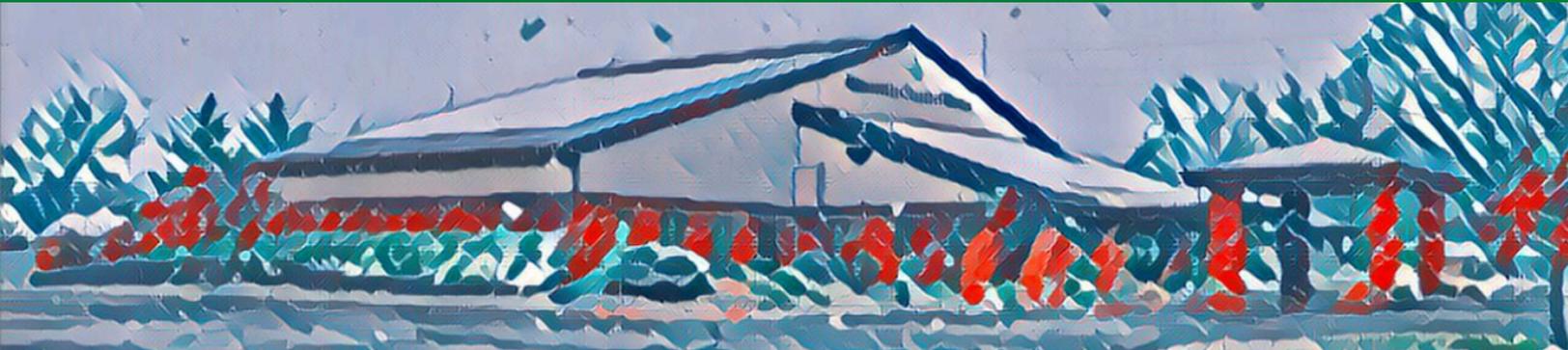


THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Vivid Despair* using John 11:1-44.

As Jesus wept, some were awed by his love for Lazarus and others were troubled that he didn't do something to prevent his death. Rather than quickly resolve the scenario, Jesus lingers in the moment before performing the impossible act of raising Lazarus. During Lent, our passages continue on this theme of "dwelling in dissonance." What gifts do we find in those unresolved places?

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



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 use this [Zoom link](#).

Shared by Lynn

Lent Choir



Beginning Sunday, February 22 at 7 pm

Welcome to Adult Choir starting this Sunday evening, February 22 at 7:00 pm! All adults (starting at 6th grade) are invited to attend. We will sing during Lent several times culminating in Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. This is a highly inclusive group – join us for an opportunity to sing together! Please contact Cindy for information. See you Sunday – and bring a friend!

From Cindy

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



Office & Building Closed

This Friday, February 20

The church office/building will be closed all day this Friday, February 20. Thank you for your understanding!



Singing Resistance

Sunday, February 22 at 4 pm

Do you like to sing? Are you interested in using music to work for justice? If so, you are invited to join us 4-5:30 pm February 22 at Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal, 1613 E. Emerson in Bloomington. We'll share more information and begin to learn songs together. These are the organizing principles from this nationwide movement, [Singing Resistance](#):

- We are building a large movement of singers that is radically welcoming.
- In the context of rising authoritarianism, we believe we need a mass civil resistance that uses a diversity of tactics including noncooperation, protest, and mutual aid.
- We take regular action, grounded in solidarity and noncooperation.
- We sing not only for the world we want to create, but to create that world right here and now.
- We seek to end all oppressive systems.
- We sing songs that are simple, taught by ear, are relevant to these times, and that communicate deep themes of grief, solidarity, love, resistance, and more.

Would you like more information? Check out the [Singing Resistance website](#), or contact [Lynn](#) or [Sheryl](#) for more information.

Shared by Lynn and Sheryl



CDC Mid-Year Gathering

Saturday, March 14 via Zoom

9:30 am - 12 pm (gathering music begins at 9:15 am)

Mark your calendars! At this year's Central District Conference mid-year gathering we will seeking input from congregations that will be used to draft a statement on our position of dissent with respect to [Article 19 of the Confession of Faith](#) from a Mennonite Perspective, which pertains to marriage and human sexuality. Questions for Discussion in Breakout Rooms:

- What do we still affirm in Article 19? What do we not affirm?
- What is most important to you as we rewrite this statement?
- What other questions come up for you?

If you are able to attend, all are welcome. If you would like to share your answers with Pastor Lauren, she will relay them to this gathering. Thanks!

Spending Plan Update



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!

Save the date: Friday, March 20 from 8:30am to 11:30am to assemble strawberry pies! Hear more this Sunday about how you can support and be involved during the 68th Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale on Friday, March 20 and Saturday, March 21! Pie crust orders will be due Friday, February 27th so please think now about how many crusts you would like to purchase. 9" pie crusts are \$1.67 each and 10.5" rolled dough is \$1.47 each. Sign up on the North side of the Atrium Sunday or let Lauren know. Do you have auction items to donate? Please let Lauren Satchwell know about those items ASAP. The final question is - who's trivia team are you joining Friday night?



Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team

The Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team, in consultation with the Worship Commission, has called Sheryl to serve on the Worship Commission. Please send any feedback to Janet by **February 28, 2026**. Thank you!

Sanctuary Decorations



We delight in adding a visual ministry to the Lenten season that inspires everyone's spiritual contemplation of this special time of the year. Due to the intricate nature of the cross visual on the stage, **we request that our children stay off the stage during Lent and Easter for safety reasons.** Thanks!

From Vivian and Nancy

A Note from Elsa



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. We're all eager to see how you are serving in your community!

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



Everence Seminar – Week 2

The four of us attending the Cultivating Generous Congregations program through Everence met last week with a topic of Theology of Money. There was some discussion about various scriptures, both New and Old Testament. In shaping a theology of giving, what questions are we asking? Based on New Testament scriptures, some questions might be:

- “How free are we to hear God’s call?
- In what and whom do we place our ultimate trust?
- How are we using the power of our wealth for the greater good?
- By what standards do we determine what to keep and what to give away?”¹
- How do we connect these moral questions to everyday approaches and practices of how we use our money?

We have two sacred currencies through life with which we are graced. They are money and time. We don’t have simple answers when it comes to faith, money, and giving. How we answer questions related to how much we give, to whom we give, and when we give are varied given each of our life situations and faith commitments.

The conversation moved into discussions about what is happening now with money-talk in each of our congregations. Data have shown that congregations are asking for financial support much more often than they are teaching on giving and stewardship. Many congregations may ask for financial support every week. Yet 43% of congregations teach about giving only once a year or never.²

As individuals, how might we answer these questions?

- What is your individual approach to religious giving?
- Do you have a spiritual or theological rationale for giving?
- How did you learn about giving to your congregation?

As a congregation, how might we answer these questions?

- When we talk about money, what language do we use?
- What would you say is our theology of money?
- How could we further develop our money-talk in our congregation?

As you think about these questions, feel free to share with any of the four of us (Lotus, Lauren, Adam, and Mary). We hope to share data about our congregation as we move through this program and would value your input as we begin to analyze the data.

¹Wheeler, S. (1995). Wealth as peril and obligation: The New Testament on possessions. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, pp. 138-143.

²Cormode, S. (2006). Making spiritual sense. Nashville: Abingdon Press, p. 130.



Hopedale Comforter Bash Follow Up

Greetings All! This is a follow up and thank you about the Central Illinois Comforter Bash held at Hopedale Mennonite Church Friday and Saturday, February 13 and 14. Over the two days we met together we were able to make 40 comforters to be sent through Mennonite Central Committee and partners to our neighbors both near us and far away from us. We not only were able to enjoy time working together and learning to know one another better, we were able to express our love to our fellow travelers in this world and live out in one way our joint mission to pass on the love of Christ. Thank you to all who attended, tied knots, threaded needles, stuck pins and needles in fabric (and our fingers), trimmed and finished edges and provided encouragement. Also, thanks to all who contributed comforter tops and backs that enabled us to put together 40 comforters. To those who helped with setting up and cleaning up our workspace and those who prepared and served food to keep us going, thank you so much. Thanks to Nadine Zook Miller and MCC Great Lakes for providing support and encouragement. Last Sunday, February 15 those gathered at Hopedale Mennonite Church gave thanks and had a time of blessing for the comforters that will be delivered to MCC. We will also remember you all. Remember Matthew 25:40 – “I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.”

From Hopedale Mennonite Church

MCN 50th Factoid

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

A common mistake is referring to our congregation as **First** Mennonite Church of Normal. The difficulty is that one of the congregations in the merger that formed MCN was indeed First Mennonite Church of Normal. There are at least 40 churches named First Mennonite Church in North America, 27 of those in Mennonite Church USA, and most of those originated from the former General Conference Mennonite Church (read more about First Mennonite Churches [here](#)). However, our change makes our name much more unique! There is only one other congregation actively using a name that begins the same as ours: Mennonite Church of Dillon in Tremont, IL. *Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: kevin@normalmennonite.org*



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN





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

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.

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, February 18

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service

Thursday, February 19

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

9:30 am Women's Bible Study

Friday, February 20

All Day Church Building/Office Closed

Sunday, February 22

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Tuesday, February 24

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, February 25

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting





De-Escalation Training

Saturday, March 14 at 12 pm Central Time

Around the world we are seeing a resurgence of authoritarian governments. While our communities face violence, we are also seeing a resurgence of people getting organized, taking action, and building community teams to protect their neighbours. It is a critical time to build our skills so that we can take action together. De-escalation is one skill in our toolbox (of many tools) we need to hone and possess. Having de-escalation skills can help reduce harm and create space to move strategically during a direct action. On March 14th, Community Peacemaker Teams will be hosting an online De-escalation Training. The focus of this training is not on de-escalating our own communities, but rather a training focused on de-escalating encounters with agitators often in a North American context. Together, we'll break down what de-escalation actually looks like in real-world situations, not as compliance, but as an intentional tactic. Participants will be guided through an individual assessment of strengths and vulnerabilities, recognizing how our bodies, identities, and experiences shape how we show up under pressure. We'll share practical tips and community-tested skills. This training also centers sustainability. We'll talk about self-care as a political practice: preparing ourselves before actions, regulating stress in the moment, and tending to our bodies and spirits afterward. Movements burn out when people are treated as expendable—this space is about resisting that narrative. Whether you're stepping into direct action for the first time or deepening long-held organizing skills, this training offers grounded, people-powered strategies to help us keep each other safe. This is an interactive training that makes use of break out rooms and expects participation of registrants. If possible, we ask that your camera is on during the training. The suggested donation is \$50. We don't believe essential skills should have a price tag. Donate what you can. If you can't pay, drop us an [email](#) and come anyway. **Learn more and register [here](#).**

Shared by Community Peacemaker Teams

Credentialing apology reflects changes: no more 'dreading' of interviews

An apology and a listening process in Indiana-Michigan Conference of Mennonite Church USA reveal how the conference's posture on inclusivity and ministerial credential reviews has changed over a decade. Indiana-Michigan's Ministry Credentialing Team apologized in 2024 to Karl Shelly, pastor of Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., for the way the conference carried out a review of his ministerial credential following a same-sex covenant ceremony he officiated for a couple from Assembly in 2014. The team repented not only for the harm credentialed leaders experienced but also for the hostile atmosphere pastoral sanctions created for LGBTQ+ people. **Read the rest of Tim Huber's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

A best-fit response

An MCC partner in Afghanistan helps families meet basic needs after a devastating earthquake
After a listening process by a Mennonite Central Committee partner, 209 families that survived an August earthquake in Afghanistan used cash assistance from MCC to buy winter clothing, shoes, medicine or cooking utensils. MCC partners were some of the first to provide support. They visited people sheltering in tents to listen to the families and comfort them. The MCC partners' staff learned the needs were vast and varied. Each family had different priorities. Cash distributions would allow families to meet their needs with dignity. In Nangahar province, 209 families — over 1,400 people — received funds to purchase essential items while also stimulating the local economy. More than 80% of families purchased clothing first. Winter layers, children's shoes and daily wear had all been lost. Medicine to treat injuries was another common purchase. Others bought cooking utensils to prepare food again. **Read the rest of Sienna Malik's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee published by *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Must we die in order to live?

As Palestine counts the toll of the genocide in Gaza, Shahd reflects on how poetry helps us to understand the nature of homeland, memory and resistance.

During these two long years of aggression against Gaza, I have found myself returning constantly to a line by the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani in *Return to Haifa*: "Do you know what the homeland is, Safiyya? The homeland is where none of this can happen." This sentence has lived within me, an echo that keeps asking: what is homeland? I don't know what homeland means to all of you, but I've spent these years trying to define it for myself. Today, I woke up with a heavy, burning anger, a feeling that has been buried deep inside me for two years. Since the martyrdom of the journalist [Anas Al-Sharif](#), my anger toward everything around me has shifted into something else, something that makes all worldly frustrations feel trivial. What can be harder than loss? The answer, I've come to realize, is healing after loss, a wound that keeps breathing long after the pain sets in. As a Palestinian, I grew up hearing the words of the Iraqi poet Ahmad Matar: "We die, we die, so that the homeland may live." **Read the rest of Shahd Al Junaidi's article published by *Community Peacemaker Teams* [here](#).**

"Hide the children!" When the trucks came

A childhood memory and why it still matters.

The news has been filled with stories of ICE raids and families living in fear of sudden abduction — children kept home from school, parents terrified. Reading those headlines, I couldn't help but think of my mother — seven years old in post-war Germany — hidden in a shepherd's hut when Soviet agents came looking for refugees to force back to Stalin's brutal regime. Different time, different continent, but the same terror: the knock on the door, the scramble to protect the vulnerable, the question of who will stand up and help. **Read the rest of Arnold Neufeldt-Fast's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

U.S. defense bill calls for automatic draft registration

The Selective Service System has been instructed to make military draft registration automatic. President Trump signed the annual National Defense Authorization Act Dec. 18, a day after the Senate gave its approval to the record \$901 billion spending bill. This includes a mandate that the Selective Service System make registration automatic for males ages 18-25. The deadline for implementation is Dec. 18, 2026. Reviving a military draft would require congressional approval. The most recent draft ended in 1973. Draft registration resumed in 1980. The Center on Conscience and War reports Selective Service will implement this legislation by crossmatching data with other federal agencies to register people it believes are required to do so and share that information with military recruiters. **Read the rest of the *Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

Faith, family, and frying pans: Ten years at Drift Creek Camp

In 2013, our family took a leap of faith and signed up for a short-term mission trip through Mennonite Mission Network's SOOP program. We were matched with [Drift Creek Camp](#), a Mennonite camp in Siuslaw National Forest in Oregon. Three of our children, Sydney (8th grade), Ivan (5th grade), and Garrison (3rd grade), joined us, while Emma (9th grade) attended Mennonite Convention. The week at camp was spent in the kitchen, preparing meals for campers and staff. Our experience working together as a family was unforgettable. We have made ten more trips since that first week, deepening our connection to the camp and its community. Powered only by batteries and a generator, Drift Creek Camp taught us the value of simplicity, teamwork, and service. **Read the rest of Jen Cobb's blog post for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

Peacemaking takes a community — and we are grateful for ours!

In August, Turtle Island Solidarity Network hosted a delegation, Unmasking and Dismantling Settler Colonialism. Here, one of its leaders reflects on the importance of community in hosting delegations. **Read CPT Turtle Island Solidarity Network's article for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

My virtue, their villainy?

Once I fixed my gaze upon the brave and innocent. Now I was drawn to the thief-catcher. My professional ministry has taken place in ecumenical, interreligious settings outside Mennonite communities. In clinical chaplaincy and a local pastorate, I have worked with people from all backgrounds. Through those relationships there appeared many saints who carried me through times of personal crises. (One of my favorite saints is St. Martin of Tours — a convert, a 4th-century bishop, a conscientious objector.) I once guarded against the danger of cheap grace; I have learned to speak of the theology of grace. **Read the rest of Shuji Moriichi's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Hymns are alive and well

One of my earliest memories is of lying in bed in the morning, listening to my mother sing in the kitchen downstairs. Hearing her voice, combined with the sounds of food being prepared, made me feel safe and loved. Recently I went to Cleveland, Tenn., for the 75th anniversary celebration of the Church Hymnal, known as the Red Back Hymnal. The *Church Hymnal* is published by the Church of God, a Protestant denomination of the holiness tradition, birthed in Tennessee in 1886. Yet it can be found in more than a few other denominations' pew racks on a Sunday morning. **Read the rest of Sarah Kehrberg'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

Building Open:

Standard Hours:

Monday-Friday 9AM-11AM & 1:30PM-3PM

Pastor Kevin designated office hours: Wednesdays, 8am-12pm
(or call to plan a visit)

Lydia Hedberg:

Office Administrator; church@normalmennonite.org; 309-452-6622

Rita Munkakusi:

Custodian

Kevin Chupp:

Pastor for Community Life Commission, Outreach Commission,
Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team, & Worship Commission;
kevin@normalmennonite.org

Lauren Satchwell:

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

Past Midweeks

Commission Meeting Minutes

Structure Documents
