



**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

March 3, 2021

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

## **Lent 2021: Deep calls to Deep**

"Deep in the changing sky: Called to deep wisdom" is our theme for the Third Sunday in Lent. In the patterns and glory of God's creation, and in God's commandments and promises, we are called to obtain deep wisdom. We will revisit The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), which begin, "Then God spoke all these words..." Christians omit v. 2, and begin numbering the commandments at v. 3. In the sermon, *Ten Words (not nine)*, we will focus on what Jews consider to be God's First Word (v. 2), and why v. 2 is crucial in understanding the remaining nine Words. In both the Exodus text, and 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, we see God's deep wisdom which undermines our assumptions, and takes us deeper than our efforts can lead us.

## **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 wisdom? (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 wisdom? What area of your life needs God's wisdom?

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 14	Deep in the wilderness: Called to deep healing
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

Joe Culpepper
Melika Hershberger
Holly Zehr
Gary Martin

## Milepost 426 What is an Anabaptist Christian?

*The Anabaptist Vision* (Harold S. Bender, 1943), shaped Mennonite understanding of Anabaptism for three generations. He summarized Anabaptism:

Christianity is *discipleship*: following Jesus.

The church is *community*: committed to Christ, and each other.

Jesus' followers have an ethic of *love and nonresistance*.

It is revealing that when Mennonites today are asked "What do Mennonites believe," the most common answer we give is, "we believe in peace." Coming in a distant second, is "community." A better response could be: "We believe in, and follow Jesus, who taught us to love God, each other, our neighbor, and our enemies."

Today, Bender's summary for many, has evolved into: Anabaptism means global involvement in social justice, peacemaking and relief work, grounded in selective reading of the OT prophets and Jesus' ministry, and participation in a community of like-minded people.

Bender missed an integral dynamic in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Anabaptism: bold missional zeal evidenced in witnessing to holistic faith in Christ, as they were martyred. Palmer Becker attempted to reshape Mennonite understanding of Anabaptism in his 2008 pamphlet, "What is an Anabaptist Christian?" It can be downloaded [here](#). Becker summarizes Anabaptism:

*Jesus* is the center of our faith.

*Community* is the center of our lives.

*Reconciliation* is the center of our work.

Being a Christian from an Anabaptist perspective, integrates believing in Jesus, belonging to community, and behaving in a reconciling way. For Becker, reconciliation in Scripture, integrates social justice and evangelism.

Back in the 1980s, a movement began among new church starts, to remove the denominational label. It was considered a hindrance to growth in most denominations, including among some Mennonites. I observed that generally, Mennonite church planters who wanted the name removed, were not committed to being theologically Mennonite. Thus, a number of these left the Mennonite Church after a few years. And all too often, new church plants which kept Mennonite in their name, struggled to grow. But I would contend, what hindered growth was the failure to really *be* Mennonite, not the presence of the name.

In my opinion, we should not shy away from using the Mennonite or Anabaptist labels. But it is much more important to *be* Mennonite (Anabaptist), as Becker describes, than to rely on the brand. After someone checks out our website, Facebook page, newsletter or a worship service, would they clearly see that Jesus *is* the center of our faith, that Community *is* the center of our lives, and that holistic Reconciliation *is* the center of our work? -Gary Martin

## Devotional Collaboration Ignites Amidst COVID

A diverse and talented group of Latin American Anabaptist women came together during this uncertain time to contribute to and publish a Spanish devotional in an effort to encourage others in their walk with Christ. The collaboration and commitment to this project speaks to the tenacity of so many to bring joy and comfort to the body of Christ amidst the pandemic. You can read more about this inspiring story, the women behind the publication, as well as find links to and download the devotional by clicking [here](#).

## Welcome Home Building Re-entry Plans

Last spring, a Welcome Home Task Group was formed to develop a plan for re-entry into the building at some point in the future. The Task Group included Gail Fisher, Lotus Hershberger, Cindy Ropp, Mary Ann Watkins, and Laurie Vial. Currently the group has expanded to include Mary Dyck and Glenn Wilson. The Task Group developed a re-entry plan that was shared with the congregation in June.

The church building is in Region 2 of the Restore Illinois plan. While some church participants may reside in other regions, church re-entry will be determined by Region 2 metrics. Persons from other regions are asked to follow the directives of their region, particularly if there are higher positivity rates in their region.

Region 2 is currently in Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan. This phase allows for gatherings of 50 people or fewer with this limit subject to change based on latest data and guidance. The Task Group will look for a minimum of 3 weeks of continuous:

- Test positivity rate  $\leq 6.5\%$
  - Staffed ICU bed availability  $\geq 20\%$
  - No sustained increase in COVID patients in hospital
  - The status of the vaccination progress in the area will also be considered.
- To re-enter for worship, a vaccination rate of 75% would be preferred.

At this point, the Task Group, in consultation with the Church Board, will initiate a stepwise progression of re-entry into the building. This might initially begin with staff in the building, office open, committee meetings, and small groups from within/outside of the congregation. This would eventually culminate in re-opening the building for worship.

All changes to the building status will be communicated to the congregation through The Midweek.

Should any of the metrics we are watching move beyond the acceptable range, the building re-entry may reverse temporarily. This decision will be made by the Task Group, Church Board, and staff.

The Welcome Home Task Group appreciates the positive support we have received from the congregation. These are difficult times and we long to be together. We are eager to move forward with the plan as things become a bit safer.

**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](mailto:mfkhersh@gmail.com) or 309 888 6241.

Lynn Reha shares from her experiences: Small groups have changed my life. I have found them to be a vital part of the way in which I feel God's love. I am so glad that small group opportunities are being offered by MCN. A small group focused on spiritual gifts has recently been helpful for me in finding a renewed energy for my life's mission. I encourage you to give a new small group a try.

## Transition Process Update

Twelve available members of the Church Board, Pastoral Council, ministry staff, and breakout session facilitators, identified three goal areas from the results of all eight groups, during their two meetings. They meet again on Thursday. We anticipate a congregational meeting in late March, to discuss the proposal which emerges from this phase of the process.

The Structure Evaluation Task Group (Spring Neely, Rick Harnish, Lauren Satchwell, Cindy Ropp, Bess Desch, and Gary Martin), meets next on March 15, and anticipates presenting a report for congregational discussion in April.

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](#). This is a new link.



## 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 our web site: [ilreliefsale.org](http://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(12:00 -5pm) or March 27 (8:00am-12:00). Questions call or email Louise Reeser. 826-3423 [reeserfarms@gmail.com](mailto: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. 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.



## 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](mailto: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

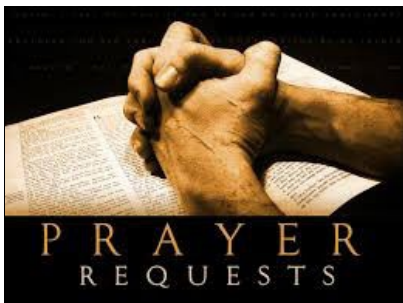
The first COVID-19 case in McLean County was announced by the health department on March 19, 2020 with the first death reported on March 22. Since then, at least 170 McLean County residents have lost their lives to the virus, and more than 14,400 people have had the virus. This has been a challenging 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 12monthsin6words 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](mailto:csummers@mchistory.org).



Aldine Combs would like to extend thanks to all those who have offered their prayers and condolences after the passing of her husband, Lloyd Combs.



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

### **Birthdays**

Lily Driscoll March 3  
 Jeremy Haab March 3  
 Amy Reiman March 4  
 Connie Satchwell March 6  
 Olivia Petri March 7  
 Laura Dick March 8  
 Andy Reeser March 9



## **This week at MCN (All via Zoom)**

### **Thursday**

6:30 a.m. Next Man Bible Study

### **Saturday**

9:30 a.m. Worship Rehearsal

### **Sunday**

9:30 a.m. Worship

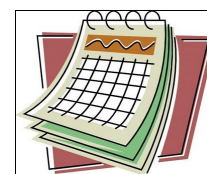
10:30 a.m. Three after worship options

### **Monday**

4:30 p.m. Financial Stewardship Committee

### **Tuesday**

5:30 p.m. Church Board



## **Illinois Mennonite Conference Annual Meeting**

The Illinois Mennonite Conference Annual Meeting will be held online on this Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. To access agenda, or register, click here [Home – Illinois Mennonite Conference](#).



## 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 fellowshiping 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](mailto:satchwell.lauren@gmail.com) by Sunday, March 21.

## 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.](#) here 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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



## **Voice of the Day**

In a society that functions optimally, those who can should naturally want to provide for those who can't. That's how it's designed to work. I truly believe we're here to take care of one another. - LeVar Burton

## **Today's Chuckle**

Submitted by Juergen Schroeer:

My husband and I purchased an old home in Northern New York from two elderly sisters. Winter was coming on and I was concerned about the lack of insulation. "If they could live here all those years, so can we!" my husband said confidently. One January night, the temperature plunged to below zero, and we woke up to find the bedroom walls covered with frost. My husband called the sisters to ask how they kept the house warm. After a rather brief conversation he hung up. "For the past 30 years," he muttered, "they have gone to Florida."