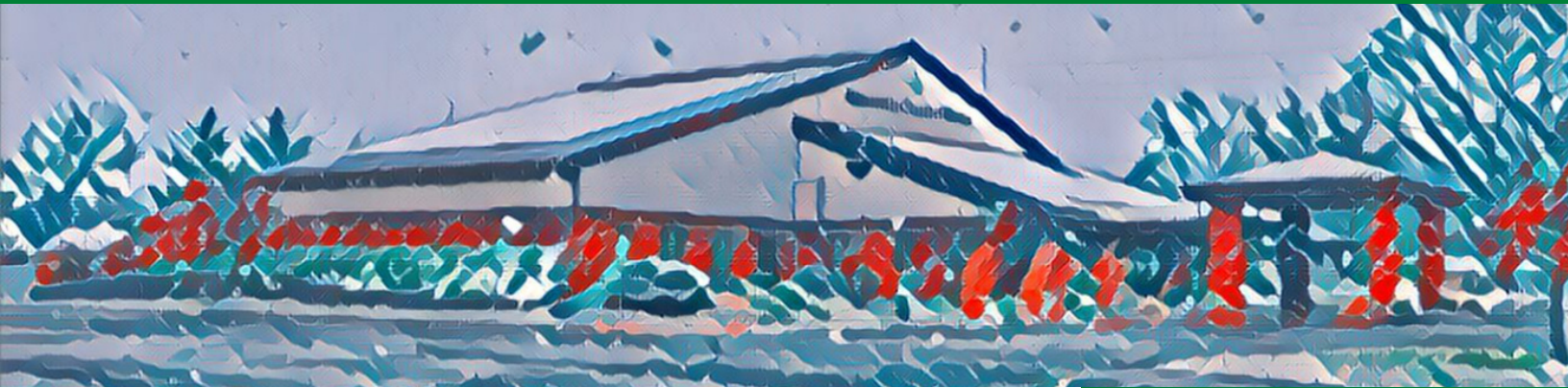


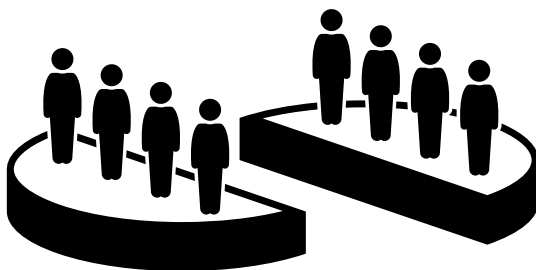
THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This week, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled Lazuli Blues based on Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13.

The Israelites are empowered by a new emperor to return from exile to Jerusalem and rebuild. As the altar and the foundation of the temple are constructed, the Israelites are not all on the same page--some are offering shouts of joy and others are weeping. Why the discrepancy? What do we do when our hopes do not coincide with others in our community?



After Worship

Adult CE

Journey Groups:
Group A (20's-30's)
Conference Room

Group B (40's-50's)
Room 4

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



MYF and MYF Caroling

Friday, December 15th

All junior high and high schoolers are invited to a simple meal at church on Friday, December 15th. Following the meal we will be caroling to the MRC residents, and then finishing up back at church with cookies and hot chocolate. **Please RSVP to Shelly King by today, December 13th so we can get a count for the meal.**

Peace & Justice in Israel and Palestine



December 19th

I attended a mass zoom meeting of Mennonite Action on Tuesday, November 28th where I was introduced to Mennonite Action along with 800 other Mennonites who attend over 200 Mennonite Churches in the US and Canada. Mennonite Action is a movement of Mennonites bonded by a common belief that we have a responsibility to use our voices as powerfully as possible for the cause of peace and justice. It is mobilizing fellow Mennonites and Anabaptists across the United States and Canada to use creative nonviolent actions to demand a ceasefire, end the US and western funded occupation of Palestine, and build for a lasting peace.

[Mennonite Day of Action for a Ceasefire:](#) December 19: On December 19, Mennonites across Canada and the US will hold demonstrations at their representatives' offices to ask them to support a ceasefire. Over 200 Mennonites from 93 different congregations have already signed up to participate. [Sign up now to get involved.](#) (Use this link to sign up.) The Outreach Commission requests that you participate in this event.

In Peace, Phil Dick, Chair, Outreach Commission



Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24th

MCN will have both a standard worship service at 9:30 am and a Christmas Eve service at 6:30 pm on December 24, 2023. The Christmas Eve service will feature lessons & carols, special music, a meditation by Pastor Kevin, and candlelight.

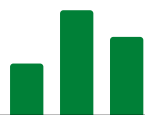
MCN will not have a longest night service this year, but we look forward to partnering ecumenically and will make that information available when it is received.



January 26-28, 2024

EVERYONE is invited to a weekend of fellowship and fun at camp, January 26-28! Friedenswald is a beautiful retreat with large, comfortable, warm lodges for us to stay in. Whether you're looking for social time or solitude, there's something for everyone! Activities for the weekend can include sledding, tubing, hiking, relaxing, eating, cross country skiing, reading, games, worship, fellowship, and more! For more details (including notes on cost and an important note about meals), and to sign up, please click [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Shelly and Darvis King.

Sponsored by the Fellowship Committee



Spending Plan Update

Spending Plan Status as of November 30, 2023

Shared by the Administration Commission

Update from Vision Team



The Vision Team (VT) met December 6 on Zoom. We were glad to have join us for the first time to get oriented to VT before she officially joins in January. This was Barry Weaver's last meeting as a member and chair of VT. The team offered their deep gratitude to Barry for his hard work and gracious leadership over the past 2 1/2 years, and we prayed for the many transitions we and the congregation continue to face. We heard updates from the Pastoral Team, the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team, and each commission. We continued discussions toward finalizing the VT's portion of the spending plan for submission to the congregation. We made plans for the Annual Congregational Meeting which will take place after church on January 21 (both in person and over Zoom) at 1 pm. VT will meet next on January 10. Shelly King will begin her role as chair at that time. You can find VT meeting minutes and resource documents in the VT folder [here](#).

From the Vision Team

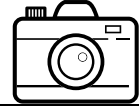


Missing Steamer

MCN's new handheld steamer (used for decorations) has gone missing. Please contact the church office at church@normalmennonite.org or 309-452-6622 if you have any information about.

From the church office

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 the church office at church@normalmennonite.org. We're all eager to see how you are serving in your community!

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



A Note from Roelie

Mary and Bob Kauffman, Doris Shoemaker, Lois Jett and Roelie Homan like to thank the Church for the beautiful poinsettias we received. We appreciated that very much. We also like to thank Deb Stenger and Mary Ann Watkins for their visits along with the poinsettias which brightened our days.

From Roelie Homan



A Note from Dorothy

Thank you to Cindy and the congregation for the many kind words and reflections shared with me last Sunday. Our long musical journey together in this congregation has been very meaningful and inspirational for me and has blessed me greatly. *Peace and love, Dorothy Loepf*

Donate to the Mitten Tree

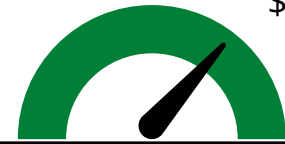


The Community Life Commission along with the Fellowship Committee are asking for donation of children's mittens and adult gloves (size med and large). These mittens and gloves will be given to Home Sweet Home Mission for distribution to those in need. Please help to assist in keeping our community warm this winter. You may place your donation on the tree inside the church atrium. We will deliver the mittens and gloves during the week between Christmas and New Years. Any questions contact Deb Stenger or MaryAnn Watkins co-chairs. Thank you!

From Community Life Commission (CLC) and Fellowship Committee

SMAP Update

\$0



\$17,283

\$24,500

"The entire educational experience at Bluffton College, among teachers and friends, helped me to develop a philosophy of life based upon the biblical teachings of Christ. The concepts of peace, justice, reconciliation, and love for one's fellow beings came from these experiences. There I also learned of God's power in the scientific world which helped me as a physician." -Dr. John Stuzman

Our very own, John, sums it up perfectly. This is the value of a Mennonite/Anabaptist liberal arts education. My four years at Bluffton University were foundational to my profession, faith, and relationships. SMAP was created so students in our congregation could access continued learning through an Anabaptist lens. Please consider giving back or giving forward to SMAP to keep this opportunity possible.

From Leah Roeschley

We are approaching the second payment for college students attending Mennonite Schools. Our current balance is \$17,283 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 Information

We are inviting 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 Lydia Hedberg Office Administrator 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.

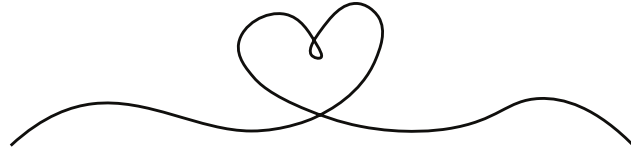
From Community Life Commission (CLC) and Fellowship Committee

Did You Know?



As of the publishing of this Midweek, there are only 11 days until our Christmas Eve service at 6:30 pm on December 24, 2023.

From the Administration Commission



Those Serving This Week



-
- South Greeters:** King family
West Greeter: Judy Hershberger
Welcome Table: Mary Jantze
Ushers: King family
Offering Counter: Mark Roeschley
Worship Planner & Leader: Wayne Hochstetler
Sharing Prayer Leader: Kevin Chupp
Children's Story: Shannon Unzicker
Scripture Reader:
Technology: Caleb Augspurger
Song Leader: Cindy Ropp
Accompaniment: Dorothy Loepp
Prelude & Postlude: Advent Ensemble
Infant Nursery – during worship: Open for parents
Infant Nursery – during CE: Jane Roeschley
Preschool Nursery: Amy Reiman

Prayer Requests and Announcements

Sharing of Joys and Concerns have returned to open mic sharing during the services. Please send Lauren Satchwell (satchwell.lauren@gmail.com) 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.



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

Birthdays & Anniversaries
CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, December 13

9:30am Wednesday Morning Book Group

7:30pm Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (Zoom)

Thursday, December 14

7:00am Next Man Bible Study

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

5:30pm Community Life Commission (Zoom)

Saturday, December 16

Advent Ensemble Rehearsal

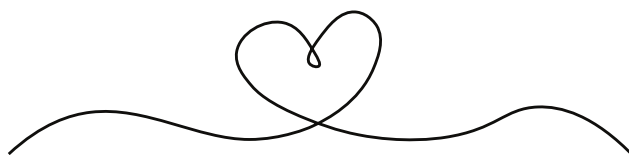
Tuesday, December 19

2:30pm Administration Commission

3:00pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, December 20

9:30am Wednesday Morning Book Group



TromBari, featuring Jim Pugh and Glenn Wilson, will be playing at the Rose Bowl in Urbana **today, Wednesday, December 13 from 5-7 pm.**

Below is a message from [La Posada Immigrant Aid](#) in Elkhart, IN that was shared in the Central District Conference weekly email.

Since September, La Posada Immigrant Aid has been able to finish up most of the cases we began during the summer through the excellent work of our legal assistant, Adriana Martinez. Unfortunately, Adriana has resigned for personal reasons and as of November 21, we will be without any staff. But in 1 Cor. 2:9, Paul quotes Isaiah to say, "...no eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him."

Just this month, we have begun to work with Damian Sanchez, a Mexican-American businessman with a background as an attorney in Mexico and in sales here in Elkhart County. Damian and other volunteers will make contacts through churches, businesses, local media outlets, and social media to make sure people in need know they can trust La Posada.

Current Needs:

We need a qualified person to staff our ministry, and we need them quickly. Please announce this in your congregation and use your networks to help us find the right person with either DOJ accreditation or a law license.

We need money to pay the new staff person. Without an adequate bank balance, we will not be able to ask someone to come work with us. We have \$16,000 in the bank today. We need at least \$50,000 to begin next year.

Read more details in the [full November update](#) found on our web site. **With God's help, and your prayers, we will begin seeing new clients as soon as we find the right person to staff our ministry.**

END GUN VIOLENCE

Learn. Pray. Join

Lord, hear our prayer

To begin Mennonite Church USA's latest Learn, Pray, Join initiative, End Gun Violence, Jonny Rashid shared a prayer of lament about gun violence. Rashid is the pastor for West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship, a member church of Allegheny Mennonite Conference. He is the author of *Jesus Takes A Side* and serves on the Anabaptism at 500 advisory committee. **Read Jonny Rashid's prayer of lament about gun violence published by Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

A Queer and Trans Advent Devotional

Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests (BMC) has shared this advent gift with us, co-created by lgbtqia+ religious leaders across the U.S., including BMC's Jaylon Tasby and Annabeth Roeschley. They hope the short daily writings, poetry and artwork by queer and trans leaders support your Advent reflection. **Download the booklet at [here](#).**

What are you Waiting for?



Heal Ourselves, Heal Our Planet

Below you will find the beginning of an article by Ingrid Friesen Moser, wellbeing coordinator for The Corinthian Plan, that shares how spending time outdoors can help heal us and, when we come together for climate justice, can also help our planet.

This past spring, my family spent hundreds of hours outside. It was wonderful. The green spaces were not only beautiful, they were also relaxing and energizing. Our experience was a part of my husband's pastoral sabbatical. It connected our family passion for birding with the themes of ornithology, ecology and theology. We spent April, May and June looking for migrating birds and adding new birds to our life lists that index all the birds we have seen. Our sabbatical time outdoors was not only healing physically, but we also met people making a difference healing the planet. In the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, a community reclaimed a vacant lot and transformed it into walking trails for people and a home for wildlife. Community members planted native plants and trees, constructed vital water drips, and made blinds for observing birds and nature close-up. We learned that there are churches across the country doing the work of transforming their cemeteries and green spaces into native habitat for wildlife. For example, Akron Mennonite Church is creating a [nature preserve](#) and now allows for green burials. At an Audubon camp in coastal Maine, we joined a community of like-minded people from across the country to learn about conservation and ornithology. The camp instructors gave us the gift of words to describe the things we want to save. **Read Ingrid Friesen Moser article for Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

AMBS Spanish-Language Theology Graduate Certificate

Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) are pleased to announce the first Spanish-language Graduate Certificate in Theology to be offered through a seminary of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. The fully online MEA Hispanic Ministries – AMBS Graduate Certificate in Theology will be taught entirely in Spanish and is designed to provide professionals, congregational leaders and bivocational pastors with a foundation in theological and biblical study. **Read more in the statement released by AMBS [here](#).**

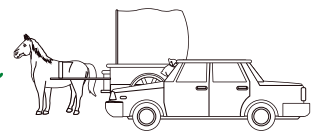


Strides at Salford Mennonite

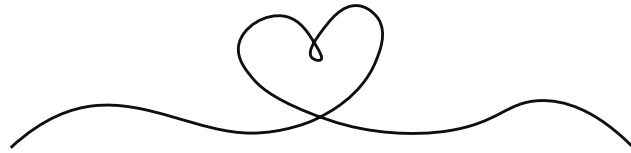
Below is an excerpt from Jennifer Svetlik's article "Salford Mennonite Church's Strides in Accessibility" for the Anabaptist Disabilities Network.

During the past year, we at Salford Mennonite Church recognized an energy and desire bubbling up toward accessibility: becoming a community that explicitly and intentionally includes people with disabilities and neurodivergence. A small group within the congregation, with varied skills and interests in this area, began to meet and formed an Accessibility Ministry Team. The [Accessibility Resolution](#) passed by Mennonite Church USA delegates in May 2022 was part of the inspiration for our group to seek to reduce the barriers to participation in our congregational life for people with disabilities. The Accessibility Ministry Team exists to facilitate and resource an environment of inclusion and belonging among diverse needs, particularly for people who are disabled and neurodiverse. We started with the resources in front of us—listening to Salford members with disabilities and their families about their needs and hopes. In response, we have begun making adjustments to benefit individuals and also helping the whole congregation be a place of belonging. Since completing the assessment of persons and families in our congregation and ADN's assessment, we have also begun some new initiatives within the congregation, including recruiting and training "inclusion aides" to provide particular attention and support for neurodiverse children and youth in our Sunday School ministry, creating a [Peace Place](#) (calm-down space) to be used during worship and Sunday School, and planning a book study group to increase congregational education and awareness. **Read Jennifer Svetlik's full article published by the Anabaptist Disabilities Network [here](#).**

A tale of two horses and two cars



In Lori Guenther Reesor's article "A tale of two horses and two cars: whatever our reasons, simplicity is complicated" published by the Anabaptist World she says: "I aspire to simplicity, but it's complicated. Consider: Is Mennonite simplicity more cultural than theological? Let me tell you the stories of two horses and two cars." **Read her four stories [here](#).**



Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

<u>Building Open:</u>	Standard Hours: Monday, Wednesday-Friday 9AM-11AM and Monday-Friday 1:30PM-3PM.
<u>Lydia Hedberg:</u>	Office Administrator; church@normalmennonite.org ; 309-452-6622
<u>Rita Munkakusi:</u>	Custodian
<u>Kevin Chupp:</u>	Pastor for Outreach Commission, Worship Commission, Congregational Care Committee, and the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team; kevin@normalmennonite.org
<u>Lynette Miller:</u>	Pastor for Discipling and Community Life Commissions
<u>Ron Ropp:</u>	Pastor for Pastoral Care
<u>Lauren Satchwell:</u>	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!

Commissions and Teams Contact List

[Commissions and Teams Contact List](#)

Item Check-Out Request Form

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

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

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

Commission Meeting Minutes

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

Structure Documents
