

# ***THE MIDWEEK***



## **WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM**

This Sunday, Shannon Neely will preach a sermon titled *Faith With or Without Works?* using Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21.

In Galatians 2, Paul confronts Peter about the idea of justification by faith alone. How do we reconcile this idea with James 2 and the concept of faith without works being dead?

## **After Worship**

### **Adult CE**

Room 8

### **Children & Youth CE**

Pre-K-K Grades

1st-5th Grades

Jr High School

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



## Blood Drive

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**Saturday, June 7th from 8am-12pm**

We are partnering with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (just a few doors West on Hovey) for a Blood Drive on June 7th from 8am-12pm. **You can learn more and sign up to donate [here](#).**

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## Leaning into Summer: Lessons from Italy on Living More Mindfully and Joyfully

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**Saturday, June 14 from 5 pm to 7 pm**

Do you want to slow down this summer and live more intentionally? Maybe talk to your neighbors more, or treat a shared meal as a sacred event? As we head into summer, we invite you to take a journey to live *la dolce vita*, "the sweet life," wherever you are. In this free program, spirituality author, journalist and poet Judith Valente uses image and music to distill an Italian way of life that helps us to live more joyfully and mindfully. From the sanctity of the dinner table, to the age-old practice of chiacchiera, chatting with others to foster a sense of belonging, these practices offer us a radical alternative to the fraught, frenetic, and disconnected way of life all too common today. The program is inspired by Judith's new book just out this May, *The Italian Soul: How to Savor the Full Joys of Life*. The book will be available for purchase at the event at a special author discount. "Leaning into Summer" is free and open to all, will last about an hour, and we'll top it off with a pizza party.

*Sponsored by the Discipling Commission*

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## Adult Summer CE



You are invited to participate in the Adult Summer CE class on the characteristics of Christian nationalism and ways our church can respond to this ideology. The book, "Strange Worship" by Drew Strait, AMBS professor, will be our source book for the class. Individuals from the Wednesday morning men's group will be the facilitators of this class as they have previously been working with this book. We look forward to their insights and the fruit of their discussions. The summer will begin **June 1** with some sessions highlighting our national historical context and an overview of the religious and philosophical views of the founding fathers of the United States. Books will be available for pickup on the desk in the conference room this coming Sunday.

*Shared by the Discipling Commission*

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## Bluffton Gathering



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**Sunday, June 22 after CE at the MRC Community Building**

On June 22 after church, we will be hosting a Bluffton University gathering at the MRC community building. Coming from Bluffton is our interim president Dr. J. Alex Sider and others. Dr. Sider has served the university in various roles since 2006. This will be an opportunity for us to meet Dr. Sider and get to know him. All alumni and Bluffton supporters are invited to attend. There will be a light lunch provided. Everyone is welcome.



## Dual Conference Affiliation

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Thank you to those who attended last Sunday's hearing regarding MCN's historical and future affiliation with Illinois Mennonite Conference and Central District Conference. Please view the current [FAQ document](#) which has now been updated based on questions and feedback. It is considered a living document and will be updated as more information is received, or as new questions/considerations are raised. The Vision Team continues to welcome your questions, comments, and feedback as next steps are discerned: you can speak to a Vision Team member directly or send through email. Your Vision Team: Shelly (chair), Helen, Shannon, Ben, and Lauren (PT representative).

*Shared by the Vision Team*

## Picture Directory Update



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Many have asked when we will be receiving our new church directory. Indeed, we have waited a long time. Part of that waiting process was to allow the company to book sittings with area churches so we could offer more times to our congregants that missed our time slots last September. You can schedule your appointment by contacting the church office (309-452-6622 or [church@normalmennonite.org](mailto:church@normalmennonite.org)). Thank you for your commitment to the church, we appreciate all that you do to support and be a part of our church community! We hope to schedule more families for photos and submit our information for a proof the last week of June. Then we should receive our directories in August. Thank you for your patience!

If you haven't gotten your church directory photos taken yet - you are an important part of our church family and our directory wouldn't be complete without you! When participating in a session, you will receive a complimentary 8x10 portrait as well as an updated church directory. The process will only take about 30-45 minutes and you will have the opportunity to purchase family portraits. Sittings are available at churches in Peoria, Pontiac, Herscher, and Urbana.



## 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*



## CDC Connector

The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). This month we are gearing up for CDC's Annual Meeting (June 19-21) with a preview issue filled with all the details of worship, youth programming, seminars, and more! There is also an article about a new social-justice-oriented company and the latest edition of Doug's Mug. **If you would like a paper copy, they are now available to take from the Library Table.**



## This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

### Wednesday, May 21

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

**1:00 pm** Quilt Project for Home Sweet Home

### Thursday, May 22

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

**6:30 pm** Administration Commission (Zoom)

### Monday, May 26

**All Day** Church Office/Building Closed for Memorial Day

### Tuesday, May 27

**3:00 pm** Pastoral Team (Zoom)

### Wednesday, May 28

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

**1:00 pm** Quilt Project for Home Sweet Home

**6:30 pm** Congregational Care Committee (Zoom)

## 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

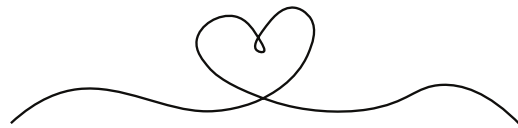


## Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



## Those Serving This Week



## Practical Leadership Training Modules

Build leadership skills through Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary's Practical Leadership Training modules! Modules beginning in March include Being the Church Amid Polarization and Conflict; Effective Church Boards; Intercultural Inclusion in the Church; and ¿Quién es mi vecino? Latinos/as Growing in Intercultural Competence (taught in Spanish). **Check out the full list of modules [here](#).**

*Shared by the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary*



# Update on Mennonite Church USA v. Homeland Security Lawsuit

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At the first hearing on April 4, 2025, the judge denied our coalition's motion for preliminary injunction in the [Mennonite Church USA et. al. v. United States Department of Homeland Security et. al.](#) lawsuit. This motion sought to limit Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) / Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) enforcement actions in and around houses of worship while the case is being adjudicated. However, the judge did allow our legal team at Georgetown Law's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection to present additional information. On Monday [May 12], the parties filed a Joint Status Report, in which we told the federal district court in Washington, D.C., that we plan to file a renewed preliminary injunction motion with additional evidence. Today [May 14], the Court set a schedule for briefing on that motion. On that schedule, we will file our renewed motion on June 2; the government will respond on June 25; and we will file our final reply by July 9.

*Shared by Mennonite Church USA*

## MC USA Executive Board rejects Mosaic proposal

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*Conference seeks a partnership, but program-entity idea is 'not viable'*

A Mosaic Mennonite Conference proposal to redefine its relationship to the denomination won't work, the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board decided May 8. Mosaic, one of MC USA's largest conferences, had proposed to become a program entity — an organization that provides services to meet churchwide goals. But the Executive Board, meeting concurrently with the Constituency Leaders Council in Wichita, Kan., passed a motion saying the idea "is not viable within our structure." A Pennsylvania-based conference that has expanded nationwide, Mosaic is evaluating its affiliation — seeking a partnership with MC USA rather than membership — and may decide the relationship's future in November. The Executive Board proposed a mediated conversation with the Mosaic board to seek "reconciliation for broken relationships." Mosaic moderator Angela Moyer Walter and executive minister Stephen Kriss said the Mosaic board would consider the request. **Read the rest of Paul Schrag's article for *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

## Unveiling the truth about migration

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"Today an icon of liberation theology, Óscar Romero was considered theologically and socially conservative at the time of his appointment as archbishop of San Salvador in 1977. What radicalized him was not a leftist political ideology but encounters with those in abject poverty, whom Romero came to see as victims of a largely hidden form of violence. Romero compared this everyday violence to Bermuda grass, whose underground system of rhizomes makes shoots that rise to the surface. Romero asks, 'When the roots are firmly in place, should we be surprised to find new weeds sprouting up everywhere?' Because of his theological vision, Romero was able to see this form of violence as an affront to God and to humans made in God's image. His adherence to Catholic Social Teaching allowed him to see what so many others tried to ignore and led him to become a witness — indeed, martyr — to this violence." **Read the rest of David C. Cramer's article for *The Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

# After We're Gone: Protecting Those with Special Needs Through Estate Planning

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Families who have loved ones with disabilities have extra concerns when estate planning. In January, Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADN) hosted a webinar covering these unique aspects of estate planning: special needs trusts, ABLE accounts, and changes under the SECURE Act and SECURE Act 2.0 that affect special needs planning with retirement accounts. **The webinar recording is now available for free on ADN's website [here](#).** Visit the [Special Needs Alliance](#) for additional resources, including a directory of members, and find an attorney near you.

## Bike ride supports climate solutions

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*Duo crossing United States after setback due to accident last summer.*

Two women are biking across the United States with the goal of raising half a million dollars to support sustainable climate solutions after an accident nearly fractured their plans last summer. Donna Minter, a member of Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis, and Lutheran pastor Becky Bolander began their 3,200-mile "Grammy Climate Ride" April 1 in San Diego with plans to arrive in St. Augustine, Fla., in June. Minter, who turned 67 in March, is seeking to support five nonprofit organizations to help make the world a better place for her — and everyone else's — grandchildren. These organizations include Climate Generation, Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light, Third Act, Climate Ride and Climate STARR (Climate Strategies for Trauma, Action, Resilience and Regeneration). Climate STARR is modeled on a trauma-awareness program developed by the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University. The cross-country bike trip was [intended to begin last fall](#), but Bolander was hit by a car in July while on a training ride near her home in Toledo, Ohio. Her multiple hip and pelvic fractures have healed, and by April 11 the duo had reached Phoenix. **Read the rest of Tim Huber's article for the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

## Congo pastor fights prejudice, abuse

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"The Indigenous Batwa people of the Democratic Republic of Congo suffer discrimination and inhumane treatment by the Bantu majority. The abuse takes many forms: expropriation of land, social marginalization, economic exploitation and even violence. Nathan Mudiji, a Mennonite Brethren pastor, bears witness to this harsh reality: a Batwa woman who died for lack of care in a hospital where Bantu doctors refused to assist her; a girl expelled from school for outperforming her Bantu classmates. In Bantu-run churches, Batwa are often forced to sit on the floor after entering last. These exclusions, ignored or tolerated by local institutions, fuel a sense of injustice and exacerbate conflicts. To restore Batwa dignity and raise awareness of Bantu prejudice, Mudiji created Friendly Spaces for Peace. The Mennonite Brethren Church of Congo supports the ministry. Friendly Spaces for Peace are welcoming places where Batwa and Bantu people can meet, talk and take part in activities. The ministry includes a listening and information center, training for income-generating activities, intergenerational dialogue and play areas." **Read the *Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

## MWC, MCC lead response to DR Congo crisis

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Mennonite World Conference has convened an inter-Anabaptist task force in response to a humanitarian crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo after a major escalation of one of Africa's longest conflicts. "We are deprived of Bibles, water, soap and even food," writes a representative of the youth organization of a Mennonite Brethren church in Bukavu. "We are soliciting the accompaniment of your prayers and materials." Mennonite Central Committee will take the lead in the response. Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Mennonite Church Canada Witness, Mennonite Mission Network and the MB mission agency Multiply are participating. **Read the rest of *The Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

## The US is poised to use terror laws against students. This could be worse than McCarthyism

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"On Monday, the Department of Justice [announced the launch](#) of 'Joint Task Force October 7 (JTF 10-7)'. In an accompanying press release, the DoJ said it would bring to justice Hamas leaders who murdered and kidnapped innocent civilians in the deadly attack on Israel of 7 October 2023. Few would quarrel with this ambition. In the same breath, however, the press release claimed that the taskforce would also 'investigate acts of terrorism and civil rights violations by individuals and entities providing support and financing to Hamas, related Iran proxies, and their affiliates, as well as acts of antisemitism by these groups'. In plain English, this means the student protesters. It could also include universities and colleges that have entered the government's crosshairs." **Read the rest of Thomas Anthony Durkin and Bernard Harcourt's article for *The Guardian* [here](#).**

*Shared by Community Peacemaker Teams*

## Benham West coordinators promote new book

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On Feb. 24, Nekeisha Alayna Alexis, MA, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) Intercultural Competence and Undoing Racism coordinator, and Jamie Pitts, PhD, AMBS Professor of Anabaptist Studies and Director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, appeared on WSBT 22's Hometown Living program to discuss the Benham West history project they coordinated together. Titled *What Happened at Benham West: African American Stories of Community, Displacement and Hope*, the project consists of both an 80-minute documentary and a book. Together, the pieces explore life in the predominantly Black Benham West neighborhood — known to many as "the village" — including experiences of segregation in Elkhart; the city's clearing of Benham West; and some of the remaining elders' hopes for the future. The book, scheduled for release in June 2025, is now available for pre-order through Wolfson Press. For the latest information about the project and upcoming screenings, see the Benham West project's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) profiles. **Watch the interview [here](#). Pre-order the book [here](#).**



## Policy updates from the MCC US National Peace & Justice Ministries April E-Memo

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- **Gaza:** Since the end of the ceasefire in March, Israel has severely increased their [land and air siege](#) of Gaza [killing and injuring over 1000 people](#) with full support from the Trump administration. Military plans show Israel taking all of Gaza and [making Rafah a permanent buffer zone](#), while President Trump is still calling for the U.S. to [take over Gaza](#) and expel all Palestinians. In addition, Israel has once again [barred humanitarian assistance](#) from entering Gaza.
- **'Alien enemies' or innocent neighbors?** [Reporting shows](#) most of the over 200 people sent to a mega-prison in El Salvador have no apparent criminal record. In one high-profile case, Kilmar Abrego Garcia was removed despite a withholding of removal order, and the [Supreme Court has since ordered the facilitation of his return](#).
- **Attacks on various immigration status holders:** In early April, [the Trump administration revoked the immigration status](#) of 985,000 migrants that used the CBP One app to seek asylum, 500,000 people with humanitarian parole, and 1.1 million Temporary Protected Status holders including Haitians, Venezuelans, and Afghans. Each revocation has a different timeline and will undergo legal challenges, but many who previously had legal status could soon face deportation.
- **Foreign assistance:** On April 4, the Trump administration [terminated more life-saving humanitarian assistance programs totaling \\$1.3 billion](#), including emergency food aid to countries in Africa and the Middle East. Though some cuts were later [reversed](#), structural hurdles continue and are adversely affecting the work of MCC partners and dashing hopes of achieving [Zero Hunger](#) by 2030. **Take Action:** [Ask Congress to protect lifesaving foreign assistance](#).
- **\$1 trillion defense budget:** On April 7, [President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced](#) that the FY2026 Department of Defense budget could exceed \$1 trillion, an increase of over \$100 billion from the current fiscal year. The administration wants to cut some programs and reduce civilian DOD jobs, but increase spending on "lethality and readiness."

*Shared by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries. Read the full April E-Memo [here](#).*

## May Vastria never exist

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In Lesbos island, the proposed new camp for migrants, Vastria, would be a monument to injustice. Built in a fire-prone forest, it would endanger both the land and those trapped inside. It would stand as a symbol of Europe's border policies, that would turn away those fleeing war, hunger and persecution. It would not be a place of refuge but of confinement, designed to isolate and control. **Read more [here](#).**

*Shared in the Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Weekly Newsletter*

## Wisdom from Luke

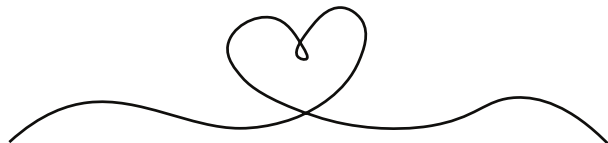
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Dr. Paul Kyu-Jin Choi shows how Paul and Barnabas' conflict in Acts 15 is less about Paul and Barnabas and more about what the Holy Spirit is doing. **Read Dr. Paul Kyu-Jin Choi's blog post for Mennonite Church USA's Learn, Pray, Join: Climate Justice: Conflict Transformation series [here](#).**

## Peace group warns of arms race in Europe

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A European ecumenical peace group is warning of an arms race in Europe as the United States redraws alliances. [In a March 6 statement](#), Church and Peace, a network that includes several Anabaptist organizations, said “massive armament” would be irresponsible and “to declare a ‘pre-war situation’... might be a self-fulfilling prophecy.” “Instead of plunging into an unlimited arms race with unforeseeable consequences for the social and democratic cohesion of our societies... Europe should promote civil society initiatives against the authoritarian and right-wing extremist tendencies being mobilized by Russia and the United States,” the statement said. **Read the rest of *The Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**



## Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

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

## Facility Use Agreement

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## Commissions and Teams Contact List

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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!

# Our Members in Care Facilities

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



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## Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

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## Past Midweeks

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## Commission, Team, & Committee Members

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## Commission Meeting Minutes

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## Item Check-Out Request Form

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## Structure Documents

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