schedule will be determined by those who participate. It’s ok to join if you have already participated in one of the new small groups this past year. If interested, please contact Melika Hershberger, at mfkhersh@gmail.com or 309 888 6241.

Barry Weaver’s reflection on his small group experience: "I hesitated to join a small group. I wasn't convinced that I needed this right now nor that I would make a difference to others in a group with me. I was wrong. I'm glad I didn't ignore this opportunity!"

Mid-Year Gatherings

The Board of Directors of the Central District Conference will host two gatherings via Zoom instead of the annual Regional Gatherings. These meetings will be held March 6 and March 27, 9:30 - 11:45 a.m. Eastern time. You are invited to attend your preferred date.

[Register here for the March 6 meeting.](#)

[Register here for the March 27 meeting.](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. For a schedule [click here.](#)

There will be breakout sessions on a variety of anti-racism themes, along with stories from three congregations about their creative Christian Education efforts during the pandemic.

Transition Process Update

Available members of the Church Board, Pastoral Council, and ministry staff, identified three goal areas from the breakout room group results, during their first meeting. They meet tonight, to discern specific objectives to accomplish each goal area over the next three years. We anticipate presenting a proposed Vision Statement to the congregation for discussion on March 14, at 10:30 a.m. Structure Evaluation Task Group meets next on Feb. 25, and anticipates presenting a report for congregational discussion in late March.

Change in Midweek Email List

We changed how we send out the Midweek and the Update. Starting today it was sent out through the church database. If you hear of anyone who did not receive it, please have them email the church office at church@normalmennonite.org and ask to be added to the church database for the newsletter. Thanks.

Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale 2021

We will be doing an online auction on March 15 to 20. Photographs will be taken of the items, and quilts the following week (Feb. 22) by our auction service. The photos will be posted online early in March, and bidding will take place approximately the week of March 12. All the bidding will end on March 20 throughout the day. More details will be coming as they are available.

There may also be other ways for you to participate to raise funds for the sale, stay tuned. Don't forget about MY COINS COUNT. We can accept those donations at any time. If you can find a matching partner, that doubles your \$\$\$.

Thank you for your support of the sale. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Louise Reeser 309-826-3423 or reeserfarms@gmail.com



Opportunity to bake

Its time to have fun and do some baking. The North Danvers Mennonite Church is holding a Relief Sale Bake Sale March 19 and 20. All proceeds will go to MCC. They are asking for donations of baked goods. These can include pies, breads, rolls, tea rings, cookies, brownies, and candy. These would have to be made in your home. Contact Gerry Schrock if you can make something.

Daily Lenten meditation options:

Meditations written by Goshen College students, staff and faculty, based on the Lenten texts we are using at MCN, are available by [clicking here](#).

Jim Bortell has written daily Lenten meditations for his home congregation, which are available [here](#).



Veggies or Apple Pie Filling or Rhubarb...

You may remember that I was making preparations for vegetable soup and Borscht to be sold at the Relief Sale 2020.



I roasted veggies for that purpose—onions, potatoes, beets, carrots. I put them into mixed veggie containers of about 5 -6 cups each and froze them. Since the Relief Sale didn't happen, AND with COVID, there seems to be no agency that wants to take already prepared veggies.

Would you like some for soup? If you phone (309-452-5994) or email (ldhershb@ilstu.edu) Lotus, he has volunteered to set some out on the bench for you to pick up. You can either keep the containers or return.

Or maybe you are hungry for apple pie? The plastic bags of apple pie filling that were prepared for Relief Sale 2020 are available, also. They contain just the right amount for one pie. Follow the same procedure and call or email Lotus, and then pick up outside church.

Or rhubarb that is cleaned and cut up and in bags. The suggested donation for the rhubarb only is \$3-5 per bag.

The pie filling or veggies are available for a suggested donation of \$5 each (or more, of course). You can write a check (separate, please) to MCN with Relief Sale in the memo line. Lynn Reha

Dear Mennonite Church of Normal,

I am so honored to be able to serve this warm and thoughtful community on a deeper level as the new office manager. For some time I have been prayerfully hoping for a position that would help me transition from my ministry in doula work to a position within church ministry where I felt God was leading. Jesus' call for us to serve has always guided my career. After my children and I began coming to the MCN last fall I felt like we had finally found our church home, and that's only been solidified by all the kindness from this community I've seen during this uncertain time. I am so excited to learn more about the role, jump in, and get to work! I will be praying for our congregation and leadership, and hope you will pray that God would equip me to serve you well!

Sincerely,

Devon Rae Tracy

(editor's note: Devon begins March 1.)



Birthdays

Jozie Yoder Feb. 24
Bess Desch Feb. 27
Marjorie Kasongo Feb. 28
Loren Busenitz March 1
Nerida Ellerton March 1
Loren Moshier March 1
Hannah Brown March 2
Bryce Nester March 2



This week at MCN (All via Zoom)

Wednesday

6:30 p.m. Vision Statement Committee

Thursday

6:30 a.m. Next Man Bible Study

4:30 p.m. Structure Evaluation Task Group

Saturday

9:30 a.m. Worship Rehearsal

10 a.m. Fellowship Committee

Sunday

9:30 a.m. Worship

10:30 a.m. Three after worship options



Illinois Mennonite Conference Annual Meeting

The Illinois Mennonite Conference Annual Meeting will be held online on Saturday, March 6. The Mennonite Church of Normal is seeking delegates. If you are interested please contact Cindy Ropp.

Staff Contact Info

Virtual Office Hours M-F 9 to 4

Deadline for Midweek items is noon Wednesday

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:

Alice Swift
Luther Oaks Apt. 2201
601 Lutz Road
Bloomington, IL 61704

Ruth Marquis
Heritage Manor, Apt 111
700 E. Walnut St.
Bloomington, IL. 61701

Jo Ropp
McLean County Nursing Home, Apt 328
901 N Main St.
Normal, IL 61761

Deborah Spacek
Evergreen Village, Apt 292
1701 Evergreen Ln.
Normal, IL 61761

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

Ken Shoemaker
Sugar Creek Alzheimer's Special Care Unit
505 E Vernon Ave.
Normal, IL 61761

Update from MCC

Our daughter, Elizabeth, wrote us to say after two years of paperwork and planning, MCC was able to send a shipment of MCC Material Resources to Quito, Ecuador for the refugee project there. (MCC Colombia administrates the funds for the Quito Refugee project.) It arrived by ship into the port in Guayaquil over the weekend, cleared customs on Tuesday, and was to arrive in Quito by semi-truck this morning, much faster than the week expected to clear customs. She considers this a miracle, because MCC has never been able to get canned turkey into Latin America without giant headaches and mishaps, but this was cleared in two days! To give you some idea of the scale of this thing, there are 13,400 cans of MCC canned turkey; 2,004 comforters; 957 infant care kits; 3,200 hygiene kits; and 3,080 school kits. -Lynette Miller

Quilt frame giveaway

Small, wooden, oval quilting frame (18"x28"x32") is looking for a new home. If you would like it, email me at vivian.hubbard@gmail.com. -Vivian Hubbard

COVID support groups to form

McLean County Center for Human Services is offering support groups specific to issues experienced because of the Coronavirus. They will be doing virtual groups on three topic areas:

- Dealing with Coronavirus: Loss of a Loved One or Friend
- Surviving the Coronavirus: Impact on Self, Family and Friends if You Tested Positive
- Coping with Coronavirus: The Stress of It All

There is no cost for the groups and will be open to adults (age 18+) that have been impacted. Group times will be determined by interest.

Youth Ministry Update

Youth Ministry Committee has been providing Christian education opportunities to our junior high and high school students by way of weekly emails and Zoom gatherings every other week. If you are a parent or guardian of one of these students or if you are in high school and have not been receiving these communications, please contact Barry Weaver at barrycweaver@gmail.com.

Adult SS books are in

The Sunday School books for the adult Standard Lesson class have arrived and are on the bench in a plastic bag—feel free to pick one up. All are welcome to attend this class and avail themselves of a guide if they would like to participate.

Control

By Ron Ropp

It's our common desire
To be in control of life
So whatever may happen
We'll be free from strife

The small child strives
In life to gain control
To make life's happenings
Meet their personal goal

But soon they come to know
Some events of life oppose
The wishes and desires
Their control would suppose

So when we lose control
Over what we no longer master
Fear and grief can take control
And it feels like a disaster

This drives us to remember
That when faith is in control
We look to the love of Christ
According to the apostle Paul
II Cor. 5:14

Voice of the Day

If justice sleeps in this land, let it not be because we have helped to lull it to sleep by our silence, our indifference; let it not be from lack of effort on our part to arouse it from its slumbers.- Francis J. Grimké, "Equality of Rights for All Citizens, Black and White, Alike" (1909)

Today's Chuckle

Last October my wife bought a magnolia tree from the local nursery, but after only a few weeks the leaves shriveled. It appeared to be on its last legs.

My wife took some leaf samples and marched into the nursery to demand an explanation.

"I know exactly what's wrong with your magnolia," said the manager.

"Good," said my wife. "What's it suffering from?"

"Autumn," he replied