

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This week, Pastor Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Hilarious Blessing* using the scripture Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7.

When we talk about making a way forward with God, things are never simple addition. Through the story of Isaac being born to Abraham and Sarah, we realize we need to manage our expectations, assuming there is always room for surprise. How do we account for such things as we think about our individual lives and our life together in the church?

blessings

The service will be live streamed on YouTube at this [link](#).

The bulletins get posted under the Worship tab of our [website](#).

After Worship

Adult CE

Journey Groups:
Group A (20's-30's)
First Office

Group B (40's-50's)
Conference Room

Group C (60's and above)
Room 4

Children & Youth CE

Pre-K-K Grade

2nd-4th Grade

5th-8th Grade

High School



**Mennonite
Church
of Normal**

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

"Last Call" Vision Team Ballots



Barry Weaver's term as Vision Team Chair ends on December 31, 2023 and he will be stepping down from the Vision Team at that time. Although Shelly King will begin her term as Vision Team Chair in January, we need to nominate and then elect a new member of the Vision Team. This new member will join Shelly, Shannon Neely, and Ben Roeschley. The SGDT is responsible for organizing the nomination and ballot process for this role. You can refresh yourself about the role, purpose, qualifications etc. for Vision Team members [here](#).

The process:

Sept. 10 – 13 Ballots are submitted (paper option available and online voting)
Sept. 14 SGDT reviews ballots; Top person is contacted and invited to prayerfully discern this call; if declined, SGDT will contact the next person.

Please fill out the electronic ballot for a member of the Vision Team [here](#). **Deadline: Midnight tonight!**

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



MCC Comforter Bash

THIS Friday, September 15 and Saturday, September 16 | 9:00 am – 4:00 pm each day

It is here! We have planned and worked to prepare for this two-day event for many months. Friday and Saturday of this week from 9:00 a.m. - 4 p.m. each day we will be knotting the 50+ comforters that have been assembled. On a weekly basis since June 1, there have been over 20 different individuals who have gathered in the MRC Community Room to assemble comforter tops. (View photos of comforter tops being made [here](#).) Gerry Schrock has provided excellent leadership for this group and spent many additional hours on her own, both planning and assembling comforter tops. Other tops have been made by individuals working on them in their own homes, some have been donated by friends of our church and MCC has provided some.

Participation in the Comforter Bash will go a long way in helping MCC in meeting its goal of 45,000 blankets, for the Ukraine and other areas of need, by the end of 2023. It is our goal to complete 50 comforters to help meet this larger goal. Over 50 women, men, and children are registered to participate in the two-day event. We can accommodate more volunteers even though the established deadline for registering is past. Financial donations to this project are also encouraged and will help with the expenses incurred.

RSVP to attend in one of two ways:

- By using this link:
- By email: church@normalmennonite.org

If you have questions contact: Gerry Schrock, Deb Stenger, or Mary Ann Watkins.

Hosted by the Community Life Commission

Let's Celebrate Autumn



THIS Sunday, September 17 at 4:30pm

Looking forward to seeing you this Sunday for a weiner roast & hayride at the Reeser Farm. All are welcome, young & old. There will be a nature scavenger hunt for the kids and we'll do s'mores. Come fellowship around the fire, beginning at 4:30 with supper at 5. Bring hotdogs and buns for your family, a dish to share and lawn chairs. Table service, drinks, s'mores provided. Contact Louise Reeser with any questions.



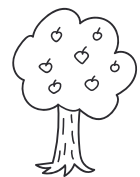
Midwest Food Bank

Thursday, September 21st from 5:00-7:00pm

Our next time to serve at the Midwest Food Bank is Thursday, September 21st from 5:00-7:00pm. We hope you will join us as we have fun while joining the work of this effective ministry in providing food to people in our community and beyond. **As always, it is helpful if you can sign up early [here](#).**

From the Outreach Commission

Apples, Apples Everywhere!



Saturday, September 23

The apple crop (mostly Empires) at Eric and Chellie Miller's is quite large this year, and most apples are blemish-free as a result of the dryer conditions.

Although no formal harvest day is planned, the Millers' are inviting anyone interested to come pick your own apples. Come at your convenience on Saturday, September 23. Buckets and crates will be available to assist with the picking, but please plan to bring your own bags or boxes to transport home. If you're not available the 23rd, you can text or call Eric to make arrangements to come another day.

Note: The trees have not been pruned or sprayed for a few years, so please be prepared to navigate overgrown tree branches loaded with apples.

Come help yourself to as many apples as you want so they don't go to waste! Enjoy!



Launching Women's Ministry at MCN

Saturday, September 23 at 10 am

Community Life Commission (CLC) has developed a plan for moving forward with a Women's Ministry based on results of the questionnaire that was completed in the spring. The results showed that many women in the church are interested in participating in such a ministry and that there are many different interests to explore.

The Commission has planned for a Launching of Women's Ministry event to be held on Saturday, September 23 at 10:00 am at the church. Jane Roeschley, MACF Threshold Ministries - Spiritual Direction, Retreat, Pilgrimage, will be presenting a talk entitled Women's Wisdom Across the Seasons. This talk will draw upon Celtic places and stories as we think about women's wisdom in the seasons of women's lives, and how sharing our wisdom strengthens and enriches our community with one another.

Following Jane's presentation, CLC will share more about the initial plan for Women's Ministry. Starting out, there will be two kinds of groups meeting. One is for Bible/book study and the other is for Sewing and more.

Coffee and conversation will take place around the tables in the Fellowship area following the presentations. Childcare will be provided for the event. **Click [here](#) to register for the Launching Meeting on September 23.**

From the Community Life Commission

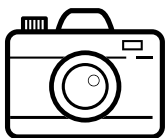
International Neighbors Night



Saturday, October 21st

The Wittenberg Lutheran Center, located at 201 S Main in Normal, exists as a campus outreach to students and scholars. As part of their ministry, they host an International Neighbors Night once a month. It is an evening of food and fellowship. MCN will provide the meal for this on October 21st. Watch for further details as to how you can help!

From the Fellowship Committee



Sharing Our Gifts

The "Sharing Our Gifts" slide show will be playing again this Sunday before and after the service and will be available to view in the following Midweek. If you've not sent in a photo yet, please do so! You can email them to church@normalmennonite.org. We're all eager to see how you are serving in your community!

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



Vision Team shared with the congregation in July that we feel it is time to transition to a 'permanent' pastoral team to meet the needs of our church. We invited the congregation to pray about this as we discern together how it will take place. Vision Team has been praying, thinking, and talking about this. Here is a summary of where we find ourselves now.

How much pastoral time does Vision Team think we need?

- One full-time (FT) person and three 1/4-time equivalents. This is our current arrangement, and it works well.
- This would allow the Pastoral Team to continue to provide the leadership and support needed by the congregation.

Why does the Vision Team feel we need this now?

- The congregation and the Vision Team cannot expect the current Pastoral Team to continue indefinitely.
- We need to plan now for the church's 2024 Pastoral Team expenses.

Who would be on the Pastoral Team?

- Pastor Kevin (FT), two 1/4-time individuals added to the staff, and another 1/4-time equivalent of unpaid lay coverage of the Team's responsibilities.

How would this affect the church's spending plan?

- Ending the service of our interim pastors and hiring two 1/4-time pastors would lead to an increase of about 6% (\$24,000) in the congregation's total spending plan if all other expenses remained the same.

How will we do this?

- All members of the Pastoral Team Search Committee (PTSC) that brought Pastor Kevin to us have agreed to continue to serve. (Thank you!)
- Doug Luginbill, Central District Conference minister, will facilitate this process.
- Vision Team, with input from the PTSC and the Pastoral Team, is developing a plan for hiring additional pastoral staff.
- **Vision Team and the PTSC invite the congregation to meet with them on September 24** (following the Christian education hour) to hear more, ask questions, and offer input.

Please share your questions and comments with any member of the Vision Team: Shelly King, Shannon Neely, Ben Roeschley, Barry Weaver.

From the Vision Team

Peace & Justice Statements on Christian Nationalism, pt 2

Nationalism, and more specifically Christian Nationalism, are difficult terms to assign a hard definition to. Further, each contains positive elements but when carried to extremes are harmful, if not deadly, to individuals, groups, society and the nations themselves.

Some sociologists define Christian Nationalism as a blending of the previously separate Christian and American identities, thus blurring their distinctions. This blurring results in a cultural framework which views the two as closely related and seeks to enhance and preserve their union.

The culture of 'I am a Christian, therefore I am an American patriot' and the defense thereof is the basis of believing that the nation's identity is inseparable from its Christian heritage. As the nation around us changes because of social, political, geo-political, environmental, and migration issues, the Christian Nationalist will seek to maintain the status quo of the privileged state of the nation.

Christian nationalism is a political ideology and cultural framework that claims America was founded to be a "Christian nation" where Christians should receive special legal treatment not available to non-Christians. This merges the previously separate Christian and American identities, proclaiming that the only true Americans are the country's Christians (and a specific subset of conservative Christians, at that). This means that Christian nationalism is anti-Semitic and Islamophobic, and poses a threat to the religious freedom of America's Jews, Muslims, Indigenous peoples, mainline Protestant Christians, and more.

Sources:

- <https://www.washingtonpost.com>
- <https://act.faithfulamerica.org>
- <https://www.umc.org>

Submitted by Mark and Pamela Hodel for the Outreach Commission

Did You Know?



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- A list of the chairs of each commission and team along with their contact information is available at the end of each Midweek.
 - The Midweek is divided into three "sections." The first section (which this is at the end of) is items directly involving MCN, the middle is an overview of the church week, and the third section has articles and events from Bloomington-Normal and the wider Anabaptist community.

From the Administration Commission



Those Serving This Week



South Greeters: King family

West Greeter: Kristen Hartwig

Welcome Table: Mary Ann Watkins

Ushers: John & Kay Reimer

Offering Counter: Mark Roeschley

Worship Planner & Leader: Steve Benner

Sharing Prayer Leader: Lynette Miller

Children's Story: Gerry Schrock & Annette Harnish

Scripture Reader: Randy Zehr

Technology: Adam Augspurger & Ryan Miller

Song Leader: Barry Weaver

Accompaniment, Prelude, & Postlude: Dorothy Loepf

Infant Nursery – during worship:

Infant Nursery – during CE:

Preschool Nursery:

Gather Round:

Prayer Requests and Announcements

Sharing of Joys and Concerns have returned to open mic sharing during the services. Please send announcements to Lauren Satchwell so that these can be shared by the worship leader during the Community Life portion of the service. When sharing, it's helpful if your requests are succinct. This is true whether in person or livestreaming on YouTube.



Sharing of Joys and Concerns



MCN IS ASKED TO BE IN CONTINUED PRAYER FOR FOR THE TOP ADMINISTRATORS AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM CARLE BROMENN MEDICAL CENTER—OUR PARTNER IN HEALING FOR 2023

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Thursday, September 13

4:30pm Community Life Commission (Zoom)

7:30pm Vision Team (Zoom)

Friday, September 15

9:00am MCC Comforter Bash

Saturday, September 16

9:00am MCC Comforter Bash

Sunday, September 17

12:30am Mennonite Colleges and Universities Fair

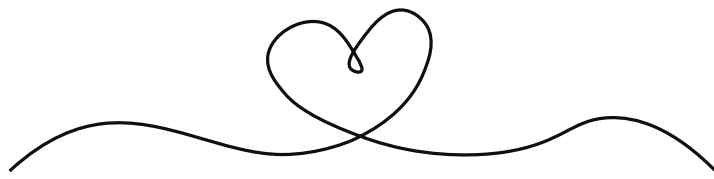
4:30pm Celebrate Autumn Cookout at the Reeser Farm

Tuesday, September 19

3:00pm Pastoral Team

Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



McLean County Hunger Walk



Saturday, September 16 at Tipton Trails

September is Hunger Action Month! McLean County's first annual Hunger Walk will be held on September 16 at Tipton Trails. The walk is free and registration is not required. People are asked to bring food donations that will go to a local food pantry. View a flyer for the event [here](#) and a poster with suggested food donations [here](#).



Heartland in search of Tutors

Heather Huckstadt-Gonzalez, Associate Dean of Adult Education at Heartland Community College, is in search of people interested in working with their students in the evenings. They are looking for someone for a M-T-W class and a T-W-Th class. If you are interested, please contact Heather Huckstadt-Gonzalez.

Bethel College Alumni Times Interview



Jason Schmidt, Bethel College '04, owner of Grazing Plains Farm in Whitewater, Kan., was interviewed for an article in *TIME* magazine about the effects of climate change on small farms. Read his interview [here](#).

Karla Stoltzfus Detweiler Climate Justice Coordinator

Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) Executive Board staff has named Karla Stoltzfus Detweiler as the new climate justice coordinator. She began the half-time position on September 5, 2023, working remotely as part of MC USA's Church Vitality department, reporting to the denominational minister for Peace and Justice. The new position is among the recent actions to strengthen MC USA's climate justice initiatives. Stoltzfus Detweiler holds a Master of Divinity degree in theological studies with an emphasis in ecological theology and ethics from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). In her previous position, Stoltzfus Detweiler served as executive director for Hungry World Farm, Tiskilwa, Illinois, a non-profit organization that focuses on educating, inspiring and connecting people around ideas of food, agriculture and caring for the earth. Read more in MC USA's article [here](#).

Once Again, The Fight for Religious Freedom in America Begins



Prayer-rising for Oak Flat

Save the date and start organizing to confront, through prayer, the forces of destruction facing Oak Flat with Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT).

The sacred land of Oak Flat is being threatened with destruction by the Resolution Copper mine. From the beginning, [Apache Stronghold](#) has grounded their resistance to Resolution Copper in the strength of their spiritual relationship with the land. Oak Flat is sacred and the presence of the holy has been attended by the Apache since time immemorial. Their resistance to systems of racism, capitalism, ecocide, and colonialism are fueled by prayer and ritual. Apache Stronghold asks people of all faiths and spiritualities to join them in this struggle. On 4 November 2023, Apache Stronghold will amplify these intercessions into a prayer-rising for the preservation of Oak Flat. Indigenous people will gather at Oak Flat to pray according to their ways. People of all faiths will join Apache Stronghold through prayer to confront the forces of destruction brought by Resolution Copper. **Will you come to pray at Oak Flat on 4 November?** Prepare yourself in prayer and plan your own transportation to this sacred site located an hour east of Phoenix, Arizona. Watch for more information about logistics, how to prepare, and tips/guidelines for guests on Apache land. For those that are unable to physically attend, Apache Stronghold also invites spiritually-grounded groups around the world to join the prayer-rising on 4 November from their own locations and to share their prayer actions via social media. Organize your spiritual community to pray with Oak Flat on 4 November! Join the resistance. **Read the message from the CPT Turtle Island Solidarity Network [here](#). Learn more about the Turtle Island Solidarity Network [here](#).**

Envisioning the future of MC USA climate justice initiatives



A webinar with Jennifer Halteman Schrock, Karla Stoltzfus Detweiler and Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz

 Sept 19, 2023

 7 PM ET/4 PM PT

 On Zoom



Join Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, denominational minister for Peace and Justice, as she discusses transitioning the work of Mennonite Creation Care Network with Jennifer Halteman Schrock, former director of Mennonite Creation Care Network, and Karla Stoltzfus Detweiler, Mennonite Church USA's new Climate Justice Coordinator. Register [here](#).



MCC Pipeline to Prison Learning Tour

November 1-3 in Goshen and Elkhart

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Pipeline to Prison Learning Tour: Join MCC Great Lakes for three days focusing on the complexities of the U.S. criminal justice system as seen in northern Indiana. Participants will learn about the systemic forces at play that have led to mass incarceration and the criminalization of marginalized groups. The group will hear diverse perspectives from community organizations and people experiencing arrest, incarceration and re-entry. More information and registration at [here](#).

Welcoming IDPs with water in DR Congo



On Mennonite Central Committee's podcast *Relief, Development and Podcast*, Reverend Antoine Kimbila, general secretary of the Community of Mennonite Brethren Churches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, shares about the needs of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Kikwit and how the church is supporting those who have been displaced by violence in Kasai. Listen and read a transcript [here](#).

INTRODUCING MCC's NEW WEBSITE **MCC.ORG**

-  EASIER TO USE
-  STORY-DRIVEN
-  MORE WAYS TO ACT



Podcast: Unarmed Resistance at NoWar2023

CPT members Rachelle Friesen and Randy Janzen join Rachel Small and Marc Eliot Stein for a wide-ranging discussion of how teams of trained and qualified civilian peacekeepers can provide badly-needed resistance in the most difficult crisis situations in the world, as well as what it means to enter war zones to assist some of the most vulnerable and oppressed communities around the world today. Listen [here](#).

A look into the Locust Loft



A look into the Locust Loft: An interview with Jonathan Fridley

If you've been to Camp Friedenswald in the past five years, it's likely that you either saw evidence of, or heard stories about, a new playground. During that time you might have wondered: what's taking so long? What's so complicated about a playground? What IS Jonathan Fridley up to? Turns out – quite a lot. Especially when the playground is being designed and constructed out of wood primarily harvested on-site. Building just about any other structure at Camp would have been more straightforward and less complex than the project that Jonathan Fridley, facilities director and designer of the playground, undertook when he set out to design and build a new playground for Camp Friedenswald. **Read an interview with Jonathan Fridley that illuminates the complexity, challenges, and joy that accompanied the playground project over the past few years [here](#).** You can also read the 2021 article printed in *The Friedensword* that introduced and gave a brief overview of the project [here](#).



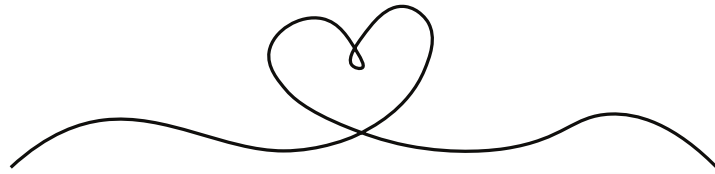
MCC Peace & Justice: Call to Action

From Mennonite Central Committee

Background: According to the World Food Program, as many as 783 million persons are unsure of where their next meal is coming from, and more than 750,000 are facing famine-like conditions. The global hunger crisis is deepening. Every five years, the United States government reauthorizes the Farm Bill, a piece of legislation designed to address both domestic and international food needs. An important part of the Farm Bill is the Food for Peace program, which addresses the root causes of global food insecurity and malnutrition and helps to build resilience in vulnerable communities. Another important tool to reduce hunger is the flexible cargo preference, which enables faster and more cost-effective delivery of life-saving food assistance. Finally, U.S. food assistance policies should support sustainable local food systems.

Faith reflection: Scripture admonishes us to “satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday” Isaiah 58:10 (NRSVA).

Action: Ask Congress to include strong funding for the Food for Peace program in the 2023 Farm Bill. **Find a template message and an easy way to send it [here](#).**



Our Members in Care Facilities

PLEASE REMEMBER THESE MEMBERS IN YOUR PRAYERS.
SEND A CARD IF THE SPIRIT LEADS YOU!

Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

Building Open

Standard Hours:

Monday, Wednesday-Friday 9AM-11AM
and Monday-Friday 1:30PM-3PM.

Lydia Hedberg:

Office Administrator; church@normalmennonite.org; 309-452-6622

Rita Munkakusi:

Custodian

Kevin Chupp:

Pastor for Outreach Commission, Worship Commission, Congregational Care Committee, and the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team;
kevin@normalmennonite.org

Lynette Miller:

Pastor for Discipling and Community Life Commissions

Ron Ropp:

Pastor for Pastoral Care

Lauren Satchwell:

Pastor for Vision Team & Administration Commission

Items for the Midweek



Please send items to be included in the Midweek to the [Church Office](#) no later than **8am on Wednesday**. Thank you!

Item Check-Out Request Form

[Google Form Version](#) & [Printable PDF Version](#)

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

[Work Order](#) & [Purchase Request](#)

Commissions and Teams Contact List

[Commissions and Teams Contact List](#)

Structure Documents

Updated structure documents, including ministry descriptions, vision statement with commission assignments for the goals, structure changes, and a list of individuals called to serve in the new structure, are available at this [link](#).

Please click [here](#) for past meeting and other recordings.

Commission Meeting Minutes

Click [this link](#) to be taken to a Google Drive folder which contains meeting minutes from each commission.