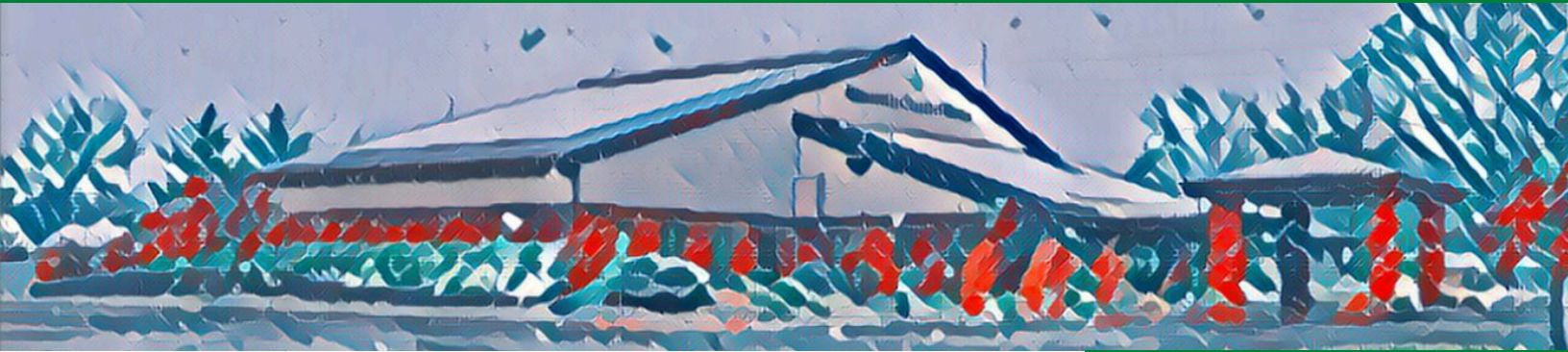


# THE MIDWEEK



## WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *I Used to Know* using Luke 1:26-45.

In a story of overlapping miracles, Mary learns from an angel that she is to give birth to Jesus and her relative Elizabeth will give birth in her old age. When she sees Elizabeth, she already knows the good news (and so does her baby in utero). These two literally carried around the expectation of God's blessing. Were others with them in this feeling that something new was beginning? Are we alone in our expectation that God will show up in the world?

## 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.

*From the Worship Commission*



## Advent Ensemble

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### Rehearsal: **This Sunday, 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). I look forward to playing with you!

*From Lydia Hedberg*



## (Almost) Longest Night

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### Tomorrow, 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 Reha for the Loss/Grief Support Group*

## Early Deadline



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### Monday, December 23 at 8 am

Because of Christmas, the Midweek will be sent out early next week. If you have anything you'd like to be included, please send them to [church@normalmennonite.org](mailto:church@normalmennonite.org) **before Monday, December 23 at 8 am!**

*From the Church Office*

## Christmas Eve Worship



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### 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*

## Midwest Food Bank Volunteering Midwest FOOD BANK

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**Friday, January 10 from 6-8 pm**

Our next volunteer night at Midwest Food Bank (MFB) is Friday, January 10 from 6-8 pm. MFB wants us to sign up at least a week ahead of time to facilitate their project planning, so if you plan to go, **please sign up as early as possible using [this link](#)**. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Outreach Committee.

*From the Outreach Commission*

## 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.*

## Meal Train

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We are eager to offer Mary and Claire some help in the form of food as Mary recovers from her knee replacement surgery this week. We will be hosting a Meal Train for them, offering 4 meals between Friday, December 20th through Saturday, December 28th. If you want to help but you’re not confident in the culinary arts, you can also send a gift card! **You can sign up or find more info [here](#)**.

*From the Congregational Care Committee*

# Immigrants in Bloomington-Normal, what's happening?

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You're invited: **WHEN:** 5PM, Sunday Jan 12. **WHERE:** MRC Community Building. Helen Dick Brandon and a friend/colleague, Kimberly Taber, will be hosting a discussion on immigrant families within our schools and community. We will be discussing trends in immigration in Bloomington/Normal, needs and assets they bring to the community, systems of support and systems of inequality for immigrants within our community, and the reaction to changes in political climates. This discussion is to help inform our church community about immigration issues within our community and to discuss our church's role (past, present, and future) with supporting our immigrant neighbors.

*Sponsored by the Community Life Commission*

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## 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.



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## Request for Emergency Funds

The Outreach Commission requested at the MCN congregational meeting on November 17, 2024, to add \$10,000 to the MCN 2025 spending plan as emergency funds to aid those harmed by the possibility of deportation as a result of the recent presidential election. Donald Trump has promised "the largest domestic deportation operation in American history" when he takes office in January. The Outreach Commission would like to clarify that this fund may be used to help people being targeted for deportation due to sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as those affected by immigration issues.

*Phil Dick, Chair, Outreach Commission*



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## Kauffman Family

We are grateful for the time of celebrating the lives of Bob & Mary Kauffman. The pastoral team invites those who would like to continue share stories and words of support to their family to send them to their family:

*Shared by the Pastoral Team*



## Log for Visiting/ Sitting with Alice Swift

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## 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!

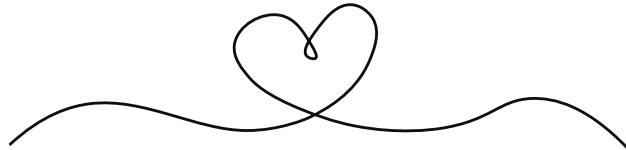
*From Denise , Steve , Kevin , Joe , and Wayne*



## Financial Planning Group

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.

*From the Community Life Commission*



## This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

### Wednesday, December 18

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

**6:30 pm** Wednesday Evening Advent Worship

### Thursday, December 19

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

**9:30 am** Women's Bible Study

**6:30 pm** (Almost) Longest Night Service

### Sunday, December 22

**8:00 am** Advent Ensemble Rehearsal

### Tuesday, December 24

**6:30 pm** Christmas Eve Worship Service

### December 24 through January 2

Office/Building Closed

## Prayer Requests and Announcements

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



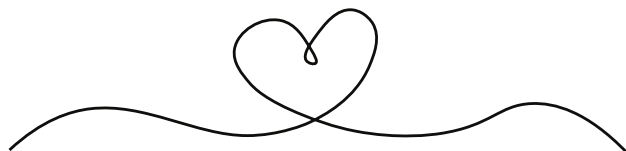
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## Those Serving This Week



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



# 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.

## Full hearts, not landfills

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In the United States, we send 25% more [waste to landfills](#) between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Decomposing food waste and other organic materials, including yard trimmings and paper, release methane gas, a potent greenhouse gas. Often situated near communities with a high percentage of people of color or historically under-resourced populations, landfills and the pollutants they emit also present environmental justice concerns.

Practice climate justice this season by reducing the waste you send to the landfill:

- [Cut food waste](#)
- Compost food scraps as a household or as a congregation.
- For holiday gifts, reuse gift bags or wrapping paper. Or use compostable wrapping paper- and be sure to compost it, not trash it!
- If using a live Christmas tree, [plan to recycle it](#) rather than sending it to the landfill.

*Shared by Karla Stoltzfus Detweiler, Mennonite Church USA Climate Justice Coordinator*

## Conflict in youth ministry

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In a Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA, Lynette McIntosh-Madrighal shares how she has experienced conflict transformation among inner-city youth in Fresno, California. **Read her post [here](#).**

## Clearing the path: An Advent reflection

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In a Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA, Talashia Keim Yoder looks at what it means to slow down and clear the path for Jesus this Advent season. **Read her post [here](#).**

# Advent Action for Justice & Mercy

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Dear United Women in Faith Members & Friends,

As we approach the holiday season, will you make room in your heart for an urgent appeal to President Biden to commute the federal death row before he leaves office in January?

We're calling on President Biden to commute death row not on account of the one who did the wrong or the one who was wronged but because of our love for God. We remember that God loved us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8) and that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). We should be grieved by the things that grieve God.

By signing this petition [here](#) you are lending your voice to a call for mercy, reform, and justice. After signing, please share this petition with others to increase our impact.

Peace,

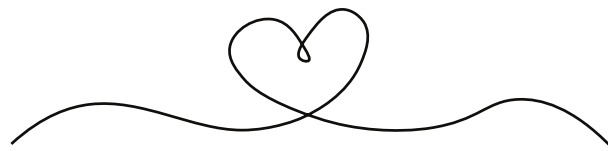
Cynthia Holland  
Digital Advocacy & Organizing Assistant  
Office of Racial Justice  
United Women in Faith

*Shared by Bess Desch*

## Exploring the history of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa: Just Peace Pilgrimage photos

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20 people from across the United States joined Chapter 2 of Mennonite Mission Network's Racial Justice Pilgrimage. The Just Peace Pilgrimage ran from October 16-27 and had the group travel from Johannesburg to Cape Town, exploring the long history and legacy of colonialism and apartheid — a political social engineering project based on racial segregation in South Africa. Jennifer Murch, who attended Chapter 1 of the Racial Justice Pilgrimage last year, documented the group's experience through photos. The pilgrimage was organized by Iziko Lamaqabane. According to their website, Iziko Lamaqabane "serves those active at the site of struggle by facilitating spaces of retreat, exchange and collective learning grounded at the intersection of Anabaptism, Black liberation theology & critical consciousness." **Learn more and view the photos in Jennifer Murch's article for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**



## Commission Meeting Minutes

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# Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

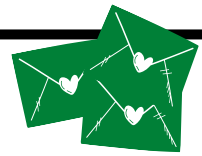
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- Building Open:     **Standard Hours:**  
Monday, Wednesday-Friday 9AM-11AM  
and Monday-Friday 1:30PM-3PM.
- Lydia Hedberg:   Office Administrator; [church@normalmennonite.org](mailto:church@normalmennonite.org); 309-452-6622
- Rita Munkakusi:   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



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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!

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## Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

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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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