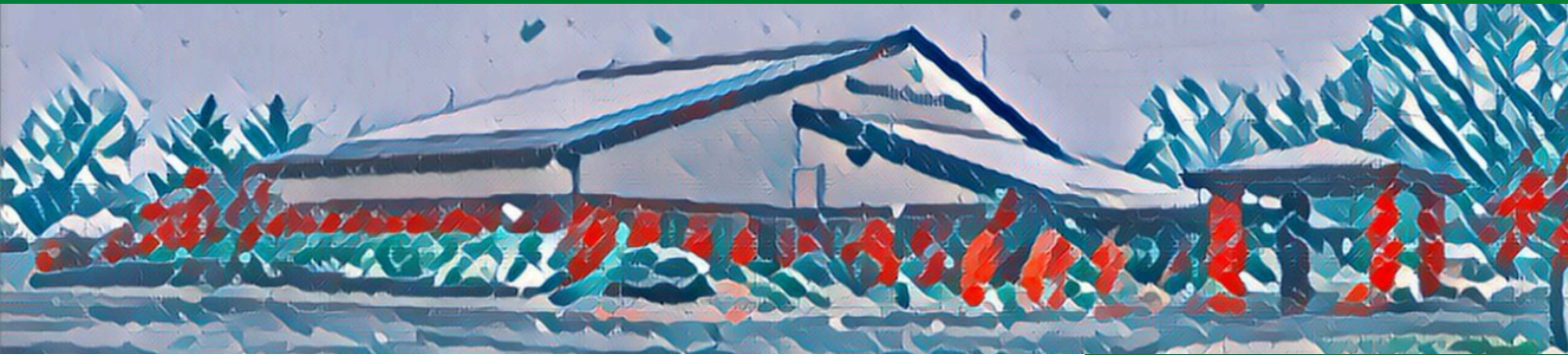


# ***THE MIDWEEK***



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

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Prosody* using John 2:1-11.

In John's gospel, instead of temptation in the wilderness, Jesus gathers disciples and heads to a wedding in Cana. What does it mean that Jesus began his ministry with a miraculous provision of good wine for the reception? How might this change how we talk about him?

## **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

# Celebration of Life



---

**Saturday, January 10 at 10 am & 11 am**

We express condolences to the family of Mary Ann King, who passed away Monday morning, January 5, 2026. Mary Ann was a long-time member of the Mennonite Church of Normal. Please remember Mary Ann's family in your prayers. The visitation will be held at 11 am and the Celebration of Life at 12 pm on Saturday, January 10. A light meal will follow. You can watch the livestream of the service [here](#).

**Folks willing to provide a salad or dessert for the meal should contact Marge.**

---

## Annual Report



---

**Sunday, January 18 at 1 pm**

You can read the 2025 Annual Report [here](#). The Annual Meeting will be on January 18th at 1 pm. Details about voting will be shared in an upcoming Midweek by Vision Team.



---

## Annual Meeting Meal

---

**Sunday, January 18 at 1pm**

There will be a Potluck Meal to precede the Annual Meeting on January 18th. Please bring a dish to share that would feed 6-8 people. As always, feel free to trade with someone if you wanted to bring something else.

- Last names A-H dessert
- Last names I-P Main dish
- Last Names Q-Z salad or side dish.

*From the Fellowship Committee*



---

## 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. MFB wants us to sign up at least a week ahead of time to facilitate their project planning, so if you think you might 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*

---

## Winter Retreat

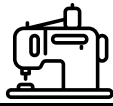


---

**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*



# Hopedale Quilt Bash

**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. Beginning on January 14, we will be 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*



Take your Valentine to Italy... Vicariously!

**BOOK CONVERSATION EVENT**

Author Judith Valente In Conversation with Pantagraph Columnist Susan Hazlett

On Judith's new book:

"The Italian Soul: How to Savor the Full Joys of Life"

Learn How We Too Can Live As Joyfully And Mindfully As Italians

Saturday, February 14 - 2 pm to 3 pm

Barnes and Noble  
1701 E. Empire Street  
Bloomington IL

The event is FREE.  
Booksigning to follow the conversation.  
[www.judithvalente.com](http://www.judithvalente.com)

## "A Painful, Divisive Year for Mennonites"

I expected 2025 to be a joyful year, celebrating 500 years since the believer's baptism that birthed Anabaptism. Instead, this was a difficult and painful year for global Anabaptism...read the rest of Melissa Florer Bixler's article [here](#).

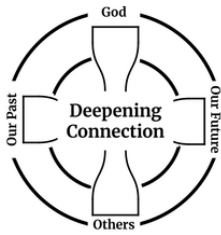
*Shared by Pastor Kevin*

## 2025 Contribution Statements



The 2025 Contribution Statements were emailed to everyone on Tuesday, January 6th. If you did not receive yours, have questions about it, or would like a printed copy placed in your church mailbox, please contact the church office at [church@normalmennonite.org](mailto:church@normalmennonite.org) or 309-452-6622.

*From Lydia in the Office*  
p. 3



## Our 2026 Annual Theme: *Connections*

During worship on December 29, the Vision Team shared an exciting look ahead to 2026 and introduced our congregational theme for the coming year: **Connections**. For those who were unable to be present, we wanted to offer a brief recap and invitation.

Over the past several months, the Vision Team has been reflecting on MCN's Vision and Welcome Statements and listening for ways to help our congregation live more fully into them. One of the insights that emerged was this: while our Vision is strong and meaningful, it can be difficult to keep it at the forefront of our shared life – especially across commissions, ministries, and seasons of change.

Rather than revising goals or creating new expectations, the Vision Team chose a simpler, more relational approach: a unifying annual theme that can guide our worship, planning, and life together in a natural and flexible way.

For 2026, that theme is **Connections**. The guiding phrase for the year will be: **"Deepening Connections with God, with Others, with Our Past, and with Our Future."**

This theme reflects who we already are as a nurturing, Christ-centered Anabaptist congregation – and who we hope to become. It draws inspiration from *1 John 4:12*, which reminds us that while no one has seen God, God's love becomes visible when we love one another. In other words, connection is not just something we value; it is one of the primary ways God's presence is made known among us.

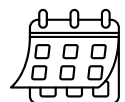
Throughout 2026, you'll see this theme woven into many areas of church life: worship series and storytelling, opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth, outreach and community partnerships, and reflections on our Anabaptist roots and congregational history. Our five commissions have already begun exploring how the theme can support and enrich the work they are already doing.

A simple visual symbol has also been created for the theme – a circle with a Celtic-style cross – representing the four directions of connection: God, Others, Our Past, and Our Future. You'll begin seeing this image appear in worship materials, the Midweek, and church visuals in the months ahead.

Our hope is that **Connections** becomes a shared language for MCN in 2026 – one that strengthens our sense of belonging, invites deeper relationships, and helps us recognize how God is already at work among us. We look forward to walking this journey together.

*From the Vision Team*

## Usher & Greeter Schedule







## Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team

---

The Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team has two requests for feedback from the congregation:

- In consultation with the chair of the Discipling Commission, the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team has called Gerry Schrock to serve on the Discipling Commission.
- In consultation with the chair of the Community Life Commission, the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team has called Marcia Rossi to serve on the Community Life Commission.

Please send any feedback to Janet by January 16. Thank you!

*From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team*

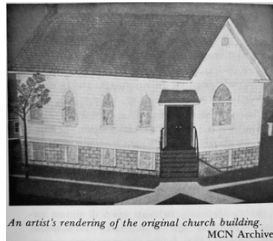
---

## 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*



An artist's rendering of the original church building.  
MCN Archives

---

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

What did Mennonites in Normal purchase for the reasonable price of \$3,654.70?

- a church van
- the Voices Together hymnals
- heating for an entire winter season
- none of the above

The answer is d, none of the above. In 1911, the First Mennonite Church building was completed and furnished for the total price of \$3,654.70 which was paid in full upon completion, free of debt!



---

## Sharing of Joys and Concerns



# 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](mailto: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.

## This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

### Wednesday, January 7

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

### Thursday, January 8

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

**2:00 pm** Worship Commission (Zoom)

### Saturday, January 10

**11:00 am** Visitation for Mary Ann King

**12:00 pm** Celebration of Life for Mary Ann King

### Monday, January 12

**5:00 pm** Outreach Commission

### Tuesday, January 13

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

### Wednesday, January 14

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

**1:00 pm** Quilting

**7:00 pm** Community Life Commission (Zoom)

**7:00 pm** Fellowship Committee (Zoom)



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



## Those Serving This Week



# JUST PEACE PILGRIMAGE

Sept. 8-22, 2026

This pilgrimage invites you into a deep and reflective exploration of South Africa's history, shaped by the intertwined forces of settler colonialism and apartheid — a ruthless socio-political system that entrenched racial segregation and inequality; and the pivotal part played by South African faith communities.

**Cost: \$2,500 + international airfare**, includes transportation in South Africa, lodging, meals and entrance fees. The optional safari is an additional \$1,000.



 Mennonite Mission Network

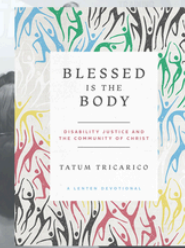
## Engaging Our Grief and Finding Resilience Thursday, Jan. 22

4 p.m. PT/7 P.M. ET on Zoom

Join us for an interactive meeting on coping with and processing grief. Learn new practices that lead toward resilience and peace.

 **The Corinthian Plan**  
Together, providing health care for pastors and church workers

ONLINE WEBINAR



## Blessed is the Body A Conversation with author Tatum Tricarico

January 15 at 2:30 pm EST



Anabaptist  
Disabilities  
Network



HERALD PRESS

Anne Blackwood



Ruth Johnston



[www.mennoniteusa.org/tcp](http://www.mennoniteusa.org/tcp)

## Learning under threat: Semester school report February – June, 2025

*The deal between Hamas and the Israeli state reminds us of the distance between relief and justice.* Since its establishment in Al-Khalil/Hebron in 1995, [CPT Palestine](#) has remained committed to accompanying children, teachers, local residents, and school principals on the daily school run. Over nearly three decades, we have witnessed the gradual transformation of checkpoints, which began as a few large stones blocking a narrow passage and slowly expanded into permanent structures with layers of restrictions. In the past, CPT members were able to wear vests and clearly identify themselves as human rights observers. Over time, however, the situation changed step by step until we were no longer allowed to wear the vests at the checkpoints, and could only identify ourselves as local people trying to cross the checkpoints. This shift happened slowly, overtime, and has been part of the long history of restrictions imposed over the years. **Read the rest of CPT Palestine's article published by Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

# Men's Retreat

---

March 6-8th

Mennonite Men will be hosting a men's retreat at Camp Friedenswald on March 6-8, 2026. The theme of the weekend will be "Becoming Malleable Men: Practicing Faith and Being Formed". **Learn more and register [here](#).**

## Beyond paternalism: Misinformation, maturity and the self-theologizing trajectory of the Meserete Kristos Church

---

In the past few weeks, many people across the global Anabaptist family have followed the news that the [Meserete Kristos Church \(MKC\)](#) will no longer host the 2028 global assembly of [Mennonite World Conference \(MWC\)](#), and the [Meserete Kristos Seminary \(MKS\)](#) has ended its formal partnership with [Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary \(AMBS\)](#). The decision has stirred deep emotions, sparked debate and raised questions about partnership, doctrine, and the nature of unity in the global church. A [recent article](#) by Dr. Girma Bekele has circulated widely, offering a sharply critical interpretation not only of *the limited educational partnership* MK-Seminary had with AMBS but also of any formal and informal relationships MKC has had for years with MWC and [Mennonite Church Canada](#) (MC Canada). While Dr. Bekele raises important issues, his portrayal leaves out key facts and misses something essential about how MKC has navigated global relationships for decades: *MKC is not a fragile institution. It is a mature, self-governing church body that has exercised its agency wisely and consistently.* In this essay, I would like to acknowledge my biases: I am employed by AMBS and have worked closely with seasoned Ethiopian MKC leaders who joined and studied in the MATGA Ethiopia cohort program. As someone shaped by MKC, trained in both Ethiopian and North American seminaries, and working closely with Ethiopian students at AMBS, I want to offer a perspective grounded in lived experience rather than distant interpretation. **Read the rest of Henok T. Mekonin's blog post re-published by the Anabaptist World [here](#).**

## Saying Yes to Transformation

---

2 Corinthians 5:17 - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" To me, saying "yes" to God means saying "yes" to transformation. There isn't just a single time where I said "yes" to God and I was suddenly transformed. I say "yes" every day when I smile at someone on the street, choose to help out my neighbor, or take action for an important cause. Transformation through faith is a journey that never ends. In my own community in Washington DC, many people struggle to get by financially and the presence of ICE agents threaten the safety of my neighbors. There are many people who don't have a safe place to sleep at night, putting them at even higher risk. Every day there are more videos on social media of people being detained or brutalized by officers. There is intense pressure on marginalized groups to hide. For those not currently being subjected to violence, there's pressure to look away and stay silent to avoid being targeted. **Read the rest of Charlie Wahl's article published by the Anabaptist World [here](#).**



## Our forebears had forebears

---

*Family albums tell who we are today and reveal a 1,500-year martyr genealogy.*

Pictures in a family album define our place in a larger story. Yet we might ask: Is the remote past relevant? How far does the story extend? Do our distant relatives matter? All of these questions apply to families of faith as well. In Anabaptism's 500th anniversary year, two new albums remind us how deep our family tree's roots have grown and how far its branches extend. The first is *Faith in Full Color: A Tapestry of Anabaptist Stories* (Herald Press) by Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi. This striking hardcover belongs in places where people will notice it. Seventy-seven richly illustrated stories present a wide-ranging portrait of Anabaptism at the five-century mark. The second album, *Lessons from the Mirror* (Masthof Press), makes the artwork of Anabaptism's most iconic book accessible by separating it from the 1,141 pages of text in *Martyrs Mirror*. This 250-page softcover reproduces all 104 scenes that Dutch artist Jan Luyken etched on copper plates for the 1685 edition, plus 11 not included in that historic volume. A brief description accompanies each. **Read the rest of Paul Schrag's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

## Favorite stories of service from 2025

---

In my work here at Mennonite Mission Network, I coordinate a lot of the materials that make their way into the hands of our donors. Finding stories to inspire people to support Mission Network's portion of God's work in the world is a distinct pleasure of mine. I also have the pleasure of writing about our short-term service programs like Youth Venture, Service Opportunities with Our Partners (SOOP), and Just Peace Pilgrimages. That part of my job allows me to explore a wide array of stories diverse in experience and wisdom. **Read the rest of Zachary Headings's list of top stories from Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**



## Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

---

<u>Building Open:</u>	<b>Standard Hours:</b> Monday-Friday 9AM-11AM & 1:30PM-3PM  <b>Pastor Kevin designated office hours:</b> Wednesdays, 8am-12pm (or call to plan a visit)
<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 Community Life Commission, Outreach Commission, Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team, & Worship Commission; <a href="mailto:kevin@normalmennonite.org">kevin@normalmennonite.org</a>
<u>Lauren Satchwell:</u>	Pastoral Team Lead & Pastor for Administration Commission, Discipling Commission, & Vision Team; <a href="mailto:lauren@normalmennonite.org">lauren@normalmennonite.org</a>

# Our Members in Care Facilities

---

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



## Commission, Team, & Committee Members

---

## Past Midweeks

---

## 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!

## Facility Use Agreement

---

## Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

---

## Item Check-Out Request Form

---

# Commissions and Teams Contact List

---

## Structure Documents

---