

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *If It Plays in Peoria* using Daniel 3:1-30.

The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shows a level of defiance most of us will never be in a position to imitate, and the result is more miraculous than anyone can expect to experience. Where does this story touch the ground? And what does it have to do with Advent?

After Worship

Adult CE
Rooms 5 & 7

Children & Youth CE

Pre-K-1st Grads
2nd-5th Grades
Junior High
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



Office/Building Closed

Thursday-Friday, November 27 & 28

The church office and building will be closed tomorrow and Friday for Thanksgiving.

From the Church Office

Advent



Advent begins this Sunday, November 30th. We are excited to begin the new series Be Amazed, based on the Narrative Lectionary texts. The theme was created by a team from Mennonite Church British Columbia. They write about the series: "The assigned scriptures speak of dry bones, a fiery furnace, a mystic's monologue, and the birth and adult ministry of Christ...There is, in each of them, a common thread of God acting in powerful and astonishing ways. The response seen in many of these passages and likewise evoked in us as readers is that of awe. Be amazed! The theme of amazement is expansive enough, we hope, to hold together all these pieces. As your congregation journeys through this stretch of the liturgical calendar, we pray that the words that follow will be of service to you and that you will, in your own ways, find wonder in the work God has done and is doing."



Cookie Baking

Sunday, December 7 after church

On December 7th, MYF and JMYF-ers are invited to stay after church for devotions (during the SS hour), cookie baking and lunch. We'll plan to be done by 1:00 or so. The cookies we bake will be frozen for a congregational / family event on December 12th: Cookies and Caroling. On that night, the pre-baked cookies will be brought out for attendees to decorate and package before being dispersed in groups for cookies and caroling. After caroling, we'll meet back at the church for hot drinks, cookies, and conversation. We're very hopeful that your child will be able to join us for cookie baking and lunch on December 7th! Please let me know if you have questions!

From the Discipling Commission

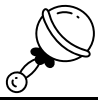
Cookies and Caroling



Friday, December 12

You're invited to participate in a cookie decorating and Christmas caroling event on December 12th. We'll gather at MCN to decorate and package cookies that have been pre-baked for us by MYF / JMYF and then disperse to carol at MRC, the surrounding neighborhood, and perhaps Westminster Village. Afterward, we'll gather back at the church for hot drinks, cookies, and conversation. Please RSVP using this [Sign Up Genius](#). We look forward to singing, snipping, and snacking with you! While no formal dinner will be offered, there will be bread, pb & j, cheese and lunchmeat plus apples and carrots if your child needs a quick dinner before helping decorate cookies!

From the Discipling Commission



Meal Train

Multifaith Thanksgiving



We were happy to be a part of the 4th annual Multifaith Thanksgiving at the YMCA in Bloomington. Pastor Kevin shared a reflection on *gelassenheit* as a means to nurture gratitude (you can read it [here](#)). An offering was taken of \$836 to support the YMCA Strong Kinds program, and pie was eaten to share fellowship across faiths. One thing to be thankful for is that MCN is a part of such a rich community!

From Pastor Kevin

Vision Team Member



Following nomination from the congregation, SGDT has called Joe to serve on the Vision Team. Joe has accepted this call. SGDT is pleased to announce that the Vision Team for 2026 is all set: Ben steps into the Chair role, Helen continues her term, and Amy and Joe begin their terms.

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



CLC Members

The Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team, in consultation with the chair of the Community Life Commission, has called Connie and Jill to serve on the Community Life Commission. Please send any feedback to Janet by December 5. Thank you!

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



Periodical Renewals

It's that time of year again -- periodical subscription renewals! Each year the church organizes group subscriptions to three Mennonite publications: [Rejoice!](#) (a quarterly devotional) by Menno Media for \$38, [The Upper Room Daily Devotional](#) (delivered quarterly) for \$9.29, and [Anabaptist World](#) (16 issues) for \$49. This gives everyone the opportunity to subscribe these publications with a discounted rate through the church office. If you would like to **renew**, **begin**, or **end** a subscription to **one or more** of these publications, please contact Lydia in the church office at 309-452-6622 or church@normalmennonite.org **before Monday, December 8th.**

From the church office

The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). In this last issue of the year, we learn about our new church safety coordinator, Gestalt pastoral care, how to age well as a congregation, and much more! If you would like a paper copy, they will be available to take from the Library Table soon.



MCN 50th Factoids

Bite-sized pieces of our shared history leading up to our 50th anniversary celebration (September 27, 2026).

We are a musical bunch at Mennonite Church of Normal! Beyond the choral music and instrumentalists that will surely share their gifts this Advent season, we have a history of supporting congregational music. A first printing of the 2020 Voices Together hymnal lists at least six donations from Bloomington-Normal. We tend to put our money where our mouth is!



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, November 26

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilt Project for Home Sweet Home Ministries

Thursday, November 27

All Day Church Office/Building Closed

Friday, November 28

All Day Church Office/Building Closed

Sunday, November 30

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Tuesday, December 2

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, December 3

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilt Project for Home Sweet Home Ministries

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 (lauren@normalmennonite.org) 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.



Those Serving This Week





Advent at Home

Advent begins Nov. 30 and Mennonite Church USA invites you to deepen your worship at home with our 2025 Advent at Home guide. This year's theme, "Be Amazed," follows MennoMedia's Leader magazine and offers weekly reflections and practices for individuals, families and households of all ages. The guide is free to share with all MC USA congregations and is available [here](#) as a downloadable PDF in English and Spanish.

Shared by Mennonite Church USA

Creativity Retreat

April 10-12

These days call for creativity...and time in the woods. Come join Camp Friedenswald for their first ever spring CREATIVITY RETREAT: One Retreat. Four Tracks. You pick your track! Memoir writing with Jeff Gundy, Songwriting with Sadie Gustafson-Zook, Watercolor with John Blosser, and Knitting/Crochet with Mariah Martin. Registration opens December 1, 2025. Spaces are limited so register early! **Learn more and register [here](#).**

Shared by Central District Conference



The Greek Ministry of Migration is attempting to push through the construction of Vastria Detention Centre in Lesvos. **Click [here](#)** to find out why it should be rejected, and sign up to say "NO" to a new detention centre.

Shared by Community Peacemaker Teams

The First Yes: Living the Call to Peace and Justice

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith is an abstract concept, but it carries deep power. As a Christian, I believe God asks me to hold tightly to the dreams in my heart, even when they seem out of reach. A dream, by nature, is something I long for, but I am not sure if that will become true. However, faith becomes the strength that pushes me to work toward those dreams, and it makes me believe that these dream for sure can become true. I first sensed that calling in 2020, during an interview with a lecturer from the Mennonite Seminary in Pati, Central Java. She asked me, "Why did you choose theology?" I had not prepared an answer, but I found myself saying, "Because I want to serve women and children in the church." I surprised myself. My original interest in theology was centered on Christian history, not specifically on women or children. But that unexpected answer planted a seed. **Read the rest of Hani Yopita Setiawan's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Intergenerational worship

In a Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA, Rachel Ringenberg Miller provides tips for growing intergenerational congregational connections. **Read Rachel Ringenberg Miller's Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

November E-Memo: We don't find hope. We build it.

On an episode of the [Beyond Prisons](#) podcast, activist, writer and educator Mariame Kaba insists that hope is a discipline. It's a commitment to a path, she argues — a path we continue to walk even when we don't feel optimistic. A friend of mine who works at a migrant shelter understands this well. When a learning tour participant recently asked them, "Where do you find hope?" my friend replied, "We don't find hope. We build it." Hope is more than an attitude or an optimistic feeling — hope is an action. Like tiny green shoots in a garden, hope sprouts up where we till, plant, weed and nurture it. Change doesn't show up from good sentiments or prayers alone. Let's have faith that things will change but remember that "faith without deeds is dead" (James 2:26). When we imagine a better future, extend hospitality or organize a rally, we build hope. Shared by Saulo Padilla, migration education coordinator, in the MCC U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries. **Read the full November E-memo [here](#).**

Shared by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries

An Anxious Presence

For most churches, the life of the community revolves around the Sunday service. Regardless of the size of the congregation, those Sunday gatherings can be quite "people-y." Small talk on the way in and out, being in a sometimes loud or crowded space, and managing the social pressures of engagement... it can be a bit overwhelming. This is particularly true for those in our communities who are experiencing anxiety. And, whether we are aware of it or not, our churches are likely filled with anxious folk who serve and bless their communities in varieties of ways. **Read the rest of JE Misz's blog post for the Anabaptist Disabilities Network [here](#).**

Everence grants respond to California wildfire needs

Everence contributed \$36,000 to churches in and around Los Angeles County in response to [the 2025 California wildfires](#). Everence distributed a dozen \$3,000 grants to eight churches from February through May. Churches needed to be either an active Everence Stewardship Partner or part of an Everence-affiliated denomination or church network. Wholicare Community Mission Church in Pasadena, where most church attenders were displaced, received a California Wildfire Assistance grant and disbursed it to members to buy food, pay utilities and afford repairs. Royal Dominion International Church in Los Angeles used funds to provide food, rent money and cleaning services for those whose homes were impacted by the fire. "The community's experience was that of fear, sadness and the loss of lifetime memories of their lives together, which cannot be replaced," said Pastor Olufemi Fatunmbi. **Read the rest of Heather Wolfe's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Historical releases dig into Revolutionary War and Virginia Mennonite experiences

John L. Ruth wrote *'Twas Seeding Time: A Mennonite View of the American Revolution* because he couldn't find stories about his eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite community and the American Revolution in history books. Originally published by Herald Press to coincide with the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976, the book describes challenges the oldest community of Mennonites in North America faced as defenseless Christians during a time of polarization and war. Forty-nine years later, as the nation's 250th birthday draws near, *'Twas Seeding Time* has been republished by Sermon on the Mount Publishing. Andrew Ste. Marie, owner of the press, said one of his friends assumed Mennonites had supported the Revolutionary cause and was surprised to learn most had not. **Read the rest of Paul Schrag's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Communities: Curated or Courageous?

If you had to choose, would you rather attend a protest or volunteer at a food pantry? Sociologist Robert Putnam has a lot to say about volunteering and protesting. In his book "Bowling Alone," he outlines the decrease in all sorts of community engagement – civic, religious, and political – that the U.S. has seen since 1970. Many of these rates are tied together; that is, those that attend church are also most likely to participate in civic organizations and most likely to volunteer. Since the book was published in 2000, volunteering rates have only continued to decline, but participation in political protests has seen a dramatic rise in the last decade. Let me rephrase my initial question: Is it more counter-cultural today to attend a protest, perhaps landing a well-articulated critique of capitalist and neo-colonial structures, or to regularly volunteer, showing up week after week within flawed but promising existing systems, making a sustained, intentional effort at incremental and tangible improvements? As I reflect on my own actions, I can say for myself that it feels more emotionally dangerous to, say, talk to an unhoused person or show up at a new community club, than it does to go to a protest, where I know my perspective will generally be shared. Fellow activists speak a critical language that I'm already comfortable with and don't tend to challenge my preconceived notions about the world. As Anabaptists, we're called to radically follow Christ and live dangerously by making sacrifices for our faith. Sacrifice means giving up some degree of comfort and control – two things that are notably difficult to let go of. **Read the rest of Harrison Horst's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

They Are Beautiful

"Your organization got the wrong name!" A police officer pointed at the sticker on one of our field worker's motorcycle. "Nyandengoh!" it said. In Mende, the local language, this means "he/she/it is beautiful!" The police officer knew we work with children living with disabilities. Abdulai, the field worker, was prepared. As a Mende follower of Jesus, he knew both the cultural beliefs of the area and the truth revealed to us in the Scriptures. Gently, he explained to the police officer what we believe: that every child is created in the image of God and therefore, is worthy of our care and respect. The name we have chosen for our organization is no mistake. **Read the rest of Heleen Yoder's blog post for the *Anabaptist Disabilities Network* [here](#).**

Mennonite Action Mass Call Recap

Thank you to all who joined last week's mass call! It was so meaningful to mark two years of this work together. We spent the night reflecting and sharing stories from what chapters have done in 2025. For those who missed it, you can [watch the recording here](#) and you can find all the [links shared on the call here](#). **Read the full update [here](#).**

From Mennonite Action



Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

<u>Building Open:</u>	Standard Hours: Monday-Friday 9AM-11AM & 1:30PM-3PM
	Pastor Kevin designated office hours: Wednesdays, 8am-12pm (or call to plan a visit)
<u>Lydia Hedberg:</u>	Office Administrator; church@normalmennonite.org ; 309-452-6622
<u>Rita Munkakusi:</u>	Custodian
<u>Kevin Chupp:</u>	Pastor for Community Life Commission, Outreach Commission, Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team, & Worship Commission; kevin@normalmennonite.org
<u>Lauren Satchwell:</u>	Pastoral Team Lead & Pastor for Administration Commission, Discipling Commission, & Vision Team; lauren@normalmennonite.org

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!

Past Midweeks

Commission Meeting Minutes

Commission, Team, & Committee Members

Facility Use Agreement

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

Item Check-Out Request Form

Commissions and Teams Contact List

Structure Documents
