



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

The Midweek

The Midweek Wednesday

Mennonite Church of Normal

March 10, 2021

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

Lent 2021: Deep calls to Deep

Our theme for the Fourth Sunday in Lent is: "Deep in the wilderness: Called to deep healing." The wilderness confronts us with our vulnerability and exposes our wounds and our needs. We are called to deep healing by trusting in God, who calls us in love.



Joe Culpepper's sermon, "'Deep Healing: Have You Been Bitten by a Bronze Serpent?'" is based on Numbers 21:4-9 & John 3:14-21. This fascinating story from the Israelites' exodus through the wilderness to the Promised Land raises some questions for us. What snake bite experiences have you had in your life? Are you experiencing one now? How has God helped you find in them healing and hope? Join us as we reflect and thank God together! Gary Martin has planned, and will lead the service.

After Worship Option

There will be only one after worship option: Introduction to Voices Together Stay on the Worship Zoom link.

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 healing? What in your life needs God's healing today?

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 21 Deep in the earth: Called to deep growth
March 28 Deep in the current: Called to deep hope
Easter, April 4 Deep in the feast: Called to deep living

Gary Martin
Holly Zehr
Gary Martin

SMAP Update Shared

Greetings church family. The Student Mutual Aid Program (SMAP), through the support of Mennonite Church of Normal (MCN) and friends of MCN, has provided full tuition to our young people attending Mennonite colleges and universities. We have several youth from our church who are considering the Mennonite schools for this coming fall, and I would like to remind you that we will be doing a pledge/fundraiser in late spring/early summer. It is possible that people may be getting another stimulus check, and we would appreciate your consideration in donating a portion toward this amazing program.

If you have any questions, please contact Darvis King, Chellie Miller, Annette Harnish, Katie Driscoll or Mark Roeschley. They should be able to answer or get answers for you. You can contribute on the MCN website, click on the "give" button and then on the drop-down menu pick Student Mutual Aid Program. Or, make out a separate check to MCN with SMAP in the memo. Thank you.

Transition Process Update

The Vision Statement committee has met three times, and is making good progress in this challenging task of discerning a clear and compelling statement based on the work of the congregation in January vision groups. They meet again on March 11 and 16.

The Structure Evaluation Task Group meets next on March 15. Please support the discernment work of both groups, in your prayers.

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](#).



Milepost 433 Signs of Spring at MCN

A year ago today, the Church Board met, spread across the fellowship hall, one per table to enable social distancing, to decide next steps in response to COVID-19. Two days later, the building closed, with staff posting signs and locking the doors. That day remains vivid in my memory.

Speaking metaphorically, Spring, Summer and Fall, 2020, never happened. It's been a winter wilderness, not wonderland, for twelve months. This Sunday, we will be reminded that God offers healing, even in the wilderness (Numbers 21: 4-9).

While many unknowns remain, I see signs of Spring at MCN.

- A new vision is emerging, which reflects the work of eight vision groups in January. It has been challenging work, but I see renewed energy among those preparing the proposed statement, to be presented to the congregation on March 28.
- Half a dozen individuals have taken various courses recently through Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, with interest in sharpening skills for various areas of ministry in congregational life.
- Several individuals have been discerning new callings, and are now taking significant risks to pursue them.
- New small groups have enabled relationships to go deeper for 21 individuals, and resulted in greater clarity of spiritual gifts, passion and calling.
- Sharing after Lenten worship experiences, is going deeper than some of us anticipated.
- Significant gifts are emerging in worship services, especially among young adults, youth and even children.

Of course, there are many other signs of Spring which I have not noticed, from my limited vantage point. Please share such signs, during sharing time on Sunday, or in Midweek. What are you seeing, which brings you hope for new life and abundant harvest? 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.



Laurie Vial and Devon Tracy have been busy with training—wearing N95 masks and face shields!

Memories

By Ron Ropp

Memories of what used to be
They bring alive the past
For some they lift the spirit
Yet the time went by so fast

For others they bring sadness
To think of what's no longer
And things that shaped our life
With some that made us stronger

But now as we look back
We miss what used to be
And now those special times
From here are only memory

The things that shape our life
Are safely bound in memory
Though some be sad or happy
May we hold them thankfully

Food Drive Planned

Fellowship and Outreach Committees are once again organizing a food drive, this time for Mount Pisgah food pantry. You may drop off your donations under the portico at MCN on Saturday, March 20 from 10 a.m.- noon.

Most needed items:

- canned vegetables
- boxed Mac n cheese
- mashed potatoes
- skillet meals (such as Hamburger Helper)
- peanut butter and jelly
- tissue
- paper towels

Monetary donations are also acceptable (checks made out to Mt. Pisgah Food Pantry). Thanks for you generosity and support!

C.E.Committee Announcement

The Sunday School class planned for March 14 at 4 p.m. has been cancelled.

Menno Haven Camp and Retreat Center is calling your name!

Join Menno Haven staff on Saturday, April 24 from 8-4 (or part of the day) for the Spring Work Day. Volunteer, meet others that love the camp and enjoy a meal! Work and meals can be indoors (masked) or outdoors. For more information contact Marge Weaver or sign up at mennohaven.com/work-day. See you there!

Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale 2021

Our Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale Online Auction is getting closer. The items up for auction, are now available for viewing. If you go to the web site: ilreliefsale.org and click on the info there, it will get you to the sale items. There are about 7-8 pages of items. You may look without bidding. Bidding will start on March 13, and the auction will end on March 20, throughout the day. If you think you want to bid, you can get registered now. You will be asked for a credit card number, but it will not be used. Payment will come when you pick up the items on March 21 (noon-5pm) or March 27 (8 a.m.-noon). Questions call or email Louise Reeser. 309-826-3423 reeserfarms@gmail.com



Opportunity to Bake

A bake sale to support Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale will be Friday held March 19 at North Danvers Mennonite Church. We are being asked to contribute bake goods for the sale. We still have about 25 apple pie fillings available to make apple pies. We also have more than 20 bags of frozen rhubarb available to make rhubarb pies. They also can use breads cookies, rolls, cakes etc. All items needed to be wrapped and labeled with ingredients. Aluminum pie pans, cake pans, plastic bags and labels are available too. All baked goods can be delivered to the North Danvers Church from 9-3 on Thursday March 18 for the sale. Contact Gerry with questions and if you can help with this project. Thank you all for your help with this way to support the Relief Sale.



Online Dutch Market announced

An online Mennonite Relief Sale Dutch Market will be held over the coming week. The online store will open for ordering items at midnight Sunday night March 15 and close Thursday morning March 18 at 8 a.m. Pickup of ordered items will be at North Danvers Mennonite Church from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. under the west entrance canopy. Items available for purchase include pies, cookies, tea rings, sweet breads, pussy willows and peanut/pecan brittle among other things. To shop the store, go to <https://north-danvers-mennonite-church.square.site> If you are not comfortable with purchasing online, you can text or leave a message for Kathy Miller at 309-242-0789 with your order. Payment due with check or exact cash when you pick up on Friday. Please note there will be no change given. All items are donated and all proceeds go to MCC.



VT Event Planned for Sunday

The Mennonite Church of Normal loves to sing, and we have experienced great worship together. Therefore, the Voices Together Introduction Committee invites you to attend a more formal introduction to this wonderful new resource, Voices Together. VT replaces our current hymnals, and we want you to begin to become acquainted with it. Zoom may not be the best platform to do this, but it is the best we currently have. Please join us after the worship service for a time of learning and singing- just stay on the Worship Zoom.

Veggies available...

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 (ldhersh@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. 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

COVID-19 Ceremony Planned

The first COVID-19 case in McLean County was announced by the health department on March 19, 2020 with the first death reported on March 22. Since then, at least 170 McLean County residents have lost their lives to the virus, and more than 14,400 people have had the virus. This has been a challenging time for all, but most of all for those who have lost relatives and close friends, and those who continue to suffer long-term health consequences.

To mark the anniversary of the arrival of the pandemic in the county, the McLean County Museum of History is partnering with Not In Our Town, Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, Heartland Community College, and local leaders and artists to present a brief ceremony at 5 p.m. Friday, March 12. Due to current Covid-19 restrictions only 50 people are allowed to attend in person; masks and social distancing will be required. People also can join virtually through the museum's Facebook page to view the live stream.

The museum also will be collecting nonperishable food items for the Immigration Project to help families in need in McLean County. Additionally, the museum is encouraging members of the community to participate in the ongoing Covid 19: McLean County Experience history project and the 12months in 6 words project (both of these programs encourage McLean County residents to share their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic with the Museum). For more information about these two projects or to contribute to them, please visit [this site](#). Please RSVP to attend in person by Monday, March 8 to Director of Education Candace Summers at csummers@mchistory.org.



You are invited to watch Lydia Hedberg's Junior Cello Recital on March 20th at 7:00pm. It will premiere through YouTube that day at 7pm. To watch the recital please go to this link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLs-gI81oy9y1xLCoLqOUKQ/videos> Thanks!



MCN is asked to pray for the Critical Care Unit of Carle BroMenn Medical Center—our Partner in Healing for 2021.

Anniversaries

Larry Schrader & Elfriede Massier 40 years March 14

Birthdays

Erin Ponnou-Delaffon March 11

Al Dick March 13

Darrel Miller March 13

Ellen Culpepper March 15

Carroll Miller March 15



This week at MCN (All via Zoom)

Thursday

6:30 a.m. Next Man Bible Study

5 p.m. Outreach Committee

6 p.m. Vision Statement Group

Saturday

9:30 a.m. Worship Rehearsal

Sunday

9:30 a.m. Worship

10:30 a.m. Voices Together Introduction

Monday

4 p.m. Worship Committee

6 p.m. Structure Evaluation Task Group

Tuesday

6 p.m. Vision Statement Group





Easter Breakfast Exchange

Easter Breakfast at MCN has traditionally been a time to fellowship and share a meal with others before the service on Easter Sunday. Even though we can't be physically together this year, the tradition continues! The Fellowship Committee is hosting an Easter Breakfast Exchange. What does this mean? Individuals or families will sign up to either exchange a breakfast casserole or pastry to another individual or family. What's the point? This will provide you the opportunity to cook for other church mem-

bers and maybe share a favorite recipe. Additionally, in the midst of the exchange you will be able to connect with others and potentially see a long-lost friend face-to-face from a safe distance! What a great way to "raise" spirits as the temperature "rises" and we remember the "rising" of Jesus! If interested in fellowshipping in this way, click on [this link](#) to sign up. **Deadline to sign up is 3-24-21.** Fellowship Committee will match people on 3-25-21 and you will be responsible to work out the details on time and place of exchange for what works with you!



Youth Group to Host Variety Show

The Youth Group will be hosting a Variety Show to generate funds for the Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale. We need your help! Do you have a way you express yourself you can share? We are looking for acts - read a poem, play an instrument, do a dance, tell a joke, do a charade, sing a song, tell a personal story, stand on your head. The options are endless. Please consider adding a recorded entry for our show! Email entries or questions to Lauren Satchwell at satchwell.lauren@gmail.com by Sunday, March 21.

Mid-Year Gathering

The Board of Directors of the Central District Conference will host two gatherings via Zoom instead of the annual Regional Gatherings. The final meeting will be held March 27, 9:30 - 11:45 a.m. Eastern time. [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.

Staff Contact Info

Virtual Office Hours M-F 9:30 to 4:00, Sunday 12:00-4:00

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 and Devon Tracy, Office Managers; 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

Highlights from Illinois Mennonite Conference Assembly

Delegates met via Zoom, last Saturday, for an introduction to Colossian Forum, an organization that seeks to transform cultural conflicts into opportunities for spiritual growth and witness. IMC is encouraging congregations to have several congregants trained to facilitate Colossian Way groups in each congregation. Information is available at <https://colossianforum.org/about-us/mission-vision-our-story/>

Delegates also approved a new mission effort in supporting Olak Sunuwar's (Living Waters Community Church) ministry to Nepali congregations across the world. IMC will provide Nepali Outreach Missions with \$12,000 a year.

An annual IMC spending plan was approved, along with individuals for leadership positions.

For additional news from IMC, see [Home - Illinois Mennonite Conference](#).

Voice of the Day

In times of stress, the best thing we can do for our children (and for each other) is to listen with our ears and hearts and to be assured that our questions are just as important as our answers. - Fred Rogers, *You Are Special* (1995)

Today's Chuckle

"Look, Charlie," the coach said, "you know the principles of good sportsmanship. You know the Little League doesn't allow temper tantrums, shouting at the umpire, or abusive language."

"Yes sir, I understand."

"Good, Charlie. Now, would you please explain that to your father?"

