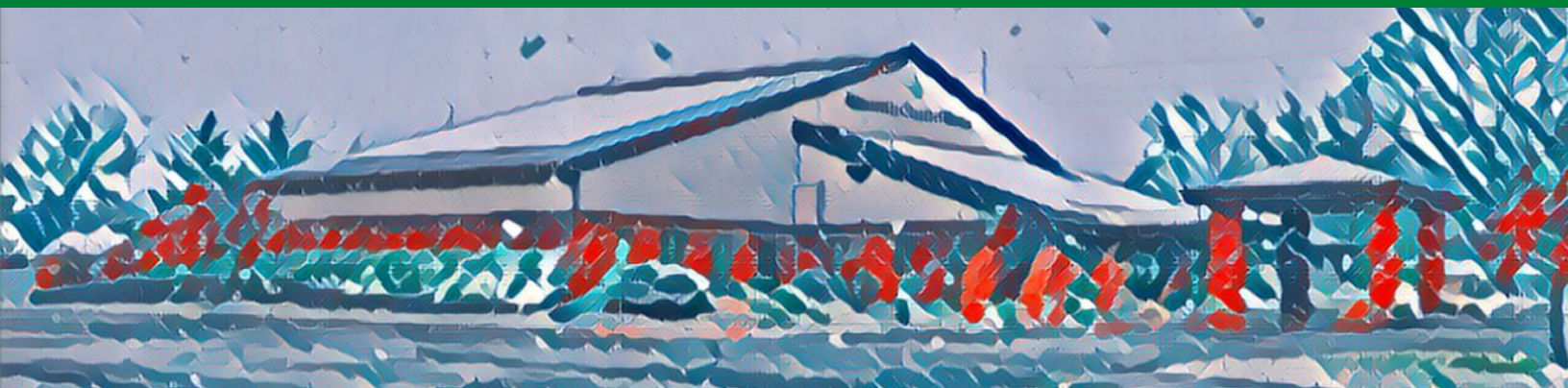


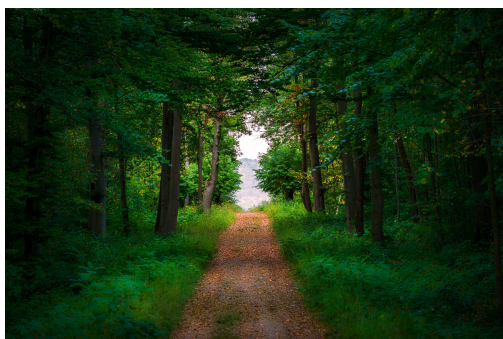
THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This week, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Screed or Creed?* based on Isaiah 40:1-11.

A couple thousand years of accumulating expressions of Christian faith since the “pioneer and perfecter of our faith” means the message of our hope is sometimes muddled. Preparing for hope sometimes means that our best efforts in eloquence ought to be employed to say something clearly rather than say everything. How do we sound the call to “prepare the way” and “make the Lord’s paths straight” like Isaiah and John the Baptist?



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)
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



**Mennonite
Church
of Normal**

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA



MYF Ugly Christmas Sweater Party

Sunday, December 10th following CE until 3:00

All High School youth are invited to the home of Andy and Beth Reeser for an afternoon of pizza, Mario Kart, and Minute to Win it Games. Ugly Christmas attire is optional, but encouraged! **Please RSVP by this Friday, December 8 to Shannon Unzicker.**

Peace & Justice in Israel and Palestine



December 12th and 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.

The Outreach Commission is asking members and friends of the Mennonite Church of Normal to [join Mennonite Action's next mass meeting on December 12th](#) (use this link to RSVP for the meeting – don't be afraid to click it and sign up). It's an opportunity for us to link arms with a growing movement of Mennonites from Canada, the United States, and beyond who are working together to demand lasting peace in Palestine.

[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



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 Wednesday, December 15th so we can get a count for the meal.**

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.



Camp Friedenswald Retreat

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

Journey Groups B and C



A reminder that Journey Group B (40's and 50's) will be joining Journey Group C for this quarter. This class is facilitated by Lynette Miller and meets in the classroom next to the kitchen.

From the Discipling Commission

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

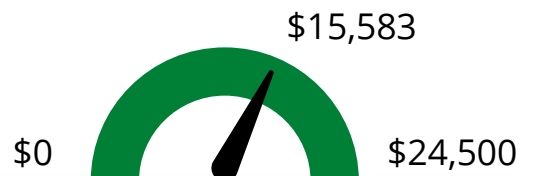


Donate to the Mitten Tree

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 entrance. 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



We are approaching the second payment for college students attending Mennonite Schools. Our current balance is \$15,583 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



CE Book Reminder

If you participated in a CE class during the fall session, please return the book you used to the table in the conference room, so that members of the next class studying that book in this winter quarter can pick it up.

From the Discipling Commission



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://www.facebook.com/moromoroscholarshipfund?mibextid=LQQJ4d>
- Check or Venmo: @Douglas-Valverde (last four 3957)

From Doug Valverde

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 are now available on the library table.**



Did You Know?



My name: _____

I would like:

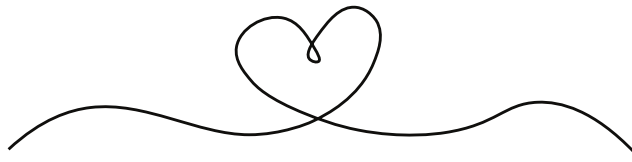
- To receive the Midweek (weekly email newsletter)
- A nametag
- A mailbox
- A pastoral visit
- To add my name to the church directory
- To learn about becoming a member
- To learn about being baptized
- To learn about Mennonites

Please follow-up and contact me by (if not in directory):

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Mail: _____
- Visit: _____

The Pastoral Team has developed a new card to help people connect and share contact information. The cards are available on the welcome table.

From the Administration Commission



Sharing of Joys and Concerns



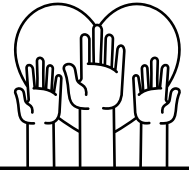
MCN IS ASKED TO BE IN CONTINUED PRAYER FOR FOR THE TOP ADMINISTRATORS AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM CARLE BROMENN MEDICAL CENTER—OUR PARTNER IN HEALING FOR 2023

Prayer Requests and Announcements

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.



Those Serving This Week



South Greeters: Rick & Annette Harnish

West Greeter: Kristen Hartwig

Welcome Table: David Voegtlin

Ushers: Hoffmann family

Offering Counter: Lotus Hershberger

Worship Planner & Leader: Ben Roeschley

Sharing Prayer Leader: Lynette Miller

Children's Story: Annette Harnish

Scripture Reader:

Technology: Jaron Zehr & Glenn Wilson

Song Leader: Barry Weaver

Accompaniment, Prelude, & Postlude: Elsa Raab

Infant Nursery – during worship: Open for parents

Infant Nursery – during CE: Janet Wilson

Preschool Nursery: Jordan K

Birthdays & Anniversaries
CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, December 6

9:30am Wednesday Morning Book Group

7:30pm Vision Team (Zoom)

Thursday, December 7

7:00am Next Man Bible Study

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

6:30pm Administration Commission (Zoom)

Sunday, December 10

7:00pm Advent Choir

Tuesday, December 11

7:00pm Fellowship Committee

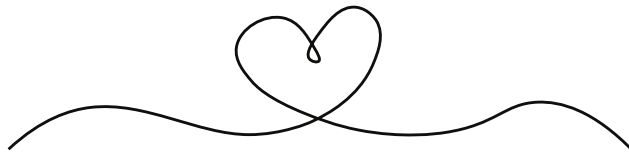
Tuesday, December 12

3:00pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, December 13

9:30am Wednesday Morning Book Group

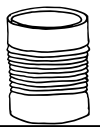
7:30m Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (Zoom)



In Case You Missed It: Anabaptism and US Gun Culture

If you missed it, it's not too late to watch the October 12, 2023 Mennonite Church USA seminar that explored the issues that drive today's violent gun culture in the U.S. and examined how our Anabaptist faith informs our response. Host Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, denominational minister of Peace & Justice, led this conversation with theologians Malinda Berry, Ph.D., of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, and Andrew Suderman, Ph.D., of Eastern Mennonite University. **Watch the Anabaptism and US Gun Culture seminar recording [here](#).**

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



In Case You Missed It: Palestine Action Hour

If you missed Community Peacemaker Team's November 6, 2023 Palestine Action Hour Zoom meeting, you can watch a recording of it [here](#). You can also access their Action Hour resources [here](#).

For the Beauty of the Earth



On Sunday, August 27, Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster (Pennsylvania) was delighted to hold a blessing for their new mural, "For the Beauty of the Earth," created by Salina Almanzar-Oree, in her delightfully collaborative process. The mural is on the corner of Grant and Concord Streets in Lancaster City. Salina Almanzar (sah-lee-nah ahll-mun-czar) (she/her) is a Puerto Rican and Dominican artist, muralist and educator. Her personal art and scholarship examine the intersections of Latinidad and feminism, often working with family photos and memorabilia and historical documents. **Read more about the process and the meaning found in the mural [here](#).**

Denomination-Wide Study Results



Research shows clergywomen find their work meaningful, powerful and distinctly vulnerable.

Amy Zimbelman, conference minister for Mountain States Mennonite Conference, and Elizabeth Johnson, PhD candidate at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, presented the results of the study during a seminar titled “Gathering Stories, Envisioning Equity: Toward a Church in Which Women in Ministry Thrive” at Mennonite Church USA’s MennoCon23 convention. “I’ve taken the role of asking hard questions within a church that I love very deeply, in hopes that we can do life together with even more kindness and justice,” said Zimbelman in her introduction. The study includes qualitative information gleaned from in-depth interviews with 28 current and former pastors and quantitative data from a nationally representative web survey that is still in progress. Zimbelman explained a few foundations of their research, including the “understanding that women can and should be pastors, because the founder of our faith, Jesus, called women to preach, respected women as equals, supported women, was financially supported by women, etc.” This was punctuated by spontaneous applause from the audience. “This research focuses on a marginalized group: women in ministry,” she said, noting that the study intentionally overrepresents lesbian, bisexual and BIPOC women compared to the denomination as a whole, because “having multiple marginalized identities compounds mistreatment.” Johnson explained that MC USA remains a male-dominated workplace, in which women in ministry represent a little under 35% of total active licensed clergy. “Women are underrepresented in roles like lead pastor and overrepresented in the roles that often come with less power and prestige, like associate pastor,” she added. Despite this, clergywomen report that they find their work powerful and meaningful. In fact, 95.4% of women who have responded to the survey said that they are moderately or very satisfied in their jobs. Yet, clergywomen’s ministry is also vulnerable, as one interview participant explained: “As pastors, we have power, and as women, we are vulnerable.” Another participant said, “[I] thought that being pastoral meant I just had to listen while we were bullied and harassed.” Zimbelman pointed out that there are very few built-in boundaries to protect pastors. Zimbelman said, “The good news is that change is afoot in our denomination structurally, and I want to affirm that.” She cited the ongoing work on the [Prevention and Accountability Project](#) and the creation of a new MC USA staff position for [denominational minister of Church Safety](#). **Read responses to the survey and more results from Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

Hope is ringing out!



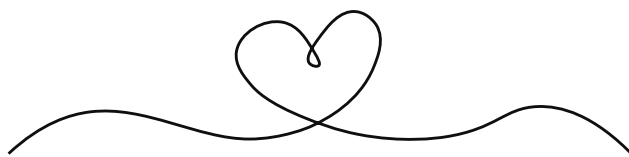
In May, Anabaptist musicians from a variety of countries met together in Canada for a songwriting retreat sponsored by Anabaptist Worship Network. George Makinto recounts how he experienced hope through the gathering of such a diverse group of people coming together to worship God. **Read Makinto's article shared by Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**



Church for Kids with ADHD, Too

Below is an excerpt from Denise Reesor's article on Christian Education for Differing Brains. Along with working as a school psychologist, Denise is a field associate for Anabaptist Disabilities Network and attends East Goshen Mennonite church.

It's the beginning of a new school year and teachers in my school building are pulling out all the stops to prepare for their incoming students. As I pop into classrooms, teachers point out their quiet rooms, flexible seating options, visual schedules, and class rules displayed around the room. With 11% of children in the United States diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), teachers are adjusting their instructional methods to meet the needs of these learners. ADHD is a neurological condition that impairs a person's executive functioning skills - planning, organizing, focusing, and inhibition control. In children this may manifest as difficulty sitting still, blurting out, carelessness, failure to finish tasks, tantrums, and sometimes aggression. While schools are learning how to adapt their classrooms and teaching techniques to accommodate children with attentional deficits, often church remains problematic. Traditional Anabaptist values include peacefulness, perseverance, self-sacrifice, and self-control. Our worship services are often orderly, restrained, and sometimes liturgical. Our church's way of being is often in direct contrast to that of a child with ADHD's way of being. With this disconnect, how do we ensure our children with attentional difficulties feel love and belonging in our congregations? Even more foundational; how do we create a space where parents of children with ADHD even want to walk through the doors? **Read Denise Reesor's ideas on how to start this work in her article published by Anabaptist Disabilities Network [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](#)

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

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

Item Check-Out Request Form

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

Commission Meeting Minutes

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

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.