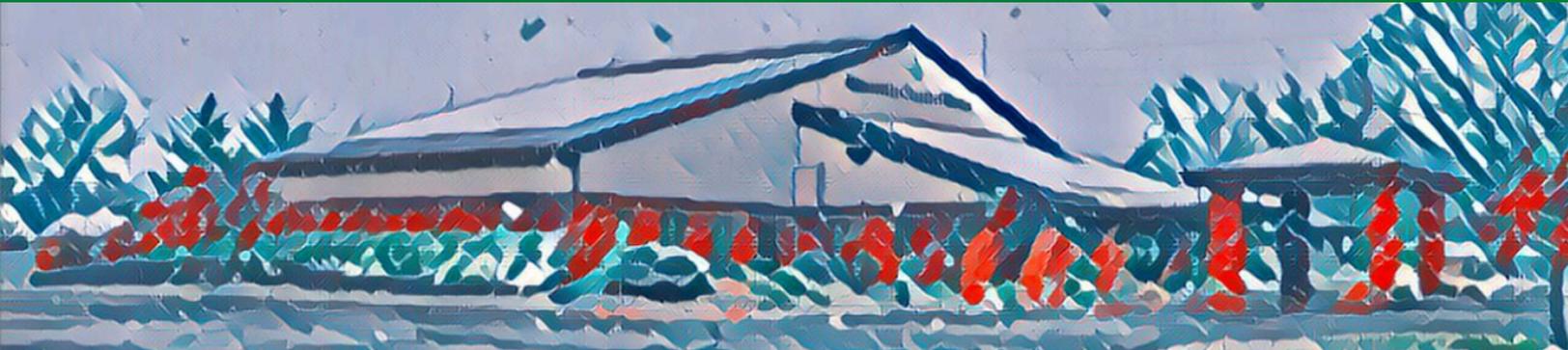


THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Mature Poets* using John 13:1-17.

In John's gospel, Jesus washes his disciples' feet. So removed as we are from the cultural context, we are left with more than a little curiosity about what Jesus might be doing here. Why does Jesus want his disciples to wash each other's feet? Why does only John mention this?

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

Office & Building Closed



Tuesday, March 3

The church office/building will be closed beginning at noon next Tuesday, March 3rd. Thank you for your understanding!



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 **this February 28**. Thank you!

Changes to PreK-5th Grade Sunday School

Beginning this Sunday, March 1

Beginning this Sunday, March 1, our PreK-1 and 2-5th grade classes will be combined into a single class. Our main reason for choosing to combine classes is to ensure that our children have a reliable opportunity for Sunday school every Sunday. In the past, we've had to cancel Sunday school when there are less than 2 families represented by the children in each class. With a combined class, it's much less likely that we would have to cancel for low attendance. This change will also allow current Sunday school teachers (Holly and Spring) opportunities to share teaching responsibilities with regular breaks. Even when combining these classes, we will remain sensitive to the individual needs of every student in our care. On March 1, please bring your student to the PreK-1 Sunday school classroom. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Holly.

From the Discipling Commission

Adult CE



Beginning Sunday, March 8

A new Christian Education quarter begins on Sunday, March 8. The adult class will be using a Salt and Light study, "Sin, Salvation and New Life" by Leonard Beechy, a thought-provoking writer. Lessons will focus on Lamentations, John and Psalms. The expression of difficult emotions and strengthening our capacity to communicate with God are foci for this quarter's study. Study books can be picked up on the shelves at the west end of the classroom. **Please note: There will be no class held on March 1.**

From the Discipling Commission

Presentation by Meghan on her involvement with Apache Stronghold at Oak Flat in Arizona

Sunday, March 8 at 5:00 pm at the MRC Community Building

Come hear more about the fight to save Oak Flat, the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery, and fumbling toward an uncolonized God as a Mennonite! Perched 4,000 feet above the Sonoran Desert in Arizona, Chí'chil Błdagoteel, or Oak Flat, is a mountain refuge where Apache people have danced in ceremony since time immemorial. When the sun rises at Oak Flat, it shines through mountaintops thick with massive red boulders, and the leaves of ancient emery oaks catch the first light over the ground. I hear the quiet voice of an uncolonized God speaking at Oak Flat. The Spirit is present in the lush tree-lined canyons, as well as in the drumming during the Sunrise Ceremony, held here when Apache girls become women. For decades the US government's hunger for extraction in the name of economic growth has threatened this sacred site with destruction, seeking to transfer of the land to Resolution Copper, a joint venture by two of the world's largest mining corporations: Australian company BHP and British-Australian company Rio Tinto. If the mine is built, in the course of 40 years Resolution Copper is expected to export more than 40 billion pounds of copper ore to China for processing. Apache Stronghold is fighting to save Oak Flat. After Congress authorized the Oak Flat land transfer, in 2021 the nonprofit group sued to stop the project on religious freedom grounds. Last year it lost in federal circuit court and appealed to the US Supreme Court. For the last two years, I (Meghan) have been working with Apache Stronghold as part of a Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery team. Our members have provided physical and spiritual accompaniment to Apache Stronghold as it faces threats, harassment, and gunfire in retaliation for its work to protect Oak Flat. Since May 2023, we have maintained a team of two people at Oak Flat. This team has camped at the site, traveled with Apache Stronghold members, and, most importantly, prayed. We have also helped recruit congregations across the continent to include Apache Stronghold in their prayer lives. Mennonite Church of Normal has been a part of this, signing an amicus brief last year supporting Apache Stronghold's legal case. Fighting alongside Apache Stronghold is not just about saving Oak Flat. It is about recovering the rootedness of our ancestors: everyone beneath their vine and fig tree, in peace and unafraid (Mic. 4:4). (with credit to my teammate Tim for some of these eloquent words!)

Sponsored by the Community Life Commission

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



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!

MCN 50th Factoid

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

Mennonite Church of Normal shares its 50th anniversary with the "More With Less" cookbook by Doris Janzen Longacre. The book was commissioned by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The first printing of the book was limited to 1000 copies, but it has sold about 2 million copies since then, making it the bestseller of its publisher, Herald Press. How have you used it? If you don't already have a copy, [the 50th anniversary edition](#) will be available in September. Or perhaps fitting with the spirit of the book, you could [buy a used copy](#).

Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: kevin@normalmennonite.org



Meal Train

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!

The sign-ups are out on the north wall of the atrium for you to find a time and place to volunteer that works for you. Information is available there as well as you think about Friday night Trivia teams! There is still time to donate auction items! And as always, happy baking!

Save the date for Friday, March 20th from 8:30 am to 11:30 am to assemble strawberry pies!

Everence Seminar – Week 3



Last evening the four of us attended another session of the “Cultivating Generous Congregations” seminar sponsored by Everence. The focus was on clarifying our mission so that we can put generosity into practice.

In clarifying our mission, we can use The Hedgehog Concept. Using a Venn diagram of 3 overlapping circles as we identify “What we’re deeply passionate about”, “What we can be the best at”, and “What drives our resource engine.”¹ When we use this concept, we can identify where our true mission and programs should be. The Hedgehog Concept helps an organization obtain clarity about how to obtain the best long-term outcomes. Once we’ve defined the outcomes that we wish to achieve, then we can decide in what activities that we wish to participate in and in what activities that we do not want to participate in. The Hedgehog Concept can help us identify where we can be successful and less successful.

Our mission based on our faith meets with governance to put our generosity into practice. We were pleased to learn that structures that we have put into practice provide stability and safety in our financial practices through good governance. Further development of our commissions could be enhanced together with a focus on our organizational culture and constituency relationships. Administration Commission will continue to drive this development into the future.

As we put generosity into practice, we can use the Stewardship Ministry Wheel with 5 core strategies. These include Telling Our Story, Teaching Stewardship Principles, Asking for Involvement, Thanking Givers and Volunteers, and Planning for the Future. Last week the four of us reviewed our giving data from 2025. This data was similar to the partial year data from 2025 that we shared at the Spending Plan Hearing in November. While we haven’t fully analyzed this data yet, it will help us as we begin to develop the 5 core strategies of the Stewardship Ministry Wheel. Stay tuned for further discussion on how we can envision and plan for our congregation’s future.

¹Collins, J. (2005). *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great*.

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, February 25

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group
1:00 pm Quilting

Thursday, February 26

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study
9:30 am Women’s Bible Study
6:45 pm Administration Commission (Zoom)

Sunday, March 1

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Tuesday, March 3

Noon Church Building/Office Closed
3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, March 4

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group
1:00 pm Quilting



Those Serving This Week



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



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

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.



MC USA joins hundreds of faith leaders to sign letter

Hundreds of Christian pastors, scholars, and leaders from across the country, including Glen Guyton on behalf of Mennonite Church USA, are warning that the United States is facing a profound moral, spiritual, and democratic emergency, in a new open letter released ahead of the nation's 250th anniversary. The letter, "[A Call to Christians in a Crisis of Faith and Democracy](#)," released to mark the start of the Christian season of repentance, emphasizes that Christians have a moral obligation to speak out in the face of an endangered democracy, the rise of tyranny, and a Christian faith corrupted by the heretical ideology of white Christian nationalism. "In a time of division and uncertainty, we are reminded that our calling in Christ is both personal and communal, inviting us to follow Jesus in ways that transform our lives, our churches, and the world around us," said Guyton. "We must widen our circles, see beyond our personal bias, and stand side by side with our neighbors," he added, citing Philippians 3:20 (NIV): But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. The statement is signed by more than 300 leaders representing nearly every state. Among the signers are denominational leaders, heads of communion, faith-based nonprofit executives, and local clergy across the country. In the letter, signers commit to concrete actions, including standing with immigrants targeted by unjust policies, rejecting political violence in all forms, defending the country's voting rights and democratic norms, and pursuing peace, truth, and hope. Citing scripture, the letter highlights Jesus' teachings on love and peace, and rejects the use of religion to justify exclusion, racism, or domination—calling on Christians to resist the manipulation of faith for political gain. The letter reads in part, "the crisis is not only political—it is one driven by a moral and spiritual collapse showing up in alarming levels of polarization. Our faith is being tested. Christians cannot pretend otherwise and must make a decision to act." **Read the full open letter [here](#). Read Mennonite Church USA's press release [here](#).**

Working Together for Creation Care

Collaboration among organizations brought energy and encouragement to potentially challenging ecological work on the Mennonite Central Committee campus in Akron, PA. MCC partnered with Mennonite Men and the nonprofit Let's Go 1-2-3 for a creation care event in mid-November. A group of 20 people gathered to learn from two experts on the topic of woodland restoration and invasive plant removal using the MCC Akron campus woodland as a model. The weather was beautiful, and spirits were high. **Read the rest of Katrina Lefever's blog post for Mennonite Men [here](#).**

"Sing Down the Doors at Target"

Mennonites across the country participated in Mennonite Action's "Sing Down the Doors at Target" demonstrations during the past two weeks to peacefully protest Target's cooperation with ICE. We spotted a few MC USA congregations in the news! Here is just a sampling:

- Iowa Starting Line | Iowa Mennonites and supporters joined nationwide protests (featuring First Mennonite Church of Iowa City) | [Watch/read about it here.](#)
- KSNT News (Kansas) | Mennonite group protests Target's alleged ICE partnership (featuring Southern Hills Mennonite Church) | [Watch/read about it here.](#)
- WPVE News (Indiana) | Michiana Mennonites lead musical protest against federal immigration enforcement actions (featuring Waterford Mennonite Church) | [Watch/read about it here.](#)

Shared by Mennonite Church USA

Strength that does not strike

Nonresistance cannot survive as a slogan or a stance. It must arise from a transformed heart 500 years? What spiritual resources will carry us forward in a world of political polarization, technological acceleration and swelling violence? A surprising conversation partner may help us ask these questions with new clarity: Friedrich Nietzsche, the 19th-century philosopher best known for his critique of Christian morality. Nietzsche was not a Christian, yet in *The Antichrist* he offers a provocative interpretation of Jesus' nonresistance. He saw Jesus not as weak or passive but as a person whose inner freedom was so deep that retaliation became impossible. This "spiritual strength that does not strike," he believed, was the most radical thing Jesus embodied. **Read the rest of Keith Lyndaker Schlabach's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here.](#)**

Belonging to the land

In occupied Palestine, access to one's own land is never guaranteed. The simple act of farming can become a battle over identity and survival. **Read CPT Palestine's article published by Community Peacemaker Teams [here.](#)**

Joint Civil Society Statement on the Migration Ministry bill

Over 70 organizations are co-signing a joint statement regarding the new bill proposed by the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

Working for an organisation registered in the “NGO Registry” of the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum becomes a punishable offence with the proposed changes to Articles 24 and 25 of the Migration Code. After five years of constant recommendations from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the UN to put an end to arbitrary restrictions on the work of civil society organisations supporting refugees and migrants, the Ministry continues to target the organisations deemed inconvenient solely for carrying out their work. The mere membership of an organisation registered in the NGO Registry elevates misdemeanours such as facilitation of illegal stay, or refusal to hand a travel document, to felonies punishable by up to ten years’ imprisonment and fines of tens of thousands of euros. It is thus considered an aggravating circumstance sufficient to reclassify the offence as a felony, in an affront to fundamental principles of criminal policy and legislation. Mere criminal prosecution suffices for removal of the organisation from the Registry. These provisions are intended to intimidate civil society. They are introduced only a few months after the Minister of Migration and Asylum made threats against the legal representatives of people who arrived in Crete during the unlawful three-month asylum ban and were protected from deportation by interim measures of the European Court of Human Rights. These attacks were immediately condemned by international and national institutions, yet the competent Minister refuses to retract them. For the undersigned organisations, this attempt is unjust, unlawful, and unreasonable. We call for the immediate withdrawal of these provisions. **Read the rest of CPT Aegean Migrant Solidarity’s statement published by Community Peacemaker Teams’ [here](#).**

Minnesota Mennonites support neighbors during immigration crackdown

As the Minneapolis and St. Paul area was inundated with federal immigration agents using deadly force, Anabaptists have worked to respond in love to support their neighbors and each other. Members of Mennonite congregations began strategizing and organizing already in December when ICE activity increased. Joan Kreider, a retired attender of Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis, [wrote Jan. 22 on Mennonite Action’s website](#) about how she began driving three boys to and from school on Dec. 11 to limit potential exposure to ICE. They lived in the same neighborhood where Renee Good would be shot to death three weeks later on Jan. 7 in her vehicle by ICE agents. When ICE’s operations ramped up dramatically in early January, Kreider was grateful for the opportunity to help families in a tangible way. On Jan. 7 she heard about Good’s death before picking up the boys from school. “I arrived about 15 minutes after ICE agents had left,” she wrote. “They had shown up at the front entrance of the school, attacked students and teachers, deploying tear gas and pepper spray indiscriminately, and had taken an employee and protesters into custody. We were encouraged to petition the school board to close schools to deescalate tensions, which was ultimately successful. At-risk students are now allowed to attend class virtually. I am assured by their parents that the boys are doing OK, but I know the trauma is ongoing.” **Read the rest of Tim Huber’s article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Walking Together: An Invitation to Men

One afternoon back in 2021, I crossed paths unexpectedly with a guy from church when we both pulled into the church parking lot about the same time, arriving before a gathering started. He was alone in his vehicle, head tilted back and looking exhausted. I went over to his van and we started catching up. To my surprise he told me he had just lost his job and his son was getting out of control at school and at home. After that conversation we started making more regular time for hanging out, usually around a backyard fire ring once his kids were put to bed. Our hangouts led to some humbling discoveries and confessions, as we both had really difficult personal stuff going on. The idea of forming a men's group emerged. Would other guys in our congregation want to have deep conversations like we were having, to find ways to grow spiritually and encourage each other? The answer was yes! It's now been three years since our men's group formed, and the gathering has transformed how I feel about church, male friendship, and myself. **Read the rest of Jon Zirkle's blog post for Mennonite Men [here](#).**

German president praises Anabaptist influence on European history

Mennonite cohort offers Turkey Red wheat as symbol of peace, welcome for refugees.
The president of Germany praised Anabaptist values at a Baptist and Mennonite worship service commemorating 500 years of the Anabaptist movement. Mennonite representatives used the opportunity to stress the importance of welcoming refugees and resisting militarism. "Today, 500 years later, we celebrate this small, diverse community that brought great ideas into the world," Frank-Walter Steinmeier said in his address Sept. 21, the International Day of Peace, at Baptist Christ Church in Hamburg-Altona. The president is Germany's head of state, a ceremonial figure. The chancellor, Friedrich Merz, is the elected head of the federal government. **Read the rest of the *Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

Faith, fellowship and filling buckets

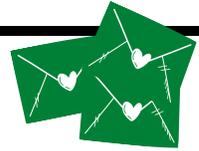
How careful planning and terrific teamwork helped one church pack thousands of MCC relief kits in a single night.
On a November afternoon, Tonia Martin stood at a table — an assembly line of sorts — set up in the gymnasium of her church. On her left was a stack of large black buckets, each packed with four colorful, neatly rolled towels. Swiftly, she picked up one bucket after the other, placing four bars of laundry soap in each one before passing them to the volunteer to her right, who added shampoo then passed the bucket down the line. She worked diligently, her eyes fixated on the soap and buckets in front of her. Then, she took a moment to look up and around the gym. About 100 volunteers — congregants from Pleasant View Mennonite Church and friends and neighbors from around Hydro, Oklahoma — had gathered. Working in three assembly lines, they packed essential hygiene items into MCC relief kits. She rejoiced at the sight of everyone pitching in to help families around the world. **Read the rest of Sienna Malik's article for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

I want braver choices, fewer walls

I've been thinking about how easily communities drift when fear sets the tempo. Fear is rampant in our world. Fear is brutally efficient. It corners people and convinces them to shrink their world. We're left with only what feels safe and controlled. I walk into this season remembering how closely grief and gratitude sit beside each other and how quickly they trade places without warning. I want Anabaptists to model something better. A place where complicated stories do not cause alarm. A place where exhaustion does not disqualify anyone. A place where justice is not treated as a side project but as a core expression of faith. **Read the rest of Chris Scott'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

Past Midweeks

Commission Meeting Minutes

Structure Documents
