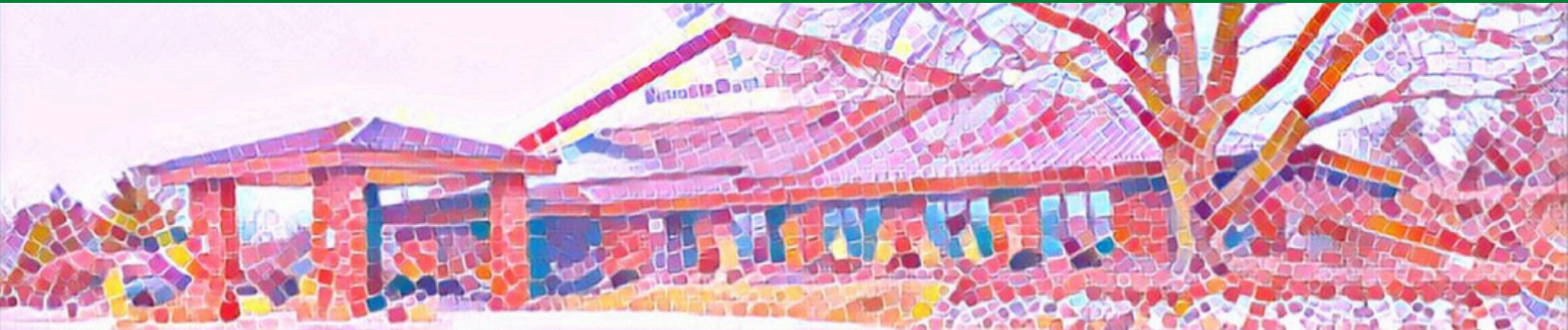


THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *A Little Farther Down the Line* using Acts 16:16-34.

In Acts 16, Paul & Silas are imprisoned after delivering someone from spirit that possessed her and thus ruining a money-making scheme.

Paul and Silas went to prison singing and praying, and after their earthquake jailbreak, they end up staying put to care for the jailer.

What vision of justice does this story inspire within us?

After Worship

Adult CE

Rooms 5 & 7

Children & Youth CE

Pre-K-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

Tuesday, April 28 from 6-8pm

Our next volunteer night at Midwest Food Bank (MFB) is April 28 from 6-8pm. MFB wants us to sign up two weeks ahead of time to facilitate their project planning, so if you think you will go, **please sign up as early as possible using [this link](#)**. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Outreach Commission.

From the Outreach Commission

Give soap full of hope: Help MCC collect bars of soap in April & May

Mennonite Central Committee provides soap to hospitals, orphanages and refugee camps in countries where soap is expensive or difficult to source. There is a need for soap beyond what is supplied in kits. MCC Great Lakes invites you to take part in a special collection of bath soap and laundry soap throughout April and May. **Soap collected at MCN will be delivered to the MCC Drop Off Site at Metamora Mennonite Church.** Thank you for limiting your generosity to the items listed below. Learn more [here](#). *Shared by MCC Great Lakes and the MCN Outreach Commission.*

Bath soap specifications:

NEW bars of soap

- 85g (3oz) or larger
- Please leave in wrapper.
- Please keep in mind that hotel soaps are too small.

Laundry soap specifications:

NEW bars of laundry soap

- Brands such as Fels Naptha®, Sunlight® or Zote®
- Please leave in wrapper.
- Homemade laundry soap blocks of 150g (5oz) or larger are acceptable.

MCN 50th Factoid

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

What event 21 years ago brought a small crowd, the press, the Normal mayor (the same mayor we have now!) and the mayor of Bloomington to Mennonite Church of Normal? On March 7, 2005, Tim (then pastor at MCN) and Sue Schrag had the kickoff event for their 4,199 cycling trip from Virginia to Oregon, which served as both a sabbatical and a fundraiser that brought in almost \$50,000. You can read more about it [here](#) and [here](#). *Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: kevin@normalmennonite.org*



Adventure: Tim and Sue Schrag climb a hill on their bicycle ride across the United States in summer 2005.

The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). In this Earth Day issue of the Connector we hear from two congregations about their experiences with outdoor worship services. There are also articles about the recent discussion on Article 19 at the Mid-Year Gathering, a new book from Mennonite Action, and a yard sign campaign by a congregation in Virginia, along with the latest edition of Doug's Mug. **If you would like a paper copy, they are now available to take from the Library Table.**

Churches look 'past the antagonism'

U.S.-Canadian tension prompts congregations to build cross-border relationships.

Mennonite congregations in Canada and the U.S. are reaching across the border to show that recent tensions between the two countries won't divide them. They are doing it through Companion Congregations, a new program created by Mennonite Church Manitoba conference minister Michael Pahl and Doug Luginbill, conference minister for Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA. The idea for the program goes back to last year, when U.S. President Donald Trump imposed tariffs against Canada, along with talking about annexation or even invasion of Canada. "People in MCM congregations started talking about not going to the U.S. anymore," said Pahl, noting it was part of a larger trend that found Canadians deciding against travel to that country. Concerned that political tensions might also disrupt relations with U.S. Mennonites, Pahl reached out to Luginbill to find ways congregations in Manitoba could connect with counterparts in the U.S. "I was hoping it could be a practical way to show that the body of Christ transcends borders," Pahl said. Luginbill said the program is consistent with the Anabaptist heritage of not letting the state define who enemies should be. "We see Canadians as our friends," he said. Pahl agreed: "Our goal as Christians is to seek God's reign above the kingdoms of this world. I hope this program can be one small piece of contributing to that." To date, four churches are involved in the program. Also in the program are Hope Mennonite Church of Winnipeg and Mennonite Church of Normal, Ill. For Dori Zerbe Cornelsen of Hope, the program is a way to "look across the border and past the antagonism we feel" from the Trump administration. "It gives us a chance to meet people who are doing incredibly good things for peace and resistance, and to be supportive," she said. The program also gave members from Normal a chance to say they were sorry about how the Trump administration is treating Canada, said Kevin Chupp, pastor of Mennonite Church of Normal. "We don't have other Canadian connections to make amends," he said. The two congregations, which are both also LGBTQ-affirming, are also just starting to connect. So far, they have exchanged symbolic gifts — Hope sent a puzzle signed by every member of the congregation, and Mennonite Church of Normal sent a stethoscope. It represents how the two can be a source of healing in the world. The two churches are also talking about doing worship services together online and sharing information in each other's bulletins. "We are exploring ways to go deeper," Zerbe Cornelsen said. In the end, the connection is mostly about "how we live day-to-day, and to help us to not get caught up in our own stuff all the time but think about others," she said. "It's just important for us to be in relationship with them." **Read the rest of John Longhurst's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**



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



Those Serving This Week



This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, April 22

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

Thursday, April 23

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

9:30 am Women's Bible Study

Tuesday, April 28

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

6:00 pm Midwest Food Bank Volunteering

Wednesday, April 29

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting



Myanmar air strikes kill church leaders

A military junta air strike killed leaders of a Mennonite church Feb. 10 in a village of civilians in Myanmar. One bomb killed six people instantly and seriously injured many others in Tlangkhua, a village in Chin State. The bombing was part of a larger pattern of attacks on civilians, including attacks on a neighboring township the previous day. On Feb. 11, Mennonite World Conference issued an [urgent call to prayer](#) for Myanmar and reported most of the victims are part of MWC member church Bible Missionary Church, Mennonite. Among the dead were the deacon, the treasurer and two youth leaders of the Mennonite church. Eleven church members needed emergency medical treatment. A church building was under construction close to where the bomb was dropped. Fighting has displaced much of the nation's population since a civil war started in 2021, with many Bible Missionary Church families [fleeing into jungles or mountainous areas](#) for safety after the military seized power and civil unrest increased. **Read the rest of William Yoder's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Receiving and giving the gift of language

As we approach the halfway mark of our service with Mennonite Mission Network in Guatemala, one word comes to mind: gratitude. I am grateful for everything my husband, Seth, and I have learned. I am grateful for the hospitality and friendship extended to us. I am grateful to serve in a place I already love. And right now, I am especially grateful for the gift of learning a new language. After three months of intensive Spanish study in Guatemala City, Guatemala, Seth and I moved to San Pedro Carchá, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, to serve at Q'eqchi' Bezaleel Mennonite Educational Center. We were initially surprised by how many people here are bilingual. In this rural Q'eqchi' Maya community, Q'eqchi' remains the first language for most families, yet Spanish is increasingly woven into daily life. School-age children learn Spanish for the purpose of broadening future work opportunities. As a result, all Bezaleel students are either bilingual or actively becoming so. Seth and I share that same goal. Yet my role at the school introduced an unexpected twist: a third language for the students. **Read the rest of Stephany Rudeen's blog post for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

Lessons on ecocide this Earth Day

On this Earth Day, we're thinking about the ways war and occupation wage destruction on the earth. Our recent delegation to the West Bank heard from Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh, who runs the [Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability](#). He identified several ways Israel's violence amounts to ecocide in Palestine. Today, we're sharing some of what we learned. As we reflect on the earth as God's divine creation, with which we were designed to live in harmony, we have to confront the ways war and occupation scar the earth. In return, people suffer water and food scarcity, extreme weather conditions and disasters, and agricultural degradation. We must return to a right relationship with land and one another, as God intended. **Read the full reflection from Mennonite Action [here](#).**

Shared by Mennonite Action

Civil discourse? Not for me.

This might sound odd coming from an Anabaptist, but I hate the idea of civil discourse. A student group on campus asked me to participate in a conversation about how Christians should respond to agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The goal was to gather different perspectives for a civil conversation. I understand the impulse. There is value in creating spaces where people can wrestle together with difficult questions, especially with those who see the world differently. What bothered me wasn't that the conversation was happening. It was that the terms of engagement were framed as civil. That may surprise some, particularly because so much of my work is bridge-building. In the classroom, I engage students whose beliefs and practices differ significantly from my own. Outside the university, I move between very different communities: one day with White mainline liberals, another with White post-evangelical progressives, another with Black Baptists who are theologically conservative and deeply committed to social justice, another with multiracial congregations that describe themselves as politically "purple" and lean heavily toward interpersonal reconciliation rather than structural responsibility. The point is simple: I spend a lot of time in urgent yet patient dialogue with people who understand our predicament and our Christian vocation very differently than I do. So my resistance to "civil discourse" is not rooted in a rejection of dialogue. Nor is it a lapse in my commitment to peacemaking. It is grounded in a theological conviction: Participating in God's shalom is inherently disruptive when it collides with the old order. **Read the rest of Drew G. I. Hart's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

We're not an association. We're co-laborers.

In a Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA, Michael Danner, associate executive director for Church Vitality, explains that MC USA is not a membership association but a community of co-laborers in Christ, where congregations, conferences and the national church work together to support pastoral leadership, safe church practices and congregational vitality. **Read Michael Danner's Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

Cubans continue to weather storms with the help of MCC church partners

After Hurricane Melissa hit eastern Cuba on Oct. 29, Yanet stood in her rice field near Santiago de Cuba, assessing the damage. The storm destroyed her family's entire crop. For the first time in years, she would need to buy rice — an uncommon and difficult choice in a country already facing food shortages and high prices. Despite her loss, she chose not to withdraw. Instead, she and her husband, a pastor, travelled to nearby communities even more affected by the storm to support families as they began their recovery. She did what churches in Cuba have always done — brought food to the hungry, cared for the sick and made sure everyone has something they need. The hurricane struck five eastern provinces, bringing heaving rain, flooding and strong winds with it. Crops were damaged, trees uprooted and public spaces were destroyed. For MCC partners across the island, the Brethren in Christ Church in Cuba (BICC) and the Christian Center for Reflection and Dialogue (CCRD), the hurricane only worsened the ongoing disruptions in Cuba's fragile daily life. Partners from the BICC churches and CCRD continued their regular work across the island. Two MCC containers filled with supplies were scheduled to arrive around the time Hurricane Melissa struck. Despite uncertain road conditions and damaged infrastructure, the church did not halt the processing or distribution of these supplies. Travel continued and items were delivered to those in need. **Read the rest of Rebekah York's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

Census documents growth of Hutterite population, colonies

The first attempt at a detailed census of Hutterites — the communal-living branch of Plain Anabaptists — reveals a population of 58,392 in 544 colonies in North America, almost 3 out of 4 in Canada. The research, published Jan. 29 in [The Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities](#), was conducted by the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania. Young Center director Steven M. Nolt said his team was often asked — sometimes by the U.S. Department of Agriculture — about the number of Hutterite colonies and people but didn't have recent data to offer. The Young Center acquired a 2024 Hutterite-published directory with information for all 544 colonies in North America and tabulated the number of adults and children. The new census follows a 2009 study by researchers Rod Janzen and Max Stanton that recorded 483 colonies, but not the number of people. Hutterite directories at that time didn't report population figures. Based on typical colony size, it can be estimated that the Hutterite population in 2009 was somewhere between 47,092 and 55,352. The Young Center study did not speculate about the 2009 population. "I do find it interesting that [Hutterite] population growth and family size are not as large as in the past and less than one would find in Old Order Mennonite and Amish groups," said Nolt, noting the other groups have doubled in size about every 20 years. **Read the rest of Tim Huber's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

One church planter's calling and journey

Watch a video and read more from Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).

Documenting war crimes in Rojava

As the January cease-fire between Kurdish-led forces and Syria's new transitional government begins to take hold, the scars of the fighting are still visible across northeastern Syria. Community Peacemaker Teams's Kamaran Osman speaks to The Amargi magazine about the team's work documenting violations of international law in Rojava. **Read more in The Amargi [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!

Commission, Team, & Committee Members

Past Midweeks

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

Facility Use Agreement

Item Check-Out Request Form

Commission Meeting Minutes

Structure Documents
