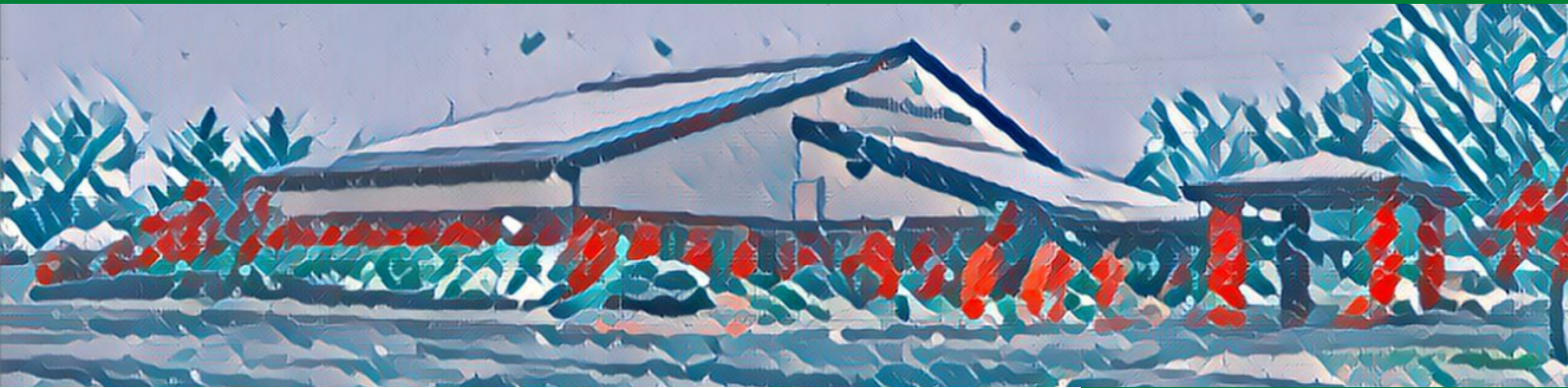


THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

Kevin Chupp will preach sermon titled Neighboring this week on Mark 1:21-45.

How do we follow (or keep up) with someone who is constantly slipping quietly away to the wilderness and who moves ever onward to “neighboring towns?”



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



Mennonite Action for Cease Fire in Gaza

Tomorrow, Thursday, January 4 at 7 pm

Dear Peacemakers,

I invite you to attend Mennonite Action's next zoom [virtual mass gathering](#) this Thursday, January 4 at 7 p.m. to discuss activities necessary to push for a cease fire in Gaza. They will share details about plans for a Washington DC action on January 16. Please consider attending this event. We will hear from speakers and leaders. We will refuel and recenter for the work ahead. [Register for the virtual gathering here.](#)

Mennonite Action's DC Day of Mennonite Action for a Ceasefire on January 16 is coming up fast. Fill out [this interest form](#) to submit your RSVP to attend in DC.

In Peace, Phil Dick, chair of MCN Outreach Commission

Giveaway Event



Wayne and Lois Hochstetler invite you to our home for a giveaway event before our move to Luther Oaks. We would like those who can make use of our items to take them, and remember us! There are a number of household and kitchen items that we will not be taking with us. For a list of some items, click [here](#). (Updated from last week)

This is not just for people who can use things from our house; it is for anyone who would like to have a Saturday morning outing with friends. Donuts and coffee, hot chocolate and tea will be supplied. This will happen on .

From Lois and Wayne Hochstetler



MYF Sunday Night Supper

This Sunday, January 7

Marge and Barry are excited to host the high schoolers in their home on Sunday, January 7 at 4:30. Plan on a fun time of fellowship, simple games and a meal together. Please RSVP to Marge if your child/ren can attend. Thank you!

Blood Pressure Checks



This Sunday, January 7th after Worship

BP checks will be available Sunday, January 7 in the office by the mailboxes. Everyone is encouraged to take advantage of this service.

Sponsored by the Congregational Care Committee



Midwest Food Bank

Thursday, January 11 from 6-8pm

Our next scheduled volunteer night at Midwest Food Bank is January 11 from 6-8pm. **MFB always wants us to sign up early, so if you think you might go, might as well sign up today!** Click [here](#) to sign up.

From the Outreach Commission

Annual Meeting



Sunday, January 21: meal at noon and meeting at 1 pm

The Vision Team invites the congregation to the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 21. Community Life Commission has graciously offered to organize and host a noon meal which will be followed by the meeting at 1 PM. We will look back at 2023 and look ahead to 2024, including voting on the congregational spending plan. The meeting will be available in person and on Zoom [here](#).

The Annual Report, which will include the agenda for the meeting and the spending plan, will be sent out this Friday. Meanwhile, please mark your calendars and plan to attend!

From the Vision Team



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

Thank you for Donating!



Thank you for your donations to the Mitten and Glove tree. There were also donated hats; all will be dispersed by the Home Sweet Home Mission and will be appreciated by those who need them in the winter cold. There were 48 pairs of Mittens and Gloves and 11 hats. These were delivered to the Mission on January 2.m Thank you for your response to this need!

From the Community Life Commission and Fellowship Committee

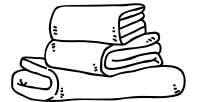


Ride for Art

Art has recently moved to Evergreen Village and is no longer driving but hopes to continue to attend worship at MCN on Sundays. Anyone who is willing to offer a ride to Art, or wants more information, please contact Pastor Kevin or anyone from the Congregational Care Committee (Bess Desch, Laura Dick, Gail Fisher, Ryan Miller, Lynn Reha).

From the Community Care Committee

Supporting Immigrants in Our Community



If you are looking for additional ways to give this season, here are the two opportunities I mentioned in church.

Warm Welcoming Closet - If you would be willing to donate items to District 87's Warm Welcoming Closet, here is the [link](#) to the Amazon wishlist. Families that are recent arrivals to the community often need blankets, sheets, pillows, rollout mattresses and other items. Thank you for considering!

BN Welcoming - Through the BN Welcoming fund housed by our church, we are able to help support families or individuals who are unable to get the assistance from other avenues. We have been able to support people with rent, medical bills, utilities, etc. You can designate this fund in your giving, by clicking the link for B-N Welcoming on the website, or using [this link](#).

Thank you for considering giving! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Helen Dick Brandon.



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

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.

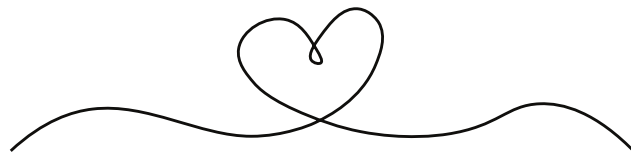
From Community Life Commission (CLC) and Fellowship Committee



Did You Know?

If you'd like to borrow items from the church for personal use (such as folding chairs or folding tables), there is now a form to use. This will help us keep track of the church's items and keep an accurate inventory of what's in the church. You can fill out the form by either submitting this Google Form [here](#) or printing this PDF version [here](#) and returning it to the office. These links will be at the bottom of every future Midweek (next to the Purchase Request Form and Work Order Form). If you have any questions or run into any problems using the form, please feel free to contact the office at church@normalmennonite.org or 309-452-6622!

From the Administration Commission



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.



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



Those Serving This Week



South Greeters: Driscoll family

West Greeter: Mark Roeschley

Welcome Table: Phylis VerSteegh

Ushers: Adam Augspurger and Lotus Hershberger

Offering Counter: Lotus Hershberger

Worship Planner: Kevin Chupp

Worship Leader:

Sharing Prayer Leader: Kevin Chupp

Children's Story: Gail Fisher

Scripture Reader:

Technology: Adam Augspurger & Ryan Miller

Song Leader: Wayne Hochstetler

Accompaniment, Prelude, & Postlude: Denise Hedberg

Infant Nursery – during worship: Open for parents

Infant Nursery – during CE: Caroline Roeschley

Preschool Nursery: Carrie Stalter

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, January 3

9:30am Wednesday Morning Book Group

7:30pm Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (Zoom)

Thursday, January 4

7:00am Next Man Bible Study

3:00pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Saturday, January 6

9:00am Worship Commission (Zoom)

Sunday, January 7

11:00am Blood Pressure Readings

Monday, January 8

5:00pm Worship Commission (Zoom)

Wednesday, January 10

9:30am Wednesday Morning Book Group

7:30pm Vision Team



MEA Hispanic Ministries at 35

[Mennonite Education Agency](#) (MEA) Hispanic Ministries Instituto Bíblico Anabautista (IBA – Anabaptist Bible Institute) has been serving the Hispanic Mennonite Church for 35 years. But don't expect them to rest on their laurels. According to Marco Güete, director of Hispanic Ministries for MEA, this is just the end of the beginning for IBA and for Mennonite Hispanic Ministries in the United States. "It is deeply gratifying to look back over three decades and see how God has led us and blessed this ministry," he said. "We move ahead in hope and trust for God's continued guidance in our work." Pastor Madeline Maldonado sees a critical need for IBA. "The Anabaptist Biblical Institute was created to educate Spanish-speaking leaders to lead from an Anabaptist perspective, along with a solid biblical foundation," she said. "This program has been crucial in developing leaders to lead, who think critically and also share their knowledge with members of the growing Spanish-speaking Mennonite Church in the United States. These leaders not only serve the church but also the communities they live in." **Read the full article written by Jolene VonGunten for the Mennonite Education Agency [here](#).**

Cluster bombs, Mennonites and a moment for witness

In early 1981, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers in Laos, Fred and Jan Swartzendruber and Linda Gehman Peachey, visited a family whose mother had struck an unexploded U.S. cluster bomb while hoeing in her garden the day before. The bomb blew up, killing her and leaving 11 children without a mother. The father gave the shattered hoe head to Linda and urged her to take it back to her country. "Use it to tell our family's story, so that it won't happen again to other people," he said. Little did we know then that more than 40 years later, thanks to the advocacy work of [Legacies of War](#), over 4,000 workers in Laos would still be busy destroying more than 300 pieces of ordnance every day, much of it consisting of unexploded cluster bombs. In 1994, MCC collaborated with the [Mines Advisory Group](#) and the Lao Government to initiate a [humanitarian demining program](#). Mennonites in the U.S. and Canada contributed generously to this work, giving it much-needed support in its beginning stages. Today, this effort is fully funded by governments, including the U.S., which provides \$45 million each year, for clearance and victim assistance.

Now, the Biden administration has [sent U.S. cluster bombs](#) to Ukraine. To do so, President Biden crossed two significant constraints that were designed to protect civilians from harm during and after wars. He waived a congressional prohibition against exporting cluster munitions with a failure rate of higher than 1%. Old U.S. stockpiles of cluster munitions have considerably higher rates of failure, especially when used in combat. According to a [Congressional Research Service report](#), and corroborated by the experience of clearance operators, U.S. cluster munitions typically fail at a 10%-30% rate. Secondly, in December 2008, governments greatly concerned about the harm to civilians caused by these indiscriminate weapons, gathered in Oslo, Norway, to ban the production, use, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions. To date, well over 100 nations have acceded to the treaty, including the majority of our NATO allies. The U.S. did not participate in this process or sign the treaty. The U.S. decision to provide cluster munitions to Ukraine shows a callous disregard for the principled commitment of many governments and [civil society groups](#) to build a strong international norm to protect the lives of civilians during and after wars.

This is a moment for courageous witness: a witness against war; a witness against indiscriminate weapons, like cluster bombs and landmines; a witness for reorienting our national budget toward diplomacy and humanitarian aid, rather than military intervention; a witness for our nation to honor the international norms designed to protect civilians from harm that are embedded in the [Convention on Cluster Munitions \(CCM\)](#); a witness against killing and domination. **Read the rest of Titus Peachey's blog post for Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

My cookbook shelf as a mirror of Mennonite history

Below is an excerpt from Mary S. Sprunger's reflection "My cookbook shelf as a mirror of Mennonite history" published by the Anabaptist World.

I like to take armloads of cookbooks from my kitchen shelf to Mennonite and food history classes and ask students what they can learn by leafing through these books produced by and largely for North American Mennonites. Cookbooks are history. They reveal much about Mennonites and our changing relationship to immigrant heritage, identity, theology, rural communities, mainstream culture and globalization. But Mennonite cookbooks have also contributed to shifts in our culture in addition to simply reflecting it. Some years ago, my college's cafeteria featured a "Mennonite recipe of the week," including More-With-Less favorite Pakistani Kima. This confused some students: how was this Mennonite? I have eaten it at my dean's home for a new faculty dinner and at a wedding reception; my family makes it often as an easy all-in-one week-night meal. Recipes and cookbooks reflect but also shape culture, and the faces and tastes of Mennonites are changing. Pakistani Kima might now be just as Mennonite as Borscht or Shoofly Pie. **Find Mary S. Sprunger's full reflection for *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Sowing the seeds of peace



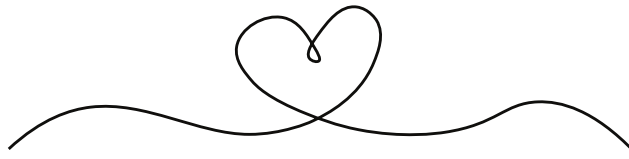
Below is an excerpt from an article by Juan Moya for the Anabaptist World describing his experience at the third Global Peace Building Conference and Festival. "We can't change the world, but we can start to change it." These words from artist/filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky have resonated with me. It is difficult to imagine a world that stands on values of peace and justice and where everyone works for a common cause. In reality, it seems like the forces of consumption and individualistic values direct our lives. On June 15-17 I had the opportunity to attend the third Global Peacebuilding Conference and Festival at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. I had attended a previous edition of the festival in 2018 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, when I got invited to perform music but didn't get a chance to participate in the rest of the conference. This time, I got sponsorship from my local church and Anabaptist World to be more involved. Just like the '80s band Tears for Fears said in their song about changing the world through "sowing the seeds of love," I believe that we were sowing the seeds of peace and that exciting opportunities will emerge from it. **Read the rest of Juan Moya's article for the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Below is an excerpt from Bekah York's reflection on her work with Justapaz (the peacebuilding organization of the Colombian Mennonite Church) published by Mennonite Mission Network.

I have been involved in a variety of accompaniment ministries over the past several months. One of these experiences was with Justapaz (the peacebuilding organization of the Colombian Mennonite Church) in Chocó, the most biodiverse region in the world, and the only place in the world with both Atlantic and Pacific coastlines. It is inhabited mostly by Afro-Colombian, Indigenous and mestizo communities. Precisely because of its remote location with two coasts, biodiversity and rich natural resources, Chocó is vulnerable to armed groups and illicit economic activities, including drug trafficking, which has a profound impact on the safety and well-being of the people. In this context, in a small, rural town, I helped facilitate a gathering with Mujer y Paz (Women and Peace), one of the five strategic areas of Justapaz. The goal of this gathering was to bring women leaders together to discuss the current humanitarian crisis, along with the dire security situation in their region, and how they can raise their voices in spaces occurring at a national level between the current government and the ELN (National Liberation Army, a guerrilla group involved in the continuing Colombian conflict). One of the workshops was specifically for women from Anabaptist churches. Together, we looked at the role of women of faith in political advocacy efforts, guided by the biblical story of Deborah, a political leader whom God raised up to advocate on behalf of God's people. Many were surprised that such a story was in the Bible, and they very quickly connected the story of Deborah to their own context and felt motivated to continue their work for peace in their territory. **Read Bekah York's full reflection for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

Diverse and welcoming: Two church plants thrive with support from MC USA grant

Mennonite Church USA is helping to fuel growth and diversity with its 2023 Thrive Church Planting Grants. This year's repeat award recipients, Brooklyn (New York) Peace Church and Community of Hope Mennonite Church, Bellingham, Washington, are building circles of community in creative, Jesus-centered ways. "It's wonderful to witness how church planters and those in these worshipping communities are reimagining what it means to be a missional peace church," said Rachel Ringenberg Miller, MC USA's denominational minister for Ministerial Leadership. **Read about Brooklyn Peace Church and Community of Hope Mennonite Church in Mennonite Church USA's press release [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
<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

Our Members in Care Facilities

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

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
