

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Hope Etc.* using Luke 19:29-44 and Luke 22-23.

As Jesus makes his way up to Jerusalem there is a jubilant mood among the crowd.

We can only imagine the many varied expectations that were hung on Jesus at that moment. What expectations do we have about Jesus? How do we faithfully think about the future?

After Worship

Adult CE

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



Wednesdays at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary

Brothers and sisters in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection. We prepare for this with a season of penitence and fasting. By carefully keeping these days, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord. You are invited to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word. In addition to our regular Sunday worship, Worship Commission invites you to join the community in prayer and meditation on God's word during this holy season. MCN will be meeting the Wednesdays of Lent at 6:30 for prayer, confession, song, and lectio divina.

Wednesday, April 9, 6:30pm Lent Vespers

Wednesday, April 16, 6:30pm Lent Vespers

Thursday, April 17, 5:30pm Maundy Thursday Foot Washing (note earlier time)

Friday, April 18, 12:00pm Ecumenical Good Friday (at MCN)



Good Friday

Friday, April 18th at 12:00pm

This year, we are honored to host the Ecumenical Good Friday service at MCN with New Covenant Community leading the planning of the worship, around the theme: Human Suffering and God's Redemptive Love. You can mark your calendars for April 18th at 12:00pm—a time which is intended to enable people to attend during their lunch hour. This service is put together each year with the local Christian clergy group, with pastors across traditions leading most parts of the service. We hope you will join us for this meaningful opportunity to worship across traditions! If you are interested in helping host this event please reach out to Pastor Kevin.



Holy Saturday Meditation Walk

Saturday, April 19, 2025 at 10:00 am

Merwin Nature Preserve Parklands

Come soulfully wander among the wildflowers this Holy Saturday, April 19, on a Meditation Walk co-led by Jane and Judith. The Walk will include extraordinary springtime beauty, poetry and readings, some silence, and moments for contemplation and reflection. You must be able to walk safely for 3 miles on an unpaved woodland trail that includes some steep areas and some steps. Waterproof pants and walking shoes recommended and, if needed, a stick for balance. Please arrive in time to begin the walk at 10 am. There are porta potties available in the parking area. Bring a small notebook/journal and pen and water bottle. To register, send a text to Jane.



Easter Breakfast

Sunday, April 20th from 8 am to 9 am

The Fellowship Committee is respectfully requesting donations of either Fresh Fruit or pastries or coffee cake, so that we might all enjoy some very light refreshments before the Easter Service. We specifically request nothing that needs to be heated such as egg casseroles, in order to focus ourselves on the Easter Sunday celebration, and not kitchen duty. We will be serving from 8 am until 9 am before the service, so please come early and help us rejoice!! Donations can be dropped off anytime after 8 am Easter Sunday.

From the Fellowship Committee

Celebration of Life



Thursday, May 8 at 3:00pm at MCN

The Celebration of Life for Alice Swift will be held here at the Mennonite Church of Normal on Thursday, May 8 at 3:00pm. All are welcome to attend. It will also be livestreamed [here](#). You can read her obituary [here](#). Please keep Alice's family in your prayers.



Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team

The Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team, in consultation with the chair of the Discipling Commission, has called Robin to serve on the Discipling Commission. Please send any feedback to Janet by **April 18**. Thank you!

Shared by the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



Lloyd and Aldine Combs Scholarship

Administration Commission and Discipling Commission are pleased to announce a new opportunity for students pursuing higher education. Lloyd and Aldine Combs generously endowed an annual scholarship of \$5000 to be awarded annually to a student pursuing college or seminary. Mennonite institutions are preferred, but not required. Students may apply regardless of their participation or non-participation in the Student Mutual Aid Program. **Applications are due by April 25th and can be found at this. You can find a more detailed description of the scholarship.**

Shared by the Discipling Commission

CDC Connector



The April edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). This month celebrates Earth Day with a special themed issue of the Connector! Inside we hear from folks at three CDC congregations who are involved in earth care work. Also in this edition is a reflection by Trey Ferguson, pastor of The Intention Church, a recap of Mennonite Arts Weekend, and photos from the first ever Knitting Retreat at Camp Friedenswald. If you would like a paper copy, they will be available on the Library Table in the coming weeks.

Delegates Needed

The Mennonite Church USA Convention and Delegate assembly is meeting this summer. Please consider being a delegate for the conference. Let Lauren know if you have interest or questions.

From the Administration Commission



Overage Discussion

As was shared in the Annual Meeting and year-end financials, we ended 2024 with an excess of income over expenses of \$31,091. This current excess (Unrestricted Net Assets - Current on the Balance Sheet) is in addition to the accumulation of excess income over expenses from prior years (Unrestricted Net Assets - Prior Years on Balance Sheet). In 2018 a group called the Spending Plan Task Force was tasked with developing some policies around significant mid-year deficits as well as year-end overages, and as part of that made a recommendation for a formulaic approach to keeping a reasonable amount in that Unrestricted Net Assets line (funds that are in the checking/money market account but not allocated to any Balance Sheet accounts/funds/projects) from year to year, fluctuating with the level of the spending plan.

Given the growth of that line over the past 5 years, the Administration Commission is looking at what to do with that accumulation of approximately \$84,500 and looking for input from the congregation. For example, the last distribution of an overage (at the end of 2022) was allocated 10% to donations and 90% to Capital Improvement savings.

We have an aging building with numerous capital improvement needs. Some of our ideas include replacing leaking windows, repadding chairs, disability accommodations (recommendations forthcoming from the Safety, Access, and Accommodation subcommittee of the Administration Commission), and 10% donations. We have learned that in the last few years that our giving to Mennonite Church USA does NOT include Mennonite colleges or seminaries. We are open to the congregation's ideas.

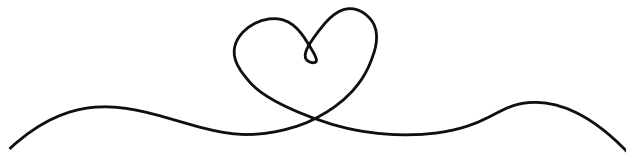
After a period of two weeks of input, AC will develop a recommendation to be shared with the congregation. Please reach out to Mary or anyone on the Administration Commission to share any ideas or thoughts on ways the money could be used. Your prayerful input is much appreciated!

Shared by the Administration Commission

Dutch Market Update

Thank you to all who participated in the Dutch Market at the 2025 IL Mennonite Relief Sale. Whether through set-up, baking, selling, take down, or buying! We had a great day! I thought I would share some numbers with you on the homemade products taken in: Pies received - 719 (215 strawberry pies), total income from pies - \$11, 719, Cookies, candies, noodles, granola, crackers, sweet breads, dinner rolls, bread, cakes, coffee cakes, angel food cakes, received - 731. All homemade products were sold by end of the sale, with the exception of some pies. These were sold within 24 hours. Thank you for making the sale a success!

Shared by Kathy



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



Prayer Requests and Announcements

Prayer requests can be shared during the Sharing Joys and Concerns portion of our Worship Service. For other announcements, please send them to Lauren Satchwell ahead of time 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.



Sharing of Joys and Concerns



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



This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, April 9

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

6:30 pm Lent Vespers

Thursday, April 10

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

9:30 am Women's Bible Study

Sunday, April 13

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Monday, April 14

5:00 pm Outreach Commission

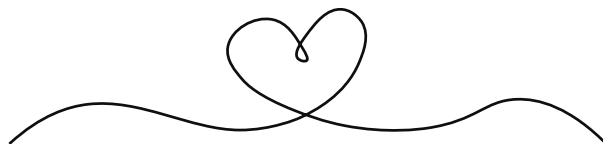
Tuesday, April 15

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, April 16

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

6:30 pm Lent Vespers



Communities of Hope: Immigration Resources

The following resources have been added to Central District Conference's [Communities of Hope](#) immigration resources website.

- ICE rarely gets judicial warrants that allow them to enter a building. Instead, they created their own warrants, which are essentially powerless, but they show and ask to enter buildings. Learn about the difference [here](#).
- The immigration defense project has a bunch of great resources in different languages [here](#).
- The article "What is the opportunity here? Re-tuning from panic to possibilities" by Nakeisha Alayna Alexis from AMBS is also helpful. Read it [here](#).

In addition to these resources from CDC, Mennonite Church USA has published their own Immigration Resources and Advocacy webpage. **View it [here](#).**

Second Mennonite child dies of measles complications

"A second unvaccinated Mennonite child has died from measles complications as the viral outbreak continues to grow in Texas and spreads to surrounding states. The Texas State Department of State Health Services [said in a news release](#) that the child died April 3 in a Lubbock hospital from measles pulmonary failure and had no reported underlying conditions. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. attended the April 6 funeral services at Reinlander Mennonite Church in Seminole. [The Associated Press reported](#) he met with families of both the [6- and 8-year-old children](#) who died." **Read the rest of the Anabaptist World article [here](#).**

Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program

When God calls someone to leadership, a journey begins. Perhaps you are on that journey. Perhaps you are looking for mentors and companions along the way. Central District Conference invites you to join Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program. This program is for lay leaders, pastors, church planters, and other emerging leaders who are called without specific training for ministry or who are exploring a call to ministry. The early registration deadline to apply for fall 2025 is July 9, with the final registration deadline on August 8, 2025. For more information visit www.ambs.edu/journey, or contact your pastor, or Doug Luginbill at doug@mcusacdc.org.

Shared by Central District Conference

A Note from MCC

Myanmar earthquake response from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC): In the wake of the magnitude 7.7 earthquake that struck Myanmar, MCC will be responding with local partners to provide cash assistance for immediate medical needs, food and water. The situation is made even more challenging by ongoing conflict and civil war. Donate today to provide emergency relief to families in need: mcc.org/Myanmar

Shared by Mennonite Central Committee

Sister Care Brazil is building a network of healing

“Healed women promote healing.’ This was the message of empowerment at the Sister Care training held in Curitiba, Brazil, in 2015. A decade later, five dedicated women from the Brasília region of the Aliança Evangélica Menonita (AEM, Evangelical Mennonite Alliance), Elizangela Fernandes, Deusilene Milhomem, Marlene Milhomem, Rebeca Milhomem and Rosalina Vasco, are living proof of this truth. The initial seminar was pivotal for these women, igniting in them a passion to share their transformative journey with women across Brazil.” **Read the rest of Sierra Ross Richer’s blog post for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

Volunteer with MCC Appalachia Build

We have had some spots open in our volunteer schedule for the summer. Consider bringing your group for a life-changing week of serving and learning with MCC Appalachia Build (formerly SWAP), a home repair ministry in eastern Kentucky and West Virginia. Volunteers help families make their homes safe, warm and dry, while building relationships and learning about Appalachia. **Learn more and register your group [here](#).**

Shared by Mennonite Central Committee

Wrestling with God: The practice of staying present to discomfort

Spiritual director Sherah-Leigh Gerber reflects on how Jacob’s time wrestling with God in Genesis reminds her of staying present in discomfort. **Read Dr. Sherah-Leigh Gerber’s Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

Anabaptist Trumpism

Our forebears challenged authoritarian regimes. Now some of us vote for one.

“Months before the November 2024 election, I began to prepare my church for the possibility of a second Trump term. I knew that ascendancy of Donald Trump to the highest office in the country would bring pain and difficulty to our church and our community. Already, in the first few weeks of office, those predictions have come to pass. The trans people in my church worry about their future as the federal government attempts to enforce gender binaries based on dubious biological claims. We are a church that includes first generation Americans and people with unsettled immigration status. Our concern for their well-being grows as the new administration targets both undocumented immigrants and those who have arrived in this country through designated legal channels. But there is another strain within Anabaptism — the survivalist tradition. In late 2024, the Washington Post published [an article](#) revealing the most Republican names according to public election data: Andy Byler, Steven Stoltzfus, Elmer Stoltzfus, Jacob Stoltzfus and Benuel Stoltzfus. These are ethnic Anabaptist names, names that come from Pennsylvania and Midwest Amish communities. They constitute [the most reliable Republican bloc](#) in the United States.” **Read the rest of Melissa Florer-Bixler’s article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Hope for the Future: Celebrating 30 years of anti-racism in the Mennonite church

“The refrain, ‘We have been here before,’ echoed throughout the Hope for the Future Conference at Goshen College, held Feb. 28 – March 2, 2025. This annual gathering for Black, Indigenous and other People of Color (BIPOC) leaders within Mennonite Church USA celebrated resilience, honored the past and envisioned a future grounded in justice and hope. This year’s conference commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Damascus Road Anti-Racism Process, a pioneering initiative launched by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. in 1995. Damascus Road laid the foundation for anti-racism training within Mennonite and Anabaptist communities, equipping participants with theological, educational and organizational tools for institutional transformation. The conference honored early founders of Damascus Road, inspired those committed to its vision and welcomed white allies into the sacred space of shared learning and solidarity.” **Read the rest of Mennonite Church USA’s article [here](#).**

The sanctuary across the street

For mother and child, a congregation shows ‘we all belong’

“On July 1, 2018, I preached a sermon at Keller Park Church in South Bend, Ind., where I pastor, on the story of Peter and John’s confrontation with the authorities recorded in Acts 4. When religious and political leaders try to silence Peter and John from sharing the good news, they respond, ‘Whether it is right in God’s sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.’ Based on this passage, we developed a chant for our children that Sunday. This chant, which seemed like an appropriate way for our Mennonite congregation to observe Independence Day weekend, soon became our church’s mantra. As we repeated it, week in and week out over the coming months and years, it instilled in our congregation a willingness to defy religious and political authorities when necessary in order to be a place of radical welcome.” **Read the rest of David C. Cramer’s article for the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Arizona school closes; land will return to Hopi tribe

“Peace Academic Center, formerly Hopi Mission School, in Kykotsmovi, Ariz., closed last fall, and the property is being transferred to the Hopi tribe. Mennonite Education Agency announced on March 14 that the school closed Oct. 15 after the school’s board decided on Sept. 17 to suspend operations due to low enrollment, unsustainable funding and a lack of volunteer support. ‘The closing of PAC marks the end of a season of educational ministry that has impacted many lives,’ MEA executive director Michael Danner said in [an MEA release](#). ‘We pray that the land and buildings will continue to bless the Hopi people under the leadership of tribal officials.’ The school was built in 1951 for 16 students, and enrollment grew to a high of 120 students from kindergarten through eighth grade. But challenges over the last decade, including fraud, embezzlement and the [COVID pandemic](#), were too much to overcome.” **Read the rest of the *Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

Recent Articles Shared in the MCC US National Peace & Justice Ministries March E-Memo

- **Words matter when we talk about immigrants:** Can we use words that are pure, lovely and admirable? [Read more](#).
- **Biblical hospitality isn't complicated:** "How do we begin to understand people from different cultures? We sit down with them and release our prejudices. We drink coffee or tea and actively listen to their stories." [Read the story](#).
- **Hopeful signs mark racial-justice road:** Celebrating 30 years of dismantling racism, leaders look for next generation to rise. [Read more](#) about Damascus Road and the Hope for the Future conference.
- **Boycotts accompany prayer as faith leaders prepare for a Lent of protest:** Learn about faith leaders creating new Lenten traditions. [Read more](#).
- **Being bridges not walls:** Migration education coordinator Saulo Padilla invites the church and individuals to look at the scriptures through the lens of migration. [Watch the video](#).

Climate Justice Corner

Climate justice and immigration concerns are intimately connected. This article on [climate and migration](#) from [Mom's Clean Air Force](#) describes how "...climate change and migration are big, complicated global issues, [and] the relationship between the two is complex." According to Gabriela Roque, climate immigration program manager at the National Partnership for New Americans' Climate Justice Collaborative, "What's important for people to know is that climate change alone doesn't always lead to forced displacement or forced migration, but it intersects with and intensifies existing drivers of migration."

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

The Violent Exhaustion of Liberal Democracy

A conversation with Wendy Brown on the U.S. presidential election, the exclusions liberal democracy is built on, and why we must aim at more than restoring its mythical former splendor. **Read the *Boston Review* article with Wendy Brown and Francis Wade [here](#).**

Shared in the Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Weekly Newsletter

Undoing Patriarchy: MC USA's latest "Learn, Pray, Join" initiative calls for transformation

How do we dismantle patriarchal norms in our churches and communities? Mennonite Church USA's (MC USA) latest "Learn, Pray, Join" initiative, [Undoing Patriarchy](#), invites congregations and individuals to explore this crucial question through learning, prayer, and action. Running through mid-May, this campaign equips MC USA members with the tools needed to work toward a more equitable church and society where all people are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of gender. **Learn more about this Mennonite Church USA initiative [here](#).**