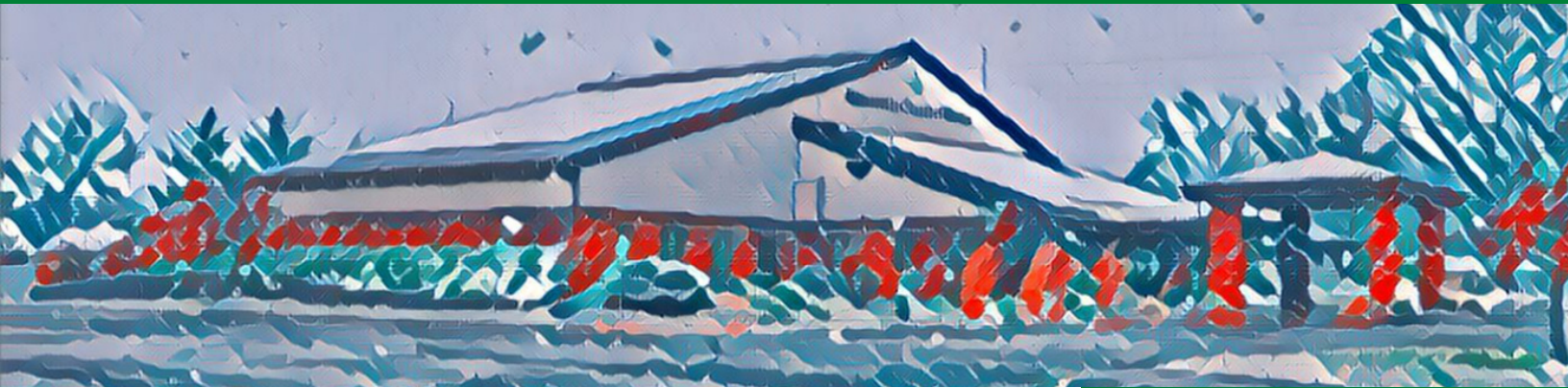


# THE MIDWEEK



## WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This week, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled Jeers in the Desert based on Jeremiah 33:10-11, 14-18.

Hope is something that only exists when things are not as they could be, and hope is only useful if it actually reaches the eyes, ears, and hearts of those who need it. Jeremiah calls attention to hope when a positive outcome seems most unlikely. How can we, like Jeremiah, listen for and proclaim hope even as we attend to the present reality of pain and brokenness?



## 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

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

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



**Mennonite  
Church  
of Normal**

A congregation of  
Mennonite Church USA



## Advent Ensemble

**Performance: Sunday, December 17th during the service**

**Rehearsals: Saturday, December 2nd and 16th**

If you are still interested in playing with the Advent Ensemble, it's not too late! Our first rehearsal is **this Saturday!** We will rehearse again on 12/16 and perform during the service on 12/17. Please email me at church@normalmennonite.org or call 309-452-6622 if you are interested in joining the ensemble but haven't signed up. All instruments and playing levels are welcome. I look forward to playing with you!

--Lydia Hedberg

## Journey Groups



**This Sunday, December 3rd**

The winter quarter for our Journey Group classes begins on December 3rd. This means we will again be swapping books among groups, so as soon as you are finished with your current book, please return it to the Conference Room so that it can be used by others in the upcoming quarter.

**Journey Group A** (20's and 30's) will be reading *How to Fight Racism* by Jemar Tisby. Amy Reiman will be facilitating for the month of December. **Group A will meet in the conference room beginning this Sunday.**

**Journey Group B** (40's and 50's) will be reading *To Be Made Well* by Amy Julia Becker. Plan on picking up your copy on December 3rd and meeting briefly to review the reading plan for the quarter. **Group B will meet in the first office beginning this Sunday.**

**Journey Group C** (60's and above) will be reading *What is the Church and Why does it Exist?* by David Fitch. Copies will be available to pick up on December 3rd.

*From the Discipling Commission*



## Alternative Gift Fair Inserts

The inserts for your selected projects have been put in your mailbox in the church foyer. If you need more or different inserts please contact Mark Hodel. Again thank you for your participation.

*From the Outreach Commission*



## Periodical Renewals

It's that time of year again -- periodical subscription renewals! Each year the church organizes a group subscription to three Mennonite publications: [Rejoice!](#) (a quarterly devotional) by Menno Media for \$35.54, [The Upper Room Daily Devotional](#) (delivered quarterly) for \$9, and [Anabaptist World](#) (16 issues) for \$39. This gives everyone the opportunity to subscribe to these publications with a discounted rate through the church office. If you would like to **renew, begin, or end** a subscription to one or more of these publications, please contact Lydia in the church office at 309-452-6622 or [church@normalmennonite.org](mailto:church@normalmennonite.org) **before next Monday, December 4th.**

*From the church office*



## Interfaith Thanksgiving Service in Bloomington

The second annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service in Bloomington was once again a meaningful event! We are grateful to have celebrated gratitude across Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Unitarian traditions. The offering raised \$1,523 to be sent to [Mid Central Community Action](#) to address the needs of the unhoused in our community. You can view a recording [here](#) if you missed this service.

*From the Outreach Commission*

## Doll Dress Sale



A big thank you to Lois Jett who generously donated her beautiful, handcrafted doll dresses, and to all of the eager shoppers who bought them. The sale raised \$895 for our youth!

*From Pastor Kevin Chupp*



## CDC Connector

The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). This issue includes stories about chaplaincy and rituals, building community and solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters, a review of *The Peace Table Bible*, and Doug's Mug on our new CDC theme. If you would like a paper copy, they will be available on the Library Table soon.

# Moro Moro Scholarship Fund



Friends - Many are my blessings. Here is one of them...the 2023 Moro Moro Scholarship Fund fundraiser letter. My father and friends started this fund to help students from his home town in rural Bolivia attend college. Please take a closer look and make a tax deductible contribution if you feel it. Extra copies are on the table in the main entryway (the narthex). Thanks! 🤗✌️🇺🇸🇧🇴🇪🇺🇨🇦

- [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MZsC6dVagsc4aYWVBvWEqXvcQtjDGR-T/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MZsC6dVagsc4aYWVBvWEqXvcQtjDGR-T/view?usp=drive_link)
- <https://www.facebook.com/moromoroscholarshipfund?mibextid=LQQJ4d>
- Check or Venmo

*From Doug Valverde*

## Update from Vision Team



Vision Team would like to share a few items from its November 15 meeting:

- We discussed the input about Vision Team's part (mainly expenses for the Pastoral Team) of the 2024 church spending plan. We decided to move forward with the proposal we presented, recognizing that adjustments will probably need to be made.
- We talked about first steps in the congregational visioning process that we are planning for 2024.
- We confirmed that we will wait to propose updates to the constitution until 2024.
- We received reports about the ministries of the other Teams and the Commissions, identifying ways that we can support them.

*From the Vision Team*

\$11,032

## SMAP Update

\$0



\$24,500

We are approaching the second payment for college students attending Mennonite Schools. Our current balance is \$11,032 and we will need \$24,500 by the end of December for the next semester starting in January 2024. Donations can be placed in the offering plate (memo line: SMAP) or online [here](#). Please reach out to Darvis King with any questions. Thank you for your continued support and pledges for this program!

*From Darvis King*





## Hosting in Homes

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We have been talking about doing a Homes for the Holidays tour of homes but have decided instead to invite interested individuals in the Congregation to be a part of Hosting in Homes. You may remember that Hosting in Homes was initiated during the summer months by CLC as a way of working toward one of our Congregational Goals for 2023. The process includes a host from the Congregation extending an invitation to the Congregation inviting a specified number of people to gather in fellowship for a meal or other activity in the home of the host.

For those who are interested in hosting in your home in December, contact the church office with your invitation, including the date and time that you have selected for hosting for the holidays in the month of December. Your invitation can then be included in Midweek with a link for use in signing up by persons interested in coming to your home. If you have questions, please contact Deb Stenger or Mary Ann Watkins.

*From the Community Life Commission and Fellowship Committee*

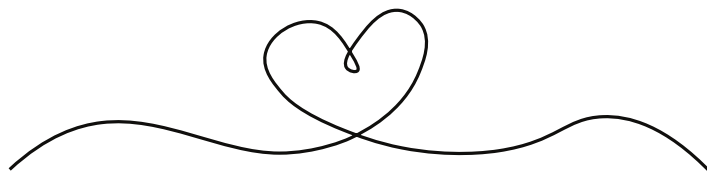
## Did You Know?



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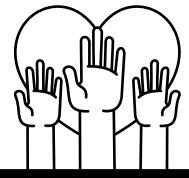
Did you know that a member of vision team also works with the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team? Shelly King has transitioned off of SGDT and Ben Roeschley will now be serving in that role.

*From the Administration Commission*





# Those Serving This Week



**South Greeters:** Caleb Augspurger & Lotus Hershberger

**West Greeter:** Nancy Fisher

**Welcome Table:** Gail Fisher

**Ushers:** Neely family

**Offering Counter:** Stephanie Company

**Worship Planner & Leader:** Marge Weaver

**Sharing Prayer Leader:** Lauren Satchwell

**Children's Story:** Gail Fisher

**Scripture Reader:**

**Technology:** Jaron & Rick Harnish

**Song Leader:** Cindy Ropp

**Accompaniment, Prelude, & Postlude:** Dorothy Loepp

**Infant Nursery - during worship:** Open for parents

**Infant Nursery - during CE:** Courtney Yoder

**Preschool Nursery:** Alexandra

## *This Week at MCN*



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

### **Wednesday, November 29**

**9:30am** Wednesday Morning Book Group

### **Thursday, November 30**

**7:00am** Next Man Bible Study

**9:00am** Brave and Beloved: Women's Bible Study

**6:30pm** Administration Commission (Zoom)

**7:00pm** Discipling Commission (Zoom)

### **Friday, December 1**

**Morning** Office Closed

### **Saturday, December 2**

**9:00am** Worship Commission (Zoom)

**3:00pm** Christmas Ensemble Rehearsal

### **Sunday, December 3**

**11:00am** Blood Pressure Checks

**7:00pm** Advent Choir

### **Tuesday, December 4**

**5:00pm** Outreach Commission

### **Tuesday, December 5**

**3:00pm** Pastoral Team (Zoom)

### **Wednesday, December 6**

**9:30am** Wednesday Morning Book Group

*Birthdays & Anniversaries*  
CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN

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*Sharing of Joys and Concerns*



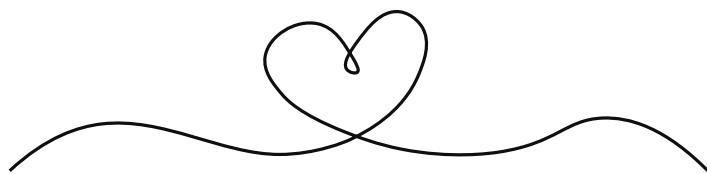
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MCN IS ASKED TO BE IN CONTINUED PRAYER FOR FOR THE TOP ADMINISTRATORS AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM CARLE BROMENN MEDICAL CENTER—OUR PARTNER IN HEALING FOR 2023

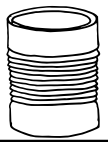
*Prayer Requests and Announcements*

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Sharing of Joys and Concerns have returned to open mic sharing during the services. Please send Lauren Satchwell your announcements 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.



# Freeport Mennonite Church Meat Canning



**December 11th-14th**

As Mennonite Central Committee's 77th year of meat canning begins, Freeport Mennonite Church has partnered with MCC for the 71st year. We couldn't be more excited to invite others to join us in this unique mission project. This project is open to anyone and everyone: businesses, school groups, churches, civic organizations, families, and individuals. If you or anyone you know would like to help stamp out hunger, we will be canning December 11th-14th (Monday-Thursday) at Freeport Mennonite Church, 3416 E Brick School Rd., Freeport, IL 61032. If you don't have time to help, consider giving your financial support by mailing a check to Freeport Mennonite Church at the above address with Meat Canning in the memo. We encourage you to be a part of this year's canning project. Some canning shifts fill up fast, so you will want to call and sign up for a shift early before they are filled. Call 815-291-6382 to sign up. Again, this year, we have online sign-up/scheduling for shifts [here](#). View a flyer [here](#).

*From Freeport Mennonite Church*

## Beyond Trauma Care

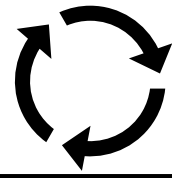


*MCC Great Lakes partners learn to practice self-care.*

Renee Dodson loves her role as director of employment services at Lexington Rescue Mission in Kentucky. But last year she started to feel the signs of burn-out and knew she needed to make some changes. The launch of a new co-hort program from MCC Great Lakes came at just the right time. "Beyond Trauma Care: Care and Concern for Yourself" is bringing together MCC partners from throughout the Great Lakes region to practice self-care with the help of trauma healing facilitators, spiritual directors and lots of personal practice. For Dodson, the co-hort has been a lifeline. "2022 was an extremely hard year personally and then also professionally," she said. Three of her clients passed away due to overdose or suicide, and two other individuals she had placed in jobs had relapses and violent outbursts. "I kept thinking, 'What have I done wrong?' The exhaustion was really hard." The co-hort has been an answer to Dodson's prayers. "MCC has been able to bless my soul is the best way to put it," she says. "The topics and support that they're giving literally brought tears to my eyes. It's such a gift. I really appreciate how it has been a blessing to me personally - that MCC is doing this and investing in people's lives that are helping other people. It's been life changing." **Read the full article by Jennifer Steiner for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

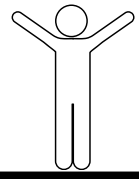


## Sacred endings, beginnings



*Below is an excerpt from Jim Shenk's reflection on green burials for Mennonite Men.* On March 29, we gathered for a graveside service to honor the life of a beloved Akron Mennonite Church member, Priscilla Ziegler. This would be unlike traditional interments. We waited expectantly for immediate family and Priscilla's shroud-wrapped body to arrive. Few of the 250 family and friends had experienced this kind of green burial and its intimacy. Upon arrival, guests were handed a short description of green burials, written by Priscilla's husband, Don. During the reading of a poem, family members gently lowered Priscilla's body into the 5-foot-deep earthen grave. While a violist played sacred tunes, we were invited to approach the grave and drop fresh-cut flowers and a note of blessing or memory. The flowers and notes thickly blanketed Priscilla's body. Participants were touched by this sacred graveside experience. Many said, "This is what I want." The possibility of green burials in the Akron Mennonite Church cemetery grew out of conversations inspired by end-of-life workshops more than a decade ago. Don Ziegler, Jerry Shank and Dick Leaman designed an eight-session curriculum and led discussion for the more than 100 people who participated. Upon learning more about what happens to the human body when embalmed and the consequences for the soil and groundwater, many participants considered more environmentally friendly alternatives. A few of us advocated for green burials as an option in the church cemetery. Some wished to be buried in a biodegradable container such as a shroud, seagrass basket or simple pine casket. Our cemetery trustees learned that in Pennsylvania there is no legal requirement for a vault. Such requirements are individual cemetery rules, primarily to prevent settling of earth for easier maintenance. It did not take long for the trustees, led by Glenn Weaver, to approve green burials without vaults. Our cemetery is only the second in Lancaster County to offer this option. Glenn and his wife, Anne, led the way by making their own plans for shroud burial. The original idea of a memorial garden shifted to a focus on a nature preserve connected to our cemetery space. It would be a place where life and death are experienced holistically, symbolized in the chrysalis and the butterfly. The congregation affirmed this refocusing. What began as a conversation about end-of-life has evolved into a life-giving initiative that offers opportunities for coming generations. **Read Jim Shenk's full reflection published by Mennonite Men [here](#).**

## *I have felt welcomed here*



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*Below is an excerpt from Naun Cerrato's article "I Have Felt Welcomed Here" published by Mennonite Mission Network (MMN). Cerrato is Constituent Engagement Representative at MMN.*

Hispanic Heritage Month began in the United States in 1968 as a week-long observance and was extended to a full month in 1988. As a Hispanic Mennonite pastor, working for Mennonite Mission Network gives me the opportunity to practice my Mennonite faith freely, which is a gift that I cannot take for granted. The freedom that I have as a Mennonite pastor has given me the motivation to start missions that can help the Hispanic community. With a missional focus on being able to listen and see what God is already doing in our local community, I can see how Hispanic churches relate with Mission Network's mission and vision, which is to equip the church to walk with the local community. For example, Mission Network has been helping the Hispanic community by supporting local projects. One of these projects is [Piedra Viva \(Living Stone\) Mennonite Church](#) in Elkhart, Indiana. This church focuses on peace, reconciliation and community-building. Another project is the podcast "[Un Momento De Anabautismo](#)," which was created out of the desire to make a communication channel in which Hispanic people could have a space to share their thoughts. Finally, one of the things I have valued at Mission Network is the way we cultivate peace through looking for ways to counteract violence in Latin American countries. **Read Naun Cerrato's full article [here](#).**



## *Blessing at the parting of ways*

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*Anabaptist World's Paul Schrag recently published a two-part series on past and current withdrawals from Mennonite Church USA conference.*

- Read "**Blessing at the parting of ways: when churches separate, it's time to model diversity with grace**" [here](#).
- Read "**Subtractions add up: when congregations choose new spiritual kin, even centuries-long relationships end**" [here](#).



## Advent at Home 2023

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The Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) Advent at Home 2023 publication is now available. Taken from Leader magazine's Advent theme, "How will we know?" this worship guide accompanies individuals and families through the days and weeks of Advent through Epiphany with scriptures, prayers, worship rituals, suggested activities, and contextual information. The guide is available as a free download in English and Spanish from the MEA website [here](#).

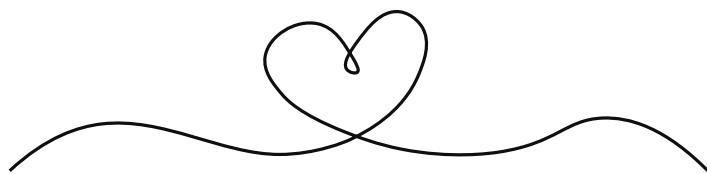


## Formation across generations at AMBS

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*Read the introduction to an interview with Mary Schertz on "Our Lives as Scholars" published by the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) below.*

On Aug. 16, 2023, the AMBS learning community celebrated a monumental achievement by [Mary H. Schertz](#), PhD, Professor Emerita of New Testament: the release of her [commentary on the Gospel of Luke](#) as part of the Herald Press Believers Church Bible Commentary series. AMBS employees, students, former colleagues of Mary's, and members of local congregations gathered to congratulate her and to listen to an in-depth interview of Mary by [Jackie Wyse-Rhodes](#), PhD, Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible, on "Our Lives as Scholars." The event took place during the orientation week for the seminary's newest group of students. As one of Mary's former students at AMBS, Jackie noted that Mary's mentoring represented a turning point in her life as a scholar. Mary, in turn, was mentored by a previous generation of faculty members during her studies at AMBS. Indeed, this scholarship and mentoring are integral parts of a long tradition of communal Christian scholarship at the seminary. AMBS forms leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world by continuing this tradition, inviting new students into the scholarly conversation and enlarging their understanding of the Bible and its context as well as implications of the Christian message for our lives in the world. **Read more and watch a video of the interview shared by Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary [here](#).**



# Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

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Building Open:     **Standard Hours:**  
Monday, Wednesday-Friday 9AM-11AM  
and Monday-Friday 1:30PM-3PM.

**Upcoming Changes:**  
**Closed:** Friday 12/1 in the morning

Lydia Hedberg:     Office Administrator; [church@normalmennonite.org](mailto: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](mailto: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

## *Our Members in Care Facilities*

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

## *Items for the Midweek*



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

### *Commissions and Teams Contact List*

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### *Work Order & Purchase Request Forms*

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

### *Item Check-Out Request Form*

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

### *Commission Meeting Minutes*

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

### *Structure Documents*

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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.