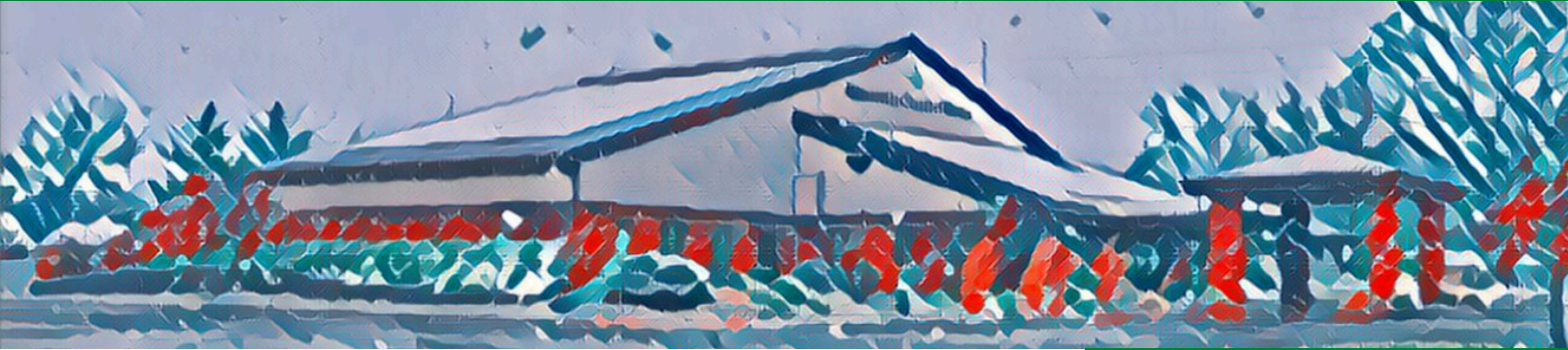


# THE MIDWEEK



## WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *I ♥ Justice* using Isaiah 61:1-11.

Isaiah brings good news for the people about their life situation and also their God. God will get to work to answer every misfortune with blessing because that's what God loves to do. How might we respond to such a God?

## After Worship

Adult CE  
**Salt & Light**  
Room 14

## 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

# Wednesday Evening Worship in Advent

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## Wednesdays at 6:30 pm during Advent

We will be having special worship services at 6:30 pm on the three Wednesdays of Advent (December 4, 11 and 18). We will gather in a dimly lit church for singing, *lectio divina* and prayers of intercession for our world as we await the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World. During *lectio divina*, we will read the following Sunday's Scripture passage and engage in guided meditation about how it speaks to us and what it might be calling us to do. The service will also be streamed online via Zoom [here](#).

*From the Worship Commission*

## Celebration of Life



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**This Saturday, December 14th**  
**Slide Show beginning at 9:30 am**  
**Service at 10:00am**

The Celebration of Life for Bob Kauffman and Mary Kauffman will be on Saturday, December 14th at the Mennonite Church of Normal. It will also be livestreamed [here](#).



## Memorial Service Lunch

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Following the memorial service for Bob and Mary Kauffman on Saturday, Dec. 14, lunch will be served as friends and family spend time together reminiscing and catching up with each other. Would you be willing to help provide for this lunch?

### **Needed:**

12 salads (each to serve 10)

18 pies (Bob and Mary loved pie!)...homemade or purchased

Please contact Marge if you can help!

Thanks so much!

*Shared by Marge*



## Advent Ensemble

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**Rehearsal: This Sunday, Dec 15 at 12:30 pm and Dec 22 at 8 am**

**Performance: Sunday, December 22**

The MCN Advent Ensemble will be performing the Prelude on Sunday, December 22. We will rehearse at 12:30 pm on Sunday, December 15 and at 8 am on Sunday, December 22 (the day we perform). If you are interested in playing with us but didn't sign-up, it's not too late! You can email me if you'd like to join us. If you have any questions, please contact me at 309-452-6622 or [church@normalmennonite.org](mailto:church@normalmennonite.org). I look forward to playing with you!

*From Lydia Hedberg*



## (Almost) Longest Night

**December 19 at 6:30 pm**

Have a Beautiful Terrible Christmas or the (Almost) Longest Night worship event. For those of us who have had a big loss, Christmas season can seem more morbid than merry. We may be facing the first Christmas without someone or something that was very important to us. It can make the unending barrage of Hallmark-happy-ending seem empty and meaningless.

If this is true for you or someone that you know, join the Loss/Grief Support Group on Thursday, December 19 at 6:30 pm. We will pray, read, and listen to poems, songs, Scripture and Christian readings that acknowledge our need for the birth of Christ as we navigate the less “happy” land of deep loss.

—Lynn for the Loss/Grief Support Group

## Mental Health First Aid



**We all have mental health.** According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experiences mental illness in a given year. That’s 43.8 million people, or 18.5% of the population. But we all have mental health and we all struggle at times.

How do we identify the signs and symptoms in someone who is just beginning to experience a mental health challenge? How do we tell when things are getting worse? What do we do when it becomes a crisis?

Over centuries, Christians have built up a lot of misconceptions that contribute to stigma around mental health and discussing it openly. Some claim that mental illness is a sign of weakness. Some tell us to just surrender our mental illness to God or that it’s just God’s way of testing you and your faith. Some believe that illness, whether physical or mental, is punishment for sins. **NONE OF THESE ARE TRUE!** Mental health disorders are the result of multiple genetic and situational factors and most disorders are highly treatable. Come learn the signs and symptoms and practice offering hope to those who are struggling.

### **Mental Health First Aid**

Mennonite Church of Normal  
Monday, **January 20**, 9am-5pm

### **Mental Health First Aid for Those Who Work with Youth**

Mennonite Church of Normal  
Friday, **January 3**, 9am-5pm

All training is free. Please register by contacting Steve.

## Christmas Eve Worship



**Tuesday, December 24 at 6:30 pm**

Christmas Eve worship at MCN will be on Tuesday, December 24, at 6:30 pm, followed by fellowship.

# Request for Cookies for Christmas Eve Service

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**Tuesday, December 24**

The Fellowship Committee will be hosting a cookie reception after the Christmas Eve service. We would greatly appreciate donations of all kinds of cookies. If you are able to help in this way, simply drop them off in the kitchen any time before the service. Thank you!

*From the Fellowship Committee*

## Writing the Prologue to Your New Year” Retreat with Author Judith Valente

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**Saturday, January 11, 2025**

“Write it down, make it happen,” suggests retreat leader Judith Valente. The start of a new year is a blank page offering us many possibilities. It is a time to reflect on where we have been and also on where we want to go to turn our dreams into possibilities. This means more than listing New Year’s resolutions that start with good intentions and are swiftly forgotten.

During this morning of reflection, we will endeavor to write the plot we want to see unfold for ourselves in the coming year so that whatever unexpected events might surprise us, we will have written a clear roadmap to help us stay the course toward our goals for spiritual and professional growth.

### **Dates and Details**

**Saturday, January 11, 2025**

10:00am – 12:00pm via Zoom

The cost of this retreat is \$25. [Register here.](#)

*This is a virtual retreat offered via Zoom. A basic familiarity with Zoom is expected of participants.*

## Church Retreat



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**January 24-26, 2025**

Please consider joining us for a weekend of fellowship and fun at Camp Friedenswald, January 24-26! Friedenswald is a beautiful retreat in southern Michigan with a large, comfortable, warm lodge 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 information contact Shelly and Darvis.



## SMAP

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Congratulations and Celebration time! We met our Spring goal! We are approaching the second payment for college students attending Mennonite Schools. Our next payment will be aprox. \$19,500 by the end of December for the next semester starting in January 2025. Let's continue to support this program with end-of-the-year giving. 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! Emily Hershberger and Evan King are seniors, Emma King is a first-year at Goshen College, and Frankie Driscoll is a Junior at Bethel College.

*From Darvis King, chair of the SMAP Committee*



## Musicians Wanted

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Does singing bring you joy? Does playing an instrument move your spirit? The Worship Commission understands that while practicing music is hard work, sharing music with others is a benefit to all. We would love to have you share your music in worship services! You can reach Denise or any member of the Worship Commission Team and we will schedule a date with you. Thank you for considering!

*From Denise, Steve, Kevin, Joe, and Wayne*

## Moro Moro Scholarship Fund



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Hi Friends - Season's Greetings! Here is the latest Moro Moro Scholarship Fund newsletter. It is a fund for students in my father's hometown, Moro Moro Bolivia. Please take a look and donate if you feel moved to. A few copies of the newsletter are available in the library/narthex. Peace on Earth and Goodwill To All.

*From Doug*



## Financial Planning Group

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CLC is considering starting a small group around financial planning and budgeting. This supportive group would explore ways to budget, save, invest, and manage debt in a way that's both practical and in line with our faith. Whether you're looking for help with budgeting, paying down debt, or just want to be more intentional with your financial decisions, this group could be a great way to support and learn from one another. If this sounds like something that would be helpful to you, or if you would like to share your own experience, please email Beth.

*From the Community Life Commission*

# Joys and Concerns in Advent & Christmas Season

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As many of you know, Advent and Christmas at MCN are seasons full of extra music from the choirs and others. As has been our practice in the past, we will **not** be having open sharing of prayers and concerns from December 1 to January 5. **If you have specific concerns that you wish the pastors to bring before the assembly, please email Lauren Satchwell in advance of Sunday.** The pastors will leave time for each person to voice their prayer requests quietly or in the silence of their hearts.

*From the Worship Commission*

## 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](mailto:church@normalmennonite.org). We're all eager to see how you are serving in your community!

*From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team*

## HR9495 now goes to the Senate



HR9495, the "non-profit killer bill," was passed by the House on November 12. This bill, a response to the widespread protests against the war in Gaza, would give the Secretary of the Treasury the authority to unilaterally declare any non-profit a terrorist group, and strip it of its 501(c)(3) status. Such organizations as the US campaign for Palestinian Rights and our own MennoAction group immediately come to mind. This bill is an attack on our First Amendment right to free speech and dissent, and is of particular concern to peace churches like ours. If you feel led, please contact Senators Durbin and Duckworth and urge them to vote against this ill-considered bill.

- Senator Durbin: [www.durbin.senate.gov](http://www.durbin.senate.gov) or call 202-224 2152 or Chicago 312-353-4952 or Springfield 217.492.4062
- Senator Duckworth: [www.duckworth.gov](http://www.duckworth.gov) or Chicago 312-886-356 or Springfield 217-528-6124. Illinois numbers may experience fewer calls.

*Shared by Meredith Schroer*



## Prayer Requests and Announcements

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We will **not** be having open sharing of prayers and concerns during the Advent and Christmas season from December 1 to January 5. **If you have specific concerns that you wish the pastors to bring before the assembly, please email Lauren Satchwell in advance of Sunday.** The pastors will leave time for each person to voice their prayer requests quietly or in the silence of their hearts.



# Sharing of Joys and Concerns



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MCN IS ASKED TO BE IN CONTINUED PRAYER FOR FOR THE PROGRESSIVE CARE UNIT AT CARLE BROMENN MEDICAL CENTER—OUR PARTNER IN HEALING FOR 2024



## Those Serving This Week



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN





A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

## Wednesday, December 11

- 9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group
- 6:30 pm Administration Commission (Zoom)
- 6:30 pm Wednesday Evening Advent Worship
- 7:00 pm Community Life Commission (Zoom)
- 7:00 pm Fellowship Committee (Zoom)

## Thursday, December 12

- 7:00 am Next Man Bible Study
- 9:30 am Women's Bible Study

## Saturday, December 14

- 10:00 am Bob & Mary Kauffman Celebration of Life

## Sunday, December 15

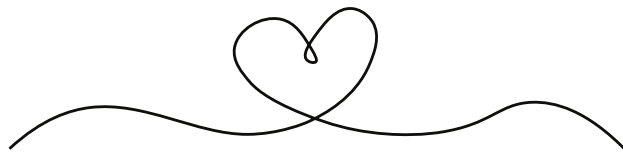
- 12:30 pm Advent Ensemble Rehearsal
- 7:00 pm Adult Choir

## Tuesday, December 17

- 3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

## Wednesday, December 18

- 9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group
- 6:30 pm Wednesday Evening Advent Worship



## On the streets with the Prince of Peace

*We welcome Jesus, as he welcomes us, into the work of mending the world.*

"I went under a sheet in the middle of Franklin Street in Chicago on a hot summer day, lying on my back and tucking the white cotton loosely around and under my legs, torso, head. Now five others and I were in submission to those around us, at their mercy. They were merciful: Joyce sat cross-legged by my head, made sure I was OK and provided water for me to drink. Jenn moved from one shroud to another to gently spray water on our hair and faces. Nida and other Palestinian women laid large, laminated images over us: Each bore a name, photo and description of a Palestinian killed by Israeli forces in Gaza. The women dipped their hands in red paint and left drips like blood on our shrouds and on the huge 'Stop the genocide in Gaza' banner on which we lay." **Read the rest of Ruth Goring's description of her experience published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**



# Upcoming AMBS Courses for Guest Students

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AMBS has some amazing courses during the second semester (**Jan. 13 to May 2**) that are open to guest students!

- Are you a history lover? Take *Global Anabaptist History and Theology* with Jamie Pitts or "Biblical Hermeneutics and the History of Interpretation" with Paul Keim.
- Are you interested in growing as a worship leader? Join *Christian Worship: Theory and Practice* with Rachel Miller Jacobs.
- Are you concerned about earth care? Take part in *Spiritual Practices: Water of Life* with Janeen Bertsche Johnson, which meets for five Tuesday evenings.
- Or want to go deeper in the book of Revelation? Take *Apocalypse Against Empire: The Book of Revelation* with Drew Strait.

There are a number of other great options you can look over [here](#). Guest students who have not yet taken a course will receive a 50% tuition discount on their first three credits! Some of the courses are online and students can work on them at the time that fits their schedule. Other courses are "blended," and students can either be in the classroom or join by Zoom. A few courses meet only in person and on campus. There are one credit courses and three credit courses, and some of the courses can be audited.

## Urge the Senate to oppose the Energy Permitting Reform Act (S. 4753) and to protect climate and community.

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### MCC Action Alert

**Background:** A global shift from fossil fuels is critical to address the climate crisis. Enabling the flow of renewable energy into the U.S. transmission infrastructure reduces oil and methane emissions at a national scale. While purporting benefits to green infrastructure, the [Energy Permitting Reform Act \(EPRA\) would lock in global emissions and toxic mining waste](#) for years to come. The EPRA would open up federal lands and waters, including Tribal lands, to new leases for mineral, gas and oil extraction. Further, it would remove environmental protections and reduce environmental reviews and community consultation. The legislation would also fast track proposed liquefied natural gas export projects to the endangerment of public health with a disproportionate impact on already affected communities. In addition, renewable energy infrastructure projects have already been [streamlined through the federal permitting and regulatory process](#) in recent years, so such reforms are not needed.

**Faith reflection:** Seeing ourselves and our planet as God's creation and as an expression of God's love fuels our desire to treat all of it with respect. 'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you declare to me.' I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes. Job 42: 4-6

**Action:** [Urge the Senate to oppose the Energy Permitting Reform Act \(S. 4753\) and to protect climate and community.](#)

# Authors examining how martyr stories have been used and abused

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As the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism draws near in 2025, two Canadian scholars are writing books that ask questions about the role martyrology plays in that story.

One is Jeremy Bergen, an associate professor of religious studies and theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont. Raised on stories of Anabaptist martyrs, he grew up seeing them as heroes of the faith. But as he studied church history and theology, Bergen began to wonder what impact those stories had on him when it came to relations to Christians from other denominations. Through his new book, which has a working title of *Christian Martyrdom and the Unity of the Church* (Baylor University Press), Bergen is exploring whether telling stories of Christian martyrs — Anabaptists and others — impedes church unity by promoting a belief that one group is right while others are wrong.

Also writing a book on martyrs is Jennifer Otto, a historian who teaches in the department of religious studies at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta. The working title of her book is *Martyr Church: Re-Inventing Martyrdom in the Anabaptist Tradition* (Fortress Press). Otto, who is part of Lethbridge Mennonite Church, wants to “situate Anabaptist martyrology in the broader church story and look at how that story was understood in the 20th century,” she said. She noted that although the early Anabaptists rejected the idea of saints, they meticulously preserved the memory of their martyrs by composing martyr hymns, preserving trial records and compiling collections of martyr acts like *Martyrs Mirror*. **Read the rest of John Longhurst’s article for the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

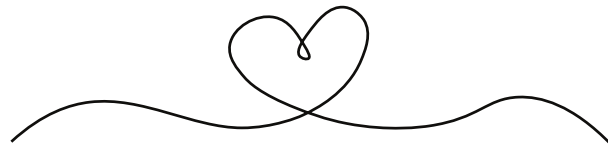
## MC USA Climate Justice | Zoom book study

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**Jan. 16 through Feb.13, 2025**

Join Mennonite Church USA in imagining a sustainable future for ourselves, our children and our planet by participating in an online book study of the compelling and timely book, "So We and Our Children May Live" by Sarah Augustine and Sheri Hostetler. In five sessions (Jan. 16 through Feb.13, 2025), we will engage in discussions in both large and small groups, interact with the authors, and explore how we – and our communities – are called to contribute to creating a more just and vibrant world.

**[Register here today!](#)**



## Commission Meeting Minutes

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## Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

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# Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

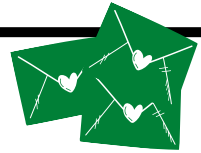
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- Building Open:     **Standard Hours:**  
Monday, Wednesday-Friday 9AM-11AM  
and Monday-Friday 1:30PM-3PM.
- Lydia Hedberg:   Office Administrator; [church@normalmennonite.org](mailto:church@normalmennonite.org); 309-452-6622
- Rita Munkakusi:   Custodian
- Kevin Chupp:     Pastor for Outreach Commission, Worship Commission,  
Congregational Care Committee, Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team,  
and Visitation Team; [kevin@normalmennonite.org](mailto:kevin@normalmennonite.org)
- Lynette Miller:   Pastor for Discipling and Community Life Commissions
- Lauren Satchwell: Pastor for Vision Team & Administration Commissions

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## Our Members in Care Facilities

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



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## 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!

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## Item Check-Out Request Form

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# Commissions and Teams Contact List

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## Commission, Team, & Committee Members

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## Structure Documents

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