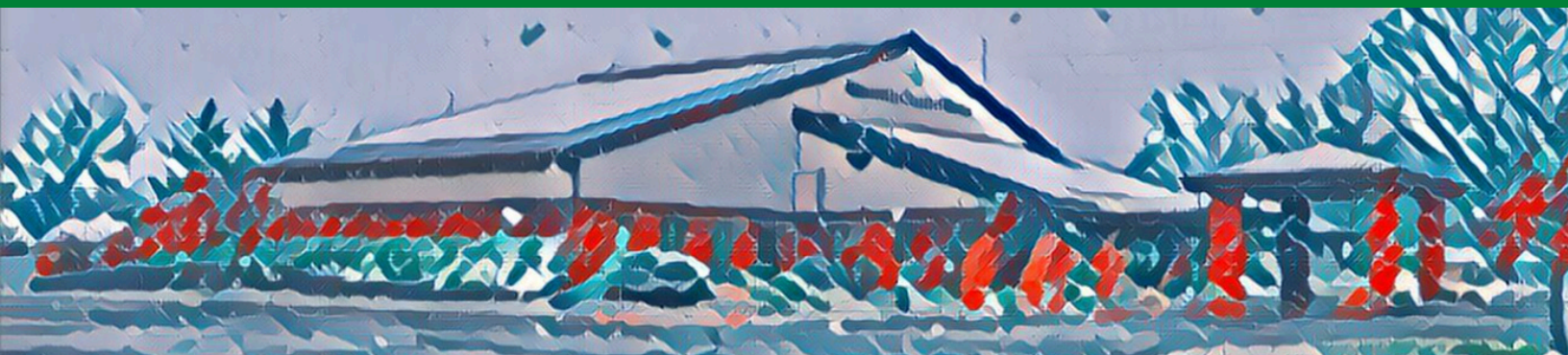


THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Reverse Graffiti* using John 3:1-21.

A man named Nicodemus comes to Jesus expressing confidence that he is indeed acting on God's behalf. However, he is confused by Jesus' response. When Jesus elaborates, we receive this famous verse, John 3:16. What does this verse, in context, reveal to us about who Jesus is? How does it invite us to respond?

After Worship

Adult CE

Rooms 5 & 7

Children & Youth CE

Pre-K-1st Grades

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



Voting

Today, January 21st at 5pm

Vote on the 2026 Spending Plan presented in the Annual Meeting [here](#). Absentee ballots can be submitted through the electronic form or by filling out a paper ballot in the church office. **Voting will close Wednesday the 21st at 5pm.** You can read the 2025 Annual Report [here](#).



Midwest Food Bank Volunteering

Thursday, January 22 at 6 pm

Our next volunteer night at Midwest Food Bank (MFB) is Thursday, January 22 from 6-8pm. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Outreach Committee.

From the Outreach Commission

Winter Retreat



This Weekend, January 23-25

EVERYONE is invited to a weekend of fellowship and fun at camp, January 23-25! Friedenswald is a beautiful retreat with large, comfortable, warm lodges 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 details and to sign up, please click [here](#).

Sponsored by the Fellowship Committee

2026 COMFORTER BASH

What is it?

We are gathering to assemble as many comforters as possible to donate to the Mennonite Central Committee. We hope to complete at least 35 comforters.



We also welcome pre-made comforter tops (60" x 80") and backs (65" x 85") for assembly at the Comforter Bash. Tops and backs may be brought directly to the Comforter Bash or dropped off at Hopedale Mennonite Church ahead of time.

Necessary skills for the Bash:

None! There will be something for everyone to do – tie knots, thread needles, help with lunch service, etc. We invite all women, men, and children to join us.

Who it helps:



MCC is donating blankets and comforters to our global neighbors who are dealing with conflict and disaster. Your participation in this Comforter Bash will go a long way in helping us meet MCC's goal of 45,000 blankets by the end of 2026. A handmade comforter provides not only warmth but also a tangible message to people that their needs are not forgotten.

Dates: Friday, February 13, 2026 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Saturday, February 14, 2026 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Please come and go as you are able. Lunch will be provided both days.

Location: Hopedale Mennonite Church, 5192 Hopedale Rd., Hopedale IL 61747

Please RSVP to Hopedale Mennonite Church, 309-449-6600 or office@hopedalemennonitechurch.com (so we can plan for lunch)

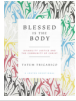
February 13 & 14

Our congregation has again been invited to take part in a Quilt Bash at Hopedale Mennonite Church on February 13 & 14. They have requested our help both on those dates and also asked us to make 10 comforter tops to be knotted. We are meeting every Wednesday from 1-4:00 sewing and constructing tops. If you cannot come on Wednesday you are welcome to make one at home. Fabric and patterns are available. So consider using your creative gifts and contributing to this worthwhile project. Thanks for helping.

Shared by Gerry

In response to the killing of Renee Good, an organization called [Multifaith Antiracism, Change & Healing \(MARCH\)](#) has called faith leaders from across the country to join together in Minneapolis. This is happening intentionally during the week of MLK Day, and it is modeled after Martin Luther King Jr.'s call to clergy across to join him in Selma in 1965, under the assumption that injustice in one place is a threat to us all. Please pray for all clergy who are gathering as they prepare on **January 22nd** and join together for a Day of Action on **January 23rd**.

Shared by Pastor Kevin



Lent Devotional

Lent is quickly approaching with Ash Wednesday on February 18th. If you are looking for resources, Herald Press recently published a new Lenten devotional by Tatum Tricarico titled, *Blessed is the Body: Disability Justice and the Community of Christ*. You can learn more and watch a webinar discussion with the author [here](#). If you'd like to order a copy, Bobzbay Books in Bloomington can get it for you in just a couple days. Place a special order [here](#).

Shared by Pastor Kevin

The Bridge



The Bridge—a community of transitional housing for unhoused people in our community—[formally opened on January 6th](#), and MCN was a part of bringing that project to fruition. The final number of our contribution is \$11,063.62 or roughly 82% of the cost of one of the cabins. We are so grateful for the vision of Home Sweet Home Ministries to begin such a project and invite you all to join us in hopeful prayer as the first residents move in.

Shared by the Outreach Commission



CDC Connector

The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). This first issue of the year is full of stories and important announcements! Included are reflections about two pilgrimages to explore Indigenous history in Utah and Indiana, a review of this year's Lenten devotional from Herald Press centered on disability justice, and information about several upcoming events. 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).

7 years ago, Mennonite Church of Normal installed solar panels that you can see on the roof of the building, which produce most of the electricity the church needs in a given year. How many solar panels do we have? There are 180 panels up there! That may seem like a lot, but the McLean I Solar Farm being constructed in Bloomington contains 3,364 solar panels.



Those Serving This Week



This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, January 21

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

Thursday, January 22

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

6:45 pm Administration Commission (Zoom)

January 23-25

Winter Retreat at Camp Friedenswald

Tuesday, January 27

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, January 28

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

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.



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



MARDI GRAS MYSTERY

A SOBER 18+ FUNDRAISER FOR RAINBOW VILLAGE*

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 6:00-7:30

New Orleans food, drinks, music, and a fun mystery to solve!
Bring cash for specialty drinks and hints.

1613 E Emerson. Bloomington
LRE@uubn.org 309.828.0235

Get your \$50 ticket now!

*Rainbow Village provides short term housing and wraparound supports for transgender individuals and their families who are relocating to our community and do not have the personal or financial resources to do so independently.

I'm proud of my denomination

For 12 of my 15 years of pastoring, I pastored in an Anabaptist denomination — Brethren in Christ — that was not LGBTQ-affirming. For a long time, I was a closeted queer pastor and also closeted about my LGBTQ+ affirmation. But as I gained more courage, I came out, and when it became clear to me that the denomination would not become LGBTQ-affirming anytime soon, I finally relinquished my credentials. I joined Mennonite Church USA as a pastor in May 2023. I did this less than a year after delegates affirmed the Resolution for Repentance and Transformation. It is precisely this resolution that has made MC USA a welcome place for me. I am deeply indebted to the labor of many queer people and allies for this resolution. Without it, MC USA could not be a home for me. This gratitude is met with sadness about how my inclusion as a queer person has resulted in division in the church. Though the circumstances are more complicated than this, it is not controversial to suggest that the Resolution for Repentance and Transformation — which helped MC USA move toward being an LGBTQ-affirming denomination — played a part in Mosaic Conference's decision to leave MC USA. Though Mosaic's choice isn't reducible to a difference of opinion about marriage and sexuality, it was a factor. This is a painful reminder, for me as a queer Christian pastor, that my inclusion is not normative and, in the eyes of some Christians, is sinful. **Read the rest of Jonny Rashid's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Siblings through and through

We call the people we go to church with our brothers and sisters. Is our household of faith really a family? Do we love each other like siblings? Or is “brothers and sisters in Christ” an empty phrase? These questions arise as a celebrative year draws to a close with sad news of: Mosaic Mennonite Conference's split from Mennonite Church USA. Mennonite World Conference's decision not to appoint a Mennonite Church USA member to a representative role after leaders of other Anabaptist denominations objected. Ethiopian Anabaptists' withdrawal from hosting the 2028 MWC assembly amid a “crisis of unity” due to controversy over links to North American churches that accept same-sex marriage. In the Anabaptist household, distrust has spread like a sickness that threatens the body's health. How shall we fulfill the apostle's call to “work for the good of all, and especially for those in the family of faith” (Galatians 6:10)? We can start by granting each other grace: unconditional, unmerited love, the kind God shows to us. It is the kind of love that keeps doors open. Church splits and conference cancellations don't have to be forever. Nor do they have to result in broken relationships. **Read the rest of Paul Schrag's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Safe Church Policies: A Cautionary Warning

In a blog post for Mennonite Church USA, Nancy Kauffmann warns that churches must consistently follow their abuse-prevention policies to ensure real safety, accountability and trust for all. **Read the rest of Nancy Kauffmann's blog post published by Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

Celebrating 50 years of More-with-Less!

Herald Press and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) invite you to share stories of food, joy, and resilience to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the More-with-Less cookbook. This beloved cookbook's call to thrift, Christian compassion and abundant living is just as urgent and relevant today as it was in 1976. [Click here](#) to learn more and to submit stories, blessings or ideas for simple approaches to sharing food and fellowship. Please share your story by Feb. 15 for a chance to be featured in the 50th anniversary edition or additional digital resources—and receive a chocolate oatmeal cake recipe as thanks!

Shared by Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes

Remembering the lost in Arizona

Almost no migrants show up in Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico, these days. No Mexicans from the south or people from other countries are coming to request asylum at the Agua Prieta/Douglas, Arizona Port of Entry. In addition, Border Patrol is not deporting people apprehended in the US back into Agua Prieta. There is only one family in residence at CAME, the migrant shelter. Almost no one has come to the Migrant Resource Center for assistance or even for information. Right now, the tragedy of US immigration policy is being played out elsewhere. Yet, every Tuesday people gather in Douglas and on Zoom calls to remember those who died in the desert while crossing into Cochise County, Arizona. The Healing Our Borders Vigil, now nearing its 25th anniversary, happens every week regardless of the weather – no matter if the temperature is over 100, if it's pouring rain, or if the wind is blowing 30 miles per hour. The vigil happens every week regardless of how many people participate – whether there are 10 or 20 or 50 people, or if there are 5 or 3 or even just 1. The vigil happens every week. **Read the rest of CPT Borderlands' Prayer for Peacemakers for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

What we learned from Martin Luther King, Jr. and MVS

With Martin Luther King, Jr. Day just passed, read this blog and reflect on Dr. King's legacy as he said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

Even before our wedding in 1965, we had decided to spend the first years of our marriage in Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS). Several units were suggested to us; we chose to go to the inner-city unit at the Woodlawn Mennonite Church in southside Chicago. It was a decision that completely changed the course of our lives. The Woodlawn congregation felt strongly that it was their role to speak out on justice issues and to get involved. Opportunities for involvement were often shared before the Sunday morning service ended. These were the years of the civil rights movement in the United States. Soon after we joined MVS, Martin Luther King, Jr. was invited to come to Chicago to bring the racism and prejudice of the north to light. Both of us, along with other VSers, Woodlawn church members, and thousands of others joined together in marches through downtown Chicago (often from Buckingham Fountain to City Hall) and in rallies. **Read the rest of Edith and Neill von Gunten's blog post for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

A pastoral letter regarding Anabaptists in Venezuela

Mennonite World Conference calls on all its members to join in prayer for our sisters and brothers in Venezuela. On 3 January 2026 at 2 a.m. local time, the USA bombed military bases in the capital city Caracas and in the states of Miranda, Aragua and La Guaira. The USA military forces captured Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro and his wife who will be tried with conspiracy to commit narco-terrorism. The president of the USA has declared an intention to “run” Venezuela and for USA oil companies to take control of Venezuela’s oil infrastructure. According to Jaime Prieto, a historian and a Mennonite from Costa Rica, this is part of a pattern: violent armies of the United States are invading the peoples of Latin America as they have done repeatedly, starting in the 19th century: Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Cuba, Panama, and now Venezuela. Reports from Anabaptists in Venezuela:

- They are currently safe in their homes but there is a general feeling of uncertainty; fear of shortages of food, medicines and fuel; and there is some danger of violence in the streets.
- They request prayer for civic and political stability, including respect for citizens’ rights; and for Christian spiritual resilience, as this translates into an invisible strength to rebuild the country.

Read the rest of the letter from Mennonite World Conference [here](#) or [en Français](#).

Anabaptism at 501

Rooted, resilient, ready for what’s next.

We’ve celebrated 500 years. That’s no small thing. But anniversaries are never just about what’s behind us. They’re also about what’s ahead. Anabaptism at 501 and beyond must be more than a historic label. It must be a living, breathing way of following Jesus. So, what do I think the future holds for our tradition? What do I hope it holds? I see both danger and promise. I’ll name three tensions I believe the church must navigate with wisdom and courage, plus three hopes I pray will take deeper root.

Read the rest of Josh Meyer’s article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).

Palestinian workers after the war

A powerful look at how war and closures stripped Palestinian workers of livelihoods, forcing thousands into poverty, fear, and perilous journeys for survival, dignity, and the basic right to provide for their families.

For many years, Palestinian workers from the West Bank formed a vital part of the labor force inside the Palestine of 1948 or “Israel”. Thousands worked daily in construction, agriculture, manufacturing, and service industries. These jobs were not luxuries; they were lifelines. In an economy weakened by occupation, movement restrictions, and limited local opportunities, work inside Israel often provided the only stable source of income for Palestinian families. Workers endured long commutes, crowded checkpoints, and humiliating inspections, all in exchange for the ability to support their households with dignity. **Read the rest of B.O.S’ blog post for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

MCC still working in Gaza via partner after Israel bans dozens of groups

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) continues to provide humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip through a local partner after Israel banned 37 groups from operating there. But Israeli restrictions still severely limit the size and speed of aid efforts, despite a ceasefire. On Dec. 31, Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs revoked the permits of both secular and faith-based humanitarian groups — including the American Friends Service Committee and the Near East Council of Churches — after they declined to comply with new rules requiring lists of Palestinian employees, including telephone numbers, emails, marital status and children's names. MCC operates in Gaza via a partnership with Al-Najd Developmental Forum. MCC disaster response director Bruce Guenther said Al-Najd does not have to register with Israel because it is a Palestinian organization. MCC is one of 53 humanitarian aid organizations that issued a joint letter Jan. 2 accusing Israel of severely threatening the delivery of food, shelter and health care in Gaza. MCC has partnered previously with the Near East Council of Churches. **Read the rest of Tim Huber's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

'Are you a real Mennonite?'

I came for peace and stayed for simple living and community.

I grew up in a Presbyterian church in Seattle. The war in Vietnam was in full force. My husband knew he would be drafted, so he applied to be a noncombatant. He would serve in the military, but he wouldn't carry a gun. Our pastor, an Army chaplain, didn't support us in this. We went ahead with the paperwork, and my husband was drafted and trained to be a combat medic. Several years later, we found ourselves in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with our 2-year-old daughter. We had been part of a Sunday night Bible study, and this was our first Sunday away from home and friends. We were so lonely! We took our daughter to the local park, where she played. Before long, another little girl joined us and played with our daughter. Her parents were not far behind. We got to talking and found out they were planting a Mennonite church in our neighborhood. Their names were Del and Lucy Epp. We had never heard of Mennonites. But when we learned they were a peace church, we were ready to give it a try. **Read the rest of Evelyn Turner's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**



Commission, Team, & Committee Members

Commissions and Teams Contact List

Past Midweeks

Our Members in Care Facilities

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



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

Facility Use Agreement

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

Item Check-Out Request Form

Commission Meeting Minutes

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!

Structure Documents
