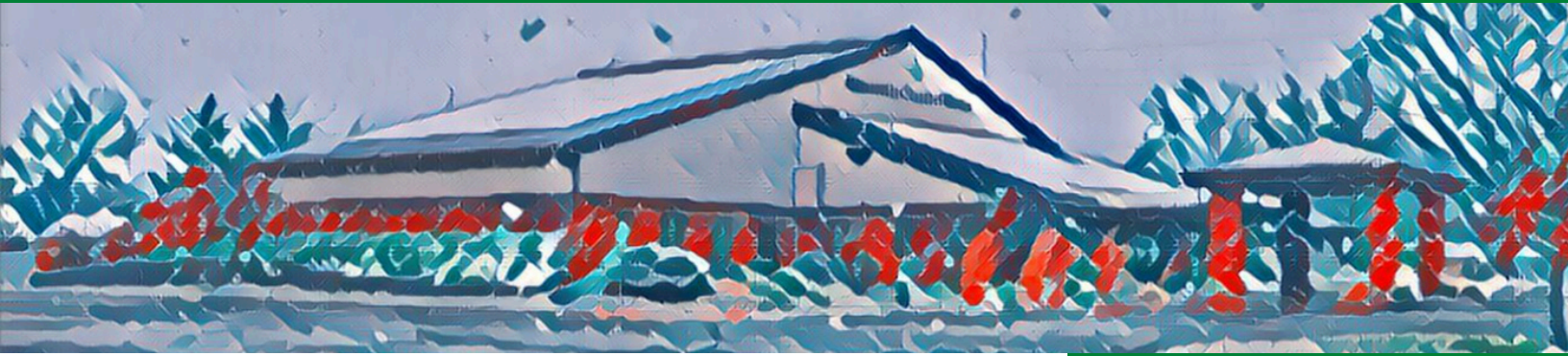


THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Spin* using John 9:1-41.

As Jesus enables a blind person to see, religious leaders are quick to try and cast doubt on the situation and discredit the person who was healed, calling him sinful and expelling him from the community. Jesus stands with him and defends him, naming another kind of blindness present in the accusers. This situation is eerily similar to the way the powerful in our polarized society attempt to spin news items to fit their narrative. Without Jesus to take the initiative, how can we find the grounding to stand up and speak the truth about Jesus' work of healing and justice?

The service will be live streamed on YouTube at this [link](#).
The bulletins get posted under the Worship tab of our [website](#).

After Worship

Adult CE

Rooms 5 & 7

Children & Youth CE

Pre-K-1st Grades

2nd-5th Grades

Junior High

High School



**Mennonite
Church
of Normal**

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

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 for 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



This Saturday, February 14 at 2 pm

Judith Valente invites everyone to a free program she is giving Valentine's Day, Saturday February 14 from 2 pm to 3 pm, at the Barnes & Noble in Bloomington when she will be in conversation with Pantagraph columnist Susan Hazlett on Judith's latest book *"The Italian Soul: How to Savor the Full Joys of Life."* Some of you might remember the program Judith gave at MCN last June on "Leaning Into Summer: Life Lessons from Italy about Living More Mindfully and Joyfully." The Barnes & Noble event will be a fun and deeper dive into what makes Italians so expert at the art of living fully. All are welcome!

Community Peacemaker Teams Presentation

This Sunday, February 15 at 11 am & 7 pm

Quinn will deliver a presentation at 7:00 pm on Sunday, February 15th at MCN on his participation with a CPT Delegation to Palestine from October 28, 2025, until November 7, 2025. He will also lead a class this Sunday during the CE hour on the history of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

In Peace, Phil Dick, Chair of Outreach Commission

J/MYF Lunch and Fellowship



This Sunday, February 15 from 12:00-1:30 pm

All students in grades 6-12 are welcome to join us for a J/MYF Waffle Bar luncheon and time of fellowship from 12:00-1:30 this Sunday, February 15th. We'll play enjoy games, discussion, and generate some fundraising ideas for our group!

From the Discipling Commission



Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 18 at 6:30 pm

On February 18th, the season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. Join us at the church at 6:30pm to mark the beginning of this season together.

From the Worship Commission

Lent Devotionals



Beginning Thursday, February 19 at 7 pm

During Advent, a group of us gathered in the evening for a short (15-20 minutes) devotional. It was a special way to close the day in that season and also to connect with our church family. A similar devotional gathering is planned for Lent.

You are invited to participate in Zoom-based Lenten Devotionals that will start on Feb 19. We will start out meeting at 7 pm through Zoom, but that time may be adjusted if needed. We will meet Sunday-Friday evening, but you can just come whenever you can. Because there is an Ash Wednesday service at church, we will start the day after, February 19, and use the Kate Bowler Devotional [The Hardest Part](#). Thanks for considering this invitation. If you are interested, just email Lynn and you will receive the Zoom link and reminder texts.

Shared by Lynn

Il Mennonite Relief Sale



Friday, March 20 & Saturday, March 21

Save the Date! The 68th Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale will kick off with Trivia Night and booths Friday, March 20 and on Saturday, March 21, begin your day with the pancake and sausage breakfast, stay for the auction, shopping, and so much more! More to come soon about MCN's involvement, but we will plan to make Strawberry Pies again this year at the church. Two things to think about now - Do you have auction items to donate? Do you want to purchase premade pie crusts?

Lloyd and Aldine Combs Scholarship Application

Deadline: March 15th

Applications are now open for the Lloyd and Aldine Combs Scholarship which supports students pursuing higher education, with a preference for those attending Mennonite-affiliated colleges, universities, and seminaries. Applicants are judged based on an essay and letters of recommendation which are scored by a committee according to a rubric. The scholarship is awarded to one student annually. This opportunity is open to MCN students who will be attending an institution of higher education in Fall of 2026. You can access the application at [this link](#).

From the Discipling Commission

Cultivating Generous Congregations



Four of us are attending “Cultivating Generous Congregations” sponsored by Everence that meets on Tuesday evenings for 6 weeks. We are Lauren Satchwell, Lotus , Adam , and Mary. The “Cultivating Generous Congregations” program was developed by the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving, part of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. Their mission is to foster greater understanding of the ways in which faith inspires and informs giving by:

- Providing educational forums that engage the general public, faith leaders, and scholars,
- Encouraging and supporting original multidisciplinary research,
- Assisting donors in the pursuit of their philanthropic passions, and
- Stimulating thoughtful conversations among individuals, families, and faith communities.

Read the rest of the note [here](#).

From the Administration Commission



Meal Train

Obituary



We offer sincere condolences to Joe Culpepper and his family. Joe’s sister Emily Erwin Culpepper passed away in January. You can read her obituary [here](#).



MCN 50th

We are celebrating the 50th anniversary of MCN on September 27th, 2026! One way we are celebrating this 50th year is by collecting stories. Read the [call for submissions here](#).



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

It may seem like a recent movement for a congregation to become inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ+ people. After all, Mennonite Church of Normal (MCN) joined the Supportive Communities Network of the Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests in April 2020. However, minutes from a 1995 congregational meeting reveal that this was a long time coming! In that year as one of our larger church bodies was discussing whether or not congregations with gay and lesbian members could remain in the conference, MCN discussed our response. There was a call to emphasize love, a question about polity, and a bold statement from John Bertsche: "it is troubling to expel a congregation if homosexuals have no choice in their orientation." This prompted the response, "what is our vocation and mission for being?" followed by the statement that "discussion is not possible when we expel people." 31 years later, we have built on that foundation and can be grateful for those who paved the way for us!



Those Serving This Week



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 (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.



Sharing of Joys and Concerns



MCN IS ASKED TO BE IN CONTINUED PRAYER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AT CARLE BROMENN MEDICAL CENTER—OUR PARTNER IN HEALING FOR 2026

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, February 11

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

7:00 pm Fellowship Committee (Zoom)

Thursday, February 12

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

9:30 am Women's Bible Study

6:45 pm Administration Commission (Zoom)

Sunday, February 15

11:00 am Quinn CPT CE Class

12:00 pm JMYF & MYF Lunch and Fellowship

7:00 pm Quinn CPT Presentation

Monday, February 16

10:00 am Community Life Commission

Wednesday, February 18

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service



Hundreds of Mennonites and friends took action against ICE

Read an update on Mennonite Action's "Sing Down the Doors at Target" campaign [here](#).

Lent at Home 2026

Lent begins on Feb. 18, Ash Wednesday, and Mennonite Church USA invites you to deepen your worship at home with the 2026 Lent at Home guide. This year's theme, "Dwelling in Dissonance," follows MennoMedia's Leader magazine and offers weekly reflections and practices for individuals, families and households of all ages. The guide and its accompanying worship calendar are free to share with all MC USA congregations and are available as downloadable PDFs in English and Spanish [here](#).

Can we rejoice in change?

It's not easy to lose what we've loved. We trust that a brighter future awaits.

When my church replaced its dated, green upholstered pews with chairs, the congregation threw an uproar. "Do you know how expensive new chairs are?" my mom asked. The controversy soon blew over. But then our pastor began rearranging the chairs: first a semicircle, then in rows. There were disagreements about how many rows there should be. Those squabbles seem petty now. Our sanctuary is being redone, the windows plastered over, the organ given away, even some of our brand-new built-in cabinets trashed to make room for a revamped church. My congregation is going through big changes. It's not a new story; a lot of churches have. But when it's your church, the process is heavy and wounding. What's happened has sparked sadness and anger, but also excitement and hope. We're learning to accept change, fear it less and even rejoice within our grief, because change is necessary to bring new life to Christ's body. **Read the rest of Aliya Ayers's article published by the Anabaptist World [here](#).**

50 Years of BMC

Registration is LIVE for BMC's 50th Anniversary Gathering! Our sacred and joyful gathering, Rooting our Stories: Reveling in 50 years of Queer and Trans Anabaptist Resilience will be held May 29-31, 2026 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Find event details, safety/accessibility info, and registration on [our 50th webpage](#). In order to encourage participation in alignment with our Shared Commitments for this event, **we invite people who identify as LGBTQIA+ to register now (including queer families), and ask that straight allies wait until February 25th, 2026. Registration and the discounted hotel block rate will close May 7th, 2026.** Register EARLY! Note that our gathering space has limited capacity. We hope to have space for all who are interested in attending, but we may need to cap attendance if we near capacity. We rise in solidarity with the people of Minneapolis, and we're close contact with local BMCers who tell us that Minneapolis is an activated, engaged and beautiful place of resistance right now. We are doing our best to be as safe as possible as we gather there in May -- learn more about our safety plans [here](#). Are you unable to join us, but want to support this event? Donate to our 50th [Solidarity Fund](#) to bring folks who need help to attend. Please reach out to gathering@bmclgbt.org with any questions and we hope to see you in May!

Shared by the Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests

Menno Haven Summer Registration

Menno Haven Summer Camp registration is now open! Learn more [here](#).

Mennonites reckon with the legacy of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School

On a cool September evening in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 19 folding chairs waited on the grass in front of Dickinson College's historic Old West building. Each chair was draped with a tribal blanket and gifts, including delicately beaded name tags, hand-wrapped drumsticks, tribal clan blankets for the boys, shawls for the girls, and brightly painted graduation caps. They honored 19 Cheyenne and Arapaho children from Oklahoma whose lives ended more than a century ago at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Ages 10 to 28, they were among thousands of Native children taken from their homes under a government system designed to erase Native identity. Carlisle, the first federally funded off-reservation Indian boarding school, operated from 1879 to 1918, and became the model for many of the 416 additional schools across the country. Nearly 7,800 Native children passed through Carlisle. At least 234 died there, from typhoid, measles, mumps and other illnesses, coupled with harsh conditions and abuse. Of those, 190 were buried at the school, located on the grounds of the U.S. Army's Carlisle Barracks. In 2017, after decades of advocacy and litigation, the U.S. Army began returning children buried at Carlisle to their families, working tribe by tribe. The repatriation of the children from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, which began in 2023, prompted the ceremony — an unprecedented Native-led honoring created by Cheyenne Chief and tribal historian Gordon Yellowman, in collaboration with Dickinson College's [Center for the Future of Native Peoples](#) (CFNP) and the U.S. Army. Mennonites from MC USA's [Koinonia Indian Mennonite Church](#) (KIMC) in Clinton, Oklahoma; Mennonite Church USA Executive Board staff; [Allegheny Mennonite Conference](#); and Mennonite Central Committee-East Coast stood alongside tribal members — not leading but following. **Read Camille Dager's article for Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

MC USA responds to recent violence in Minneapolis & calls for peacemaking

Mennonite Church USA responds to recent violence in Minneapolis and calls for peacemaking, urging faith-based action rooted in justice, nonviolence and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

In recent weeks, communities nationwide have watched with growing alarm as masked ICE recruits and federal agents operate without meaningful oversight, employing tactics that appear calculated to frighten, provoke and endanger residents of American cities. These approaches have now led to shootings and deaths and have created widespread fear among asylum seekers and immigrants — both documented and undocumented — who are part of our communities. Despite these outcomes, the current administration has not moved toward greater discipline or accountability for the agents under its authority. Instead, officials have offered explanations for the deaths that lack thorough investigation and appear to conflict with available video documentation. The deaths of Alex Pretti and Renee Good, as well as others, serve as yet another wake-up call for every follower of Jesus, that our commitment to peacemaking cannot wait. While those who serve in federal and immigration law enforcement may face challenging responsibilities, we, as people of faith, believe these duties must be carried out ethically, lawfully and with accountability. **Read the rest of Mennonite Church USA's statement [here](#).**

We won't stop till homelessness drops

I was helping at a drive-through food distribution. Before the line started, the Catholic Sister who coordinated things called all the volunteers together to thank them and pray. As she spoke encouragement, I thought, "It is good that we're doing this. It's infuriating that we have to." I find this contradiction in every charity and service space, whether it's the community breakfast where our Homeless Union organizes or in line with people signing up for Thanksgiving meal baskets: "I'm so glad you're here. Isn't it outrageous that we have to do this?" In the United States, we live in the wealthiest nation to ever exist, yet one of the most unequal societies on the planet. The people who maintain and benefit from these wealth disparities go to great lengths to obscure the underlying causes. **Read the rest of Joe Paparone's article published by the Anabaptist World [here](#).**

MC USA seeks applicants for 2026-27 BIPOC Scholarship

Mennonite Church USA is accepting applications for the 2026-27 Scholarship for BIPOC Students, offering financial support to students pursuing higher education at MC USA-affiliated colleges, universities and seminaries. The application deadline is April 1, 2026. The scholarship, launched in 2023 to strengthen the future leadership of MC USA churches, provides up to \$4,000 for one academic year. Applicants must identify as Black, Indigenous or a person of color; be a member of or active participant in an MC USA congregation; and be admitted to an MC USA-affiliated institution. "MCUSA believes in the power of education," said Amy Yoder McGloughlin, MC USA denominational minister of education. "We want to see future leaders in the church trained to see the world through the lens of Jesus, pursuing the peace and justice of Christ wherever they serve in the future." **Read the rest of Mennonite Church USA's new release [here](#).**

Justice for the victims of the Chios Shipwreck

The Greek Coast Guard is yet again implicated in the death at sea of at least 15 migrants off the coast of Chios island.

On 3 February 2026, we witnessed again the murderous practices of the Hellenic Coast Guard. Fifteen people are confirmed dead. Twenty-four have been hospitalized, some of them in critical condition. The number of missing is still unknown. Once more, the direct involvement of the Hellenic Coast Guard is undeniable. Yet we hear the same old official story. According to the narrative of the authorities, a boat carrying dozens of migrants who were trying to seek safety, ignored the signals from the HCG patrol boat – much bigger and much faster – and instead tried to ram it. All the victims came from the migrant's side. Once again the state-of-the-art recording equipment onboard HCG was not working, despite legal obligations. Once again, according to the narrative, those responsible for this crime are not the Coast Guard crew, supposedly legally responsible and trained for such operations, but an unidentifiable smuggling network. Once again, we will hear the investigation pointing to passengers of the migrant boat, those who were seeking safety, in an attempt to shift the blame from the Hellenic Coast Guard's responsibilities. While the final number of casualties remains unknown, the competent authorities and ministries are already building up the narrative that aims, once again, to patronize the public discourse and offer immunity to those who are truly guilty. **Read the rest of CPT Aegean Migrant Solidarity's blog post for Community Peacemaker Teams' [here](#).**

Baptism of believers is just the start

Baptists and Mennonites in Illinois find common ground in history and social witness. Anabaptists aren't the only ones marking Anabaptism's 500th anniversary [last] year. All churches that practice believers baptism share in that heritage. Mennonites and Baptists from two denominations in northern and central Illinois met to build on common ground Oct. 23 at Lombard Mennonite Church in Illinois. The idea of the gathering came about when Doug Luginbill, conference minister for Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA, met Michael Woolf, a co-associate regional minister with the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago and an ordained pastor in the American Baptist and Alliance of Baptists denominations. **Read the rest of Celeste Kennel-Shank's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**



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 |

Commissions and Teams Contact List

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

Commission, Team, & Committee Members

Commission Meeting Minutes

Past Midweeks

Structure Documents
