

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This week, Pastor Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Striven* using the scripture Genesis 32:[9-13] 22-30.

Jacob is injured while wrestling with a mysterious man and he persists until a blessing is given to him in the form of a name. There are a lot of unanswered questions about this scenario, but this is the origin of the name Israel—something central to our image of the Old Testament story. What does such stubborn grappling tell us as we think about the process and end of discernment?



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

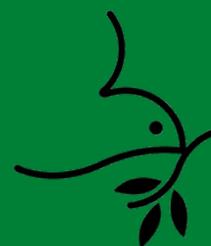
Children & Youth CE

Pre-K-K Grade

2nd-4th Grade

5th-8th Grade

High School



**Mennonite
Church
of Normal**

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

Help Us to reach our goal of 50 comforters

THIS Thursday, September 21 at 1pm at MCN.

Completion of Comforters will be held at the church this Thursday, Sept. 21 at 1pm. Please join us in continuing to knot comforters this Thursday. We can reach our goal of 50 comforters with everyone's help. A representative from MCC-Goshen will be in town with a trailer to pick up the completed quilts and school kits on September 27. Let's fill the trailer! 

From the Community Life Commission



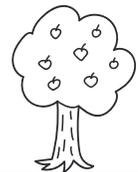
Midwest Food Bank

THIS 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!



THIS Saturday, September 23 between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM

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 between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. 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

There is still time to register and attend!

THIS 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.

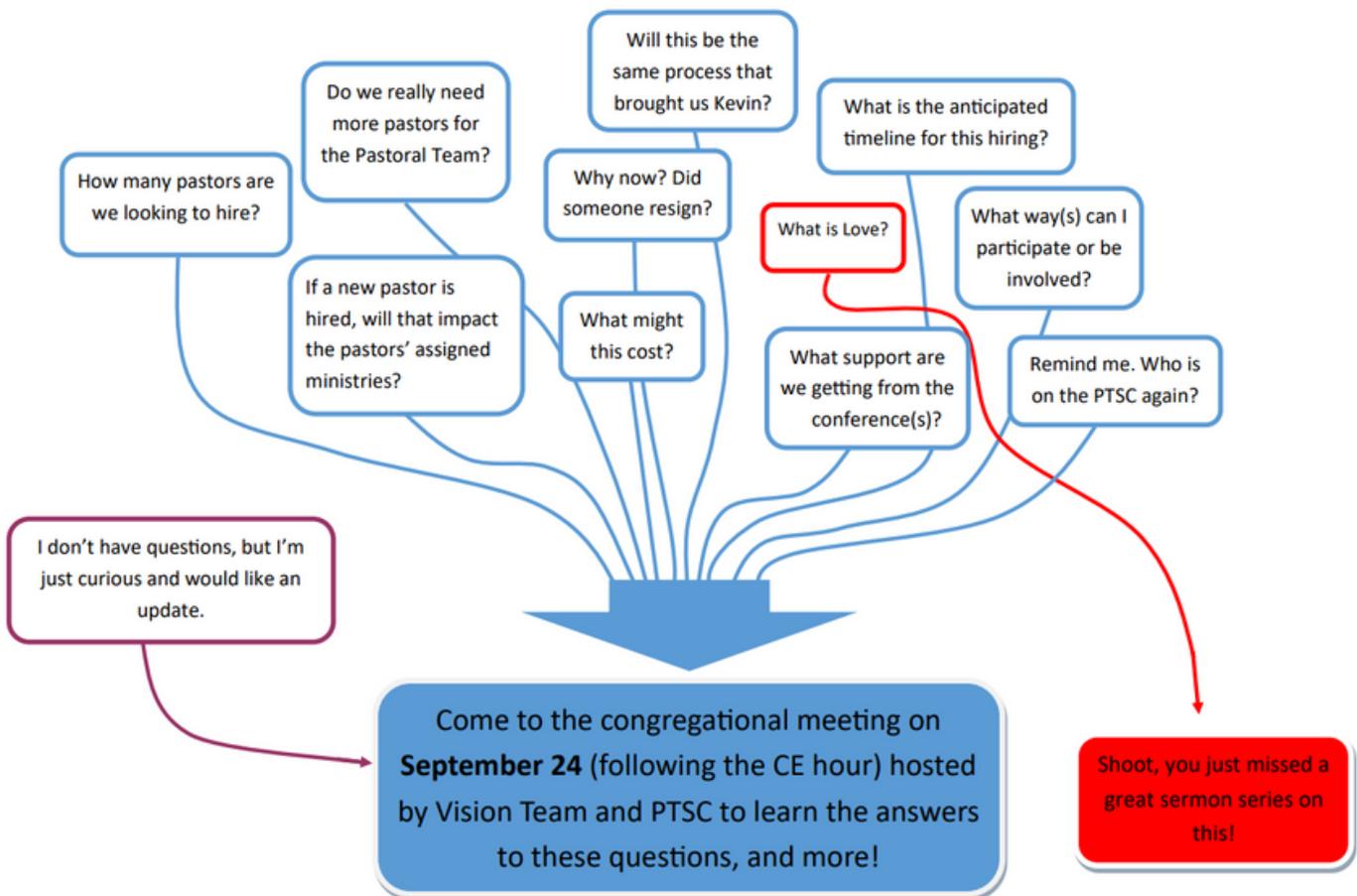
Following Jane's presentation, CLC will share more about the initial plan for Women's Ministry. Starting out, there will be two kinds of groups meeting. One is for Bible/book study and the other is for Sewing and more.

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

So you heard we may be hiring additional pastors.

Maybe you have questions.





Pastoral Team Philosophy of Ministry

Pastoral Team Philosophy of Ministry

The pastoral team seeks to serve Mennonite Church of Normal by offering leadership that is collaborative and invitational. We hope to facilitate the work of the Spirit by empowering the congregation to take part in the Christ-centered transformation of our community, inviting people to love Jesus in devotion and obedience as we seek to walk in step with his love.

In the spirit of the priesthood of all believers, we will cultivate an environment of discernment and trust, enabling all parts of the body to discern and respond to the Spirit's calling, and blessing them to chart the path for their work.

Consistent with our vision, we will prioritize the work of peacemaking, healing, and hope—holding ourselves accountable to how our ministry enables and embodies these things inside and outside the congregation.

And in tune with our welcome, we will celebrate the diversity of the gifts and stories that exist within our congregation and community, insisting that diversity nourishes and empowers us toward greater faithfulness. We will champion the stories of the marginalized and take on their cause as our own.

From the Pastoral Team

Visiting Scholar Housing



A visiting Chinese scholar in the History Department at ISU is looking for housing for the academic year. It could be a room with a family or an apartment. He was a grad student at ISU in the past, and his English is excellent. If you have any leads contact the History Department (309-438-5641) or Juergen Schroer. I met him at our neighborhood Ice Cream Social, and he is very cheerful and personable.

From Juergen Schroer



Sausage Sale Surprise

SAUSAGE SALE SURPRISE! The Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale will be taking orders for the purchase of link and bulk sausage **from October 15 through November 5**. Pick up will be on **Saturday, November 18** from 7:00 A.M. until 12:30 noon at First Mennonite Church of Morton. Complete ordering details will be forthcoming. Anyone desiring to donate a hog or having additional questions may contact Mike Yordy. Thank you in advance for your support of the Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale.

From Mrs. Ruthie Roth, IL Relief Sale Executive Secretary

MCC Comforter Bash Thank You



As the planning committee, Gerry Schrock, Deb Stenger, and Mary Ann Watkins, we are filled with gratitude when we look around the sanctuary and see the products of many months of planning and work on the part of many. The committee was assisted in the beginning by Nadine Zook Miller, Material Resource Coordinator, MCC Great Lakes, and Jennifer Steiner, Communications Coordinator, MCC Great Lakes. In addition, Sarah Fenton, Hopedale Mennonite Church, was very helpful in providing information on how the Hopedale Church organized their similar event earlier this year. We express our sincere thanks to them for giving us a great start.

We had a group of over 20 volunteers who met weekly from June 1 through last Friday, September 8. Under the excellent leadership of Gerry Schrock, they assembled over 30 comforter tops of the 40 completed comforters that are hanging around the sanctuary and fellowship area. Gerry has spent many additional hours on her own, both planning and assembling comforter tops. Other tops were made by individuals working in their own homes, and there were some donated by friends of our church.

On Friday and Saturday, September 15 and 16, there were over 50 women, men, and children participating in our church building doing the knotting, cutting, and sewing of beautiful comforter tops. Lunch and snack breaks were provided under the direction of Marge Weaver and volunteers Marianne Israel, Connie Satchwell, and Lynn Reha. Steve Stenger, Vivian Hubbard, and John Reimer worked vigorously to hang the comforters for our display in the sanctuary and surrounding the fellowship area. The display will continue to be hanging until it is taken down to send to MCC Great Lakes to be sent on to the Ukraine and other areas of need.

There were a large number of individuals from Mennonite Church of Normal who participated in some way. There were donors who helped make this event successful through their financial donations and the donations of Comforter tops. These include Mennonite Church of Normal Outreach Commission, private financial donors, donors of comforter tops, and financial donations received from participants on the two days of the event. We are deeply grateful for the participation of many and without this collective help, this project would not have been possible.

Our participation in the MCC Comforter Bash will go a long way in helping MCC in meeting its goal of 56,000 blankets, for the Ukraine and other areas of need, by the end of 2023. **A handmade comforter provides not only warmth but also a tangible message to people that their needs are not forgotten.**

From the Community Life Commission



Vision Team Update

Your Vision Team met on September 13. Following the meeting, Vision Team (VT) has the following items to share with the congregation:

- We received reports on the activities of the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (SGDT), the Pastoral Team (PT), and the Commissions and identified ways we can support them.
- We discussed plans for format and presentation of the congregational meeting on September 24 regarding the proposed plan to hire additional pastors to the Pastoral Team.
- We discussed the anticipated expenses for which the Vision Team has oversight that would make it into the 2024 Spending Plan.
- We discussed drafted revisions to the church constitution and congregation objectives which are being done following the implementation and evaluation of the church structure.
- We shared updates from our quarterly check-ins with the chairs of the commissions.
- Find Vision Team meeting minutes and resource documents in the [Vision Team folder on Google Drive](#).

From the Vision Team

Peace & Justice Statements on Christian Nationalism, pt 3

In 2016, I was dumbfounded to hear someone in my congregation say, "I don't understand it, but I guess God got the man he wanted." I had never heard a Christian express so clearly that they believed that The United States was somehow under God's direction. Added to that, I always thought it was clear that Anabaptists sort of invented the separation of church and state. In response, in worship we spent several months going through the book of Daniel, inviting us to greater faithfulness by learning to view all nations as occupying powers in God's creation. Later on, I was encouraged by and joined the list of signers of the statement by "Christians Against Christian Nationalism," and I made sure that statement was publicly visible in the congregation. It includes the line: "Conflating religious authority with political authority is idolatrous and often leads to oppression of minority and other marginalized groups as well as the spiritual impoverishment of religion" (you can read the full statement [here](#)). The organization has made themselves a visible counter-witness against Christian National movements such as the "ReAwaken America" group. You can find out the latest about them [here](#).

Submitted by Pastor Kevin Chupp for the Outreach Commission



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



Apple Pie Coordinator

Outreach Commission is in search of a volunteer to coordinate and volunteers to make the apple pie filling from Eric and Chellie Miller's apples for the MCC Relief Sale Pies. If you are interested, please contact Phil Dick or Eric Miller. Gerry Schrock has coordinated this in past years but cannot do it this time. This will need to be done pretty soon!

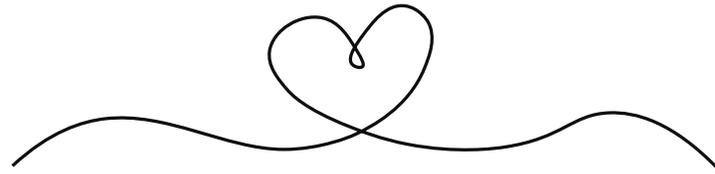
From the Outreach Commission

Did You Know?



- Vivian Hubbard and Nancy Fisher spend hours in the church putting up decorations at the change of each season. We thank them for their beautiful work!

From the Administration Commission



Prayer Requests and Announcements

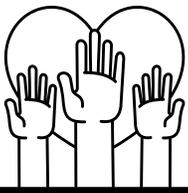
Sharing of Joys and Concerns have returned to open mic sharing during the services. Please send announcements to Lauren Satchwell so that these can be shared by the worship leader during the Community Life portion of the service. When sharing, it's helpful if your requests are succinct. This is true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



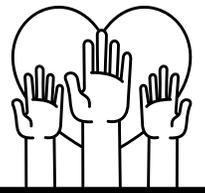
Sharing of Joys and Concerns



MCCN 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



Those Serving This Week



South Greeters: Gabriella & David Harnish family

West Greeter: Phylis VerSteegh

Welcome Table: Mary Dyck

Ushers: King family

Offering Counter: Lotus Hershberger

Worship Planner & Leader: Joe Culpepper

Sharing Prayer Leader: Kevin Chupp

Children's Story: Louise Reeser

Scripture Reader: Liz Imhoff

Technology: Adam Augspurger & Ryan Miller

Song Leader: Cindy Ropp

Accompaniment: Lydia Hedberg

Prelude & Postlude: Glenn Wilson

Infant Nursery – during worship:

Infant Nursery – during CE:

Preschool Nursery:

Gather Round:

Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Thursday, September 21

5:00pm Midwest Food Bank Volunteering

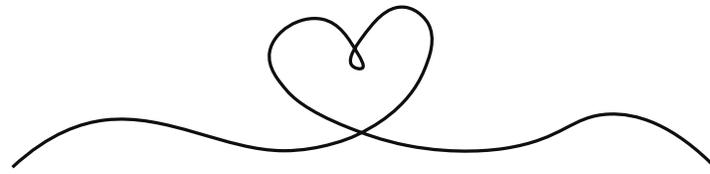
1:00pm Comforter Completion at MCN

Saturday, September 23

10:00am Women's Ministry Kick-Off Event

Sunday, September 24

12:00pm Vision Team Q&A



MENNO HAVEN'S FALL WORK DAY

Saturday, October 28, 2023

MENNO HAVEN DEPENDS ON
& GREATLY APPRECIATES
THE HARD WORK OF
VOLUNTEERS LIKE YOU

Note: meet at
Eagle Wing Activity Center



POSSIBLE PROJECTS

- Mulching at High Ropes
- Splitting Firewood
- Winterizing Flowerbeds
- Gathering Rocks for Fire Rings
- Clearing Trails
- Processing a Mailing

SCHEDULE

8:00 - Breakfast & Devos
(at Eagle Wing Activity Center)

8:30 - Begin Projects
Lunch

Resume Projects
4:00 - Clean Up



RSVP at www.mennohaven.com/work-day, call 815-255-4649
or email sheena@mennohaven.com

Mennonite Public Educators

“Being a Mennonite in public ed”

The first of four Zoom meetings

Thurs., Oct. 12, 2023 - 7pm Eastern

RSVPs are required to share the Zoom link. RSVP [here](#).

join us!

info@MennoniteEducation.org

Let's have real discussions of what it means to live out our faith (or not) in the public schools. What do you do about the pledge of allegiance? What other issues stand in the way of peaceful witness in our schools?

These Zoom meetings are for people who ascribe to a Mennonite faith and currently teach/work in a Public School setting. There is no cost to join the conversation, but registration is required to share the Zoom link. RSVP [here](#).

Energy & Spirit Challenge



Climate change, biodiversity loss, plastic pollution, chemical spills...Now, more than ever, all creation is groaning. But we are not powerless and we are not alone. God loves to work with us and through us!

A friendly competition to:

- ~Embrace our calling as earth keepers
- ~Reduce carbon footprints
- ~Nurture environmental leadership
- ~Utilize and bless youth and young adult gifts

Mennonite Creation Care Network is challenging people in Generation Z to respond to environmental needs between July 1, 2023 and April 15, 2024 in one of these two categories:

Energy - Reduce carbon emissions in your church building, congregation or local community and estimate how much carbon the measures you take will save.

Spirit - Many problems involving people and planet don't fit the energy category or are not easily measured with a carbon calculator. Follow the Holy Spirit's leading in response to one of these. Creating a pollinator garden, addressing a food desert, or helping to clean up after a natural disaster are just a few examples.

This challenge is open to groups both large and small and winners will receive a cash prize to use towards an outdoor experience that nourishes participants' relationship with creation. **Read more about eligibility, rules, and prizes [here](#). Participants enrolling in a college for the 2024-25 school year must be registered by October 15, 2023 to be included.**



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 at Heather.Huckstadt@heartland.edu.

Accessible Gardening



Accessible Gardening: creating spaces in nature for all.

The first image that comes to mind when the word gardener is mentioned might not be a grower in a wheelchair tending to seedlings, people with walkers watering plants, or people with other disabilities working with the land. But why not? On most farms, gardens, and public natural spaces, accessibility isn't a given; the terrain may be rough, and universal design is not always considered. When it comes to growing food or other plants, doing so directly in the ground can make participation seem like an impossibility for people with various disabilities. Being able to enjoy outdoor gardens and landscapes without assistance come down to design. The social model of disability suggests that disability is a result of one's environment, both physical and social. This environment creates handicaps and barriers, not the disability. So the way to address disability is to change the environment and society, rather than people with disabilities. In many places, breaking down barriers between people and the natural environment through universal design is priority, whether just to enjoy proximity to nature or be a part of tending to it. I work at Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO). Classes and guests are invited to Seminary Hill Farm, which produces food for our dining hall, CSAs, and local food security partners. As a disability advocate and ADA coordinator, making interactions with the land as accessible as possible is a priority. When Rabbi Julia Watts Belser, a passionate wheelchair hiker, avid gardener, and a lover of wild places, came to campus to offer a lecture, we visited the greenhouse full of seedlings and began to dream with the farmer about varying heights of raised beds and interspersed seating areas. A talented fellow churchgoer, Ron Headings, worked to put our dreams for a universally designed garden area at MTSO into action. An AmeriCorps team plus volunteers and leaders from the nearby Stratford Ecological center also worked to build accessible beds that await placement in an area outside the dining area, where some of the food will be eaten and shared. MTSO staff are currently working to finish the project. High school students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who intern on campus will be among the first to try out the new garden. Take stock of the green or lack of accessible green space near your church or organization. What creative strategies could you employ? **Find resources for creating accessible gardens and read Kathy Dickson's article in Anabaptist Disabilities Network's *Connections* newsletter [here](#).**



Find reading recommendations from Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT) below:

- [CPT expresses concerns of unjust sentencing in Sherwani case](#)
- [Pylos Shipwreck: Timeline and archive of a tragedy that could have been avoided](#)
- [CPT Report of Civilian Casualties of Turkish Bombardments in Northern Iraq in 2022](#)
- [For the Women's World Cup, Politics Is a Part of the Brand](#)
- [Palestinians call on Imagine Dragons to skip apartheid Israel concert](#)
- [#SearchTheLandfill: Indigenous Women are Not Disposable.](#)
- [Top Medical Journals Publish Unprecedented Joint Call for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.](#)
- [The Queer Fighters on the Frontlines in Ukraine.](#)
- [Occupation is not an inevitability.](#)
- [Indigenous resistance challenges Ontario's 'mining boom'](#)

First Openly Queer Minister Ordained in Mennonite Church Canada

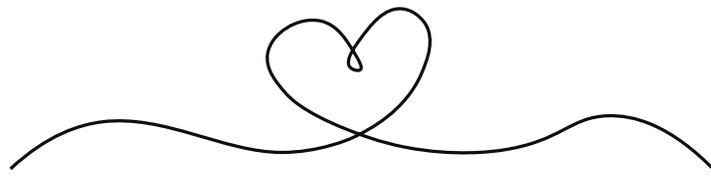


In June, Carrie Lehn was ordained at Ottawa Mennonite Church in Ontario, becoming the first openly queer minister in Mennonite Church Canada. We rejoice with Pastor Carrie and all who are blessed by this significant sign of public visibility! Read about Pastor Carrie's ordination [here](#).

**MENNONITES
AGAINST
MILITARISM**

POTC announces steering committee action

Peaceful Options for Training and Careers (POTC) — formerly known as Alternatives to Military Enlistment Network (AMEN) — has formed a steering committee, recruited volunteers and began its work to counter the recruitment of youth by the U.S. military. POTC is an independent initiative that began as an outgrowth of a collaboration between Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Church USA. The new steering committee is working on initiatives ranging from fundraising to providing tangible ways for young adults to participate. The steering committee members are Kat Brennen, Jes Stoltzfus Buller, Anne Meyer Byler, Max Lewis, Mike Martin, Mícheál McEvoy, Titus Peachey, Joe Roos, Fred Suter and Marlin Yoder. The steering committee gathered 10 potential counselors for orientation to POTC. Plans for future work include launching a new website, counseling, and fundraising. **Read more about the new steering committee [here](#). Learn about the origin of POTC [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 Commissions

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.