

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Peace & Clamor* using Acts 2:1-21; Philippians 4:4-7.

Paul seems confident that he can promise a level of counterintuitive peace that originates in God. As we hear about such peace from someone in prison, and as we mark the celebration of Pentecost—where God’s spirit comes into the picture with a violent wind—we realize the need to nuance what we mean by “peace.”

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–5th Grades
Junior High
High School



Mennonite
Church
of Normal

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

Mulch for the Garden



Tomorrow, Thursday, May 21 at 4 pm

On Thursday evening beginning about 4 PM, we will be putting mulch on the beds outside the church. If you are able to help, please bring your wheelbarrow, rake, and shovel. If you have any questions, contact David.

From the Administration Commission



Congratulations Graduates

This Sunday, May 24 after Worship

Come and celebrate our graduating high school seniors with some punch and treats! This will happen between church and Christian Education on May 24th.

Pentecost



This Sunday, May 24

If you wish to, you are invited to wear red, orange, or yellow in the spirit of Pentecost this Sunday.

From Joe



Basketful of Cards

Church Building & Office Closed



This Monday, May 25

The church building and office will be closed on Monday, May 25 for Memorial Day.

From the Church Office



Christian Education Summer Sabbatical

May 31 through August 30

From May 31-August 30, traditional Christian education during the Sunday school hour will be on sabbatical. This will allow time for our regular Sunday school teachers to rest and also provide time for the congregation to invite new Sunday school teachers for the fall for all levels. In lieu of regular Sunday school classes, there will be occasional scheduled Connection Sundays sponsored by Discipleship and perhaps other commissions as well to go along with this year's congregational theme. If you would like to schedule an event to be held this summer during our normal CE hour, please let Holly Zehr know and we can make that happen. Childcare can also be provided if needed. Discipleship Commission encourages you to use this sabbatical to reconnect with spiritual practices that draw you close to God—perhaps that will be a conversation about something that's troubling you, or maybe a walk in the woods. Perhaps you'd like to ask for a time to connect with others in prayer. Watch the midweek for Connection Sundays coming soon!

From the Discipling Commission

Intergenerational Stories



What is it? As part of our 50th Anniversary celebration, we would like to gather intergenerational oral history interviews and record them. We hope to record conversations across various ages about what practicing your faith at MCN has meant to you whether you were someone who helped build the church, someone who has newly joined us, whether you are 94 or four. Some starter questions might include (but are not limited to):

- What is your most important memory of being here at MCN?
- What is it you hope I learn by being a part of MCN?
- And maybe a few silly questions from children, too.

Help us tell the story of who we are. While we do hope to gather some conversations across generations of families that have attended (ie. grandparents and grandchildren, parents and children), we hope to invite conversations across relationships much broader than that.

What it will look like: We will be setting up a station with an iPad to record these during fellowship and the traditional Sunday School time through June and July.

What we'll do with these recordings: We will share these interviews both in the weeks leading up to our 50th celebration and in a digital display during a portion of our open house in September. We will also keep these in an archive that we draw from for future memory moments. There is no plan to make these videos public facing online in order to protect the privacy of our young people.

If you are interested in being part of this project, please reach out to me, Amy. Please also let me know if you already have an idea of who you would like to conduct this interview with or if you would like to be partnered with someone and we (Amy & Holly) will work to partner you with someone.

From the MCN 50th Committee

The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). This month we are gearing up for CDC's Annual Meeting (June 25-27) with a preview issue filled with all the details of worship, youth programming, seminars, and more! There are also stories about our conference's relationship with Mennonite Church Manitoba and a recent training on power dynamics with CDC leadership. If you would like a paper copy, they will be available to take from the Library Table soon.



Shine Collective

We, Holly and Amy, recently attended an event called Morning for Mujeres which introduced us to the work of the [Shine Collective](#), an organization whose efforts focus on women and their roles in transforming their communities. The Shine Collective is part of the larger organization [Enlace](#), which works specifically with churches in their local communities and governments to reduce and end multidimensional poverty in Central America. The event we attended highlighted the project of compositing latrines which are built at a cost of \$500 and have had significant impact in reducing illness, protecting water, and protecting dignity for mothers and young women. In honor of Mother's Day, Holly and I, with support from the Outreach Committee, are fundraising for one compostable latrine, a total of \$500. Outreach Committee is supporting this fundraiser with a contribution of \$100. Please consider donating to this fundraiser by registering for our MCN team and donating at this [link](#).

From Holly and Amy

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](#).** If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Outreach Commission. *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.

Share Your Story!

Submissions have begun to come in for our collection of stories celebrating the 50th anniversary of Mennonite Church of Normal. In the interest of including as many stories as possible, we are extending the deadline to **July 1st**. Do you have a story about MCN that is worthy of sharing? **The answer is yes!** We aren't just looking for historical and monumental stories, but every story that speaks to the experience of this congregation, both big and small. For more information, see the call for submissions [here](#).

From the MCN 50th Committee

MCN 50th Factoid

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

Outreach Commission met on Monday this week. From its founding in the church structure (2021), this group was tasked to “oversee and promote the development of a missional understanding for congregational life.” In 2023, Outreach proposed changing the commission’s name to the Peace & Justice Commission, in part because peace and justice are central to an Anabaptist understanding of “missional.” Also, the new structure did not include (in name) the *Peace & Justice Committee*, a historic committee for MCN. That group was founded in 1978 (originally called the “awareness committee”) and was designed to call the congregation to take part in social justice through local, national, and international efforts (Meetingplace, 144). Outreach Commission is the home for these things, and always invites all to share about opportunities to respond to the needs outside the church walls! *Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: kevin@normalmennonite.org*



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, May 20

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

9:30 am Community Life Commission

1:00 pm Quilting

6:30 pm Fellowship Committee (Zoom)

Thursday, May 21

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

4:00 pm Mulch for MCN Garden

Saturday, May 23

7:00 am Sanctuary Chairs Work Day

Sunday, May 24

11:00 am High School Graduation Celebration

Monday, May 25

All Day Office/Building Closed for Memorial Day

Tuesday, May 26

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, May 27

1:00 pm Quilting



Those Serving This Week



Fund care, not ICE

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? (1 John 3:17 NIV) Congress is preparing to vote on a budget reconciliation bill that would provide over \$70 billion for immigration enforcement over the next three years, for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Last summer, Congress used this same budgetary process to allocate over \$170 billion for the Department of Homeland Security with a simple majority vote. That funding has since been used to conduct sweeping immigration raids and drastically expand inhumane immigrant detention centers. These ramped-up enforcement actions have resulted in the arrest of many immigrants without criminal records and an unprecedented number of deaths in detention centers — and the new funding measure fails to impose reforms or safeguards. This bill also comes at a time when many in the U.S. are struggling with the high costs of housing, food and energy and while federal funding for food, health care and other basic needs is being cut. Republican congressional leaders hope to advance this bill by Memorial Day, so now is the time to make your voice heard. **Click [here](#) to urge your members of Congress to vote no on the reconciliation bill.**

Shared by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries

God does have hands besides ours

The Spirit of Life is at work in all beings, which means it's not all up to us.

As pastor of my home home congregation, Benton Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., I started baptizing people in the Elkhart River. A member told me the health department did not recommend full body contact with the river. That started a journey for us. I read the Bible differently, noticing the importance of rivers. I became a community scientist, leading a group in our congregation in testing the water. While the group focused on manure, the reason for the warning, we also learned to know the creatures who inhabit the river bottom — creatures who had been mostly invisible to me. We would poke dip nets into the river muck to confirm that the river was supporting a thriving community of creatures. The caddisfly larvae became my favorite creature. They build a little home around themselves out of stones and twigs. They felt like neighbors to me. Then I came to see them as brothers and sisters. Finally, I saw them as fellow worshipers, witness to our baptisms. Before I started baptizing, I didn't even know they existed. As I assessed our baptismal practice, I read one of the earliest Anabaptist essays on baptism — “On the Mystery of Baptism,” by the South German bookbinder Hans Hut, written in 1526. There I discovered the “gospel of all creatures.” While Hut first encountered this idea from his mentor, the revolutionary reformer Thomas Müntzer, other South German Anabaptists, including Pilgram Marpeck, continued to use the phrase. I find Hut's essay the most fruitful for our times. The phrase “gospel of all creatures” comes from the Great Commission in the longer ending of Mark 16. Jesus commands the disciples to preach the gospel “to every creature” (KJV). In the German version Hut was reading, this could also be translated as gospel of all creatures. **Read the rest of Douglas Day Kaufman's article published by the [Anabaptist World](#) here.**

Coffee & Conversation: Behold the Beauty

Thursday, May 28 at 5 pm CDT

Join Mennonite Women USA for their upcoming Coffee and Conversation: Behold the Beauty on Thursday, May 28 at 5 pm Central Time. We live in a noisy time. There is much pulling at our attention, much that unsettles and weighs heavy. And in the middle of it all, there is an ancient invitation, one the Psalmist voiced long ago and that still rings true today: *"One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord"* (Psalm 27:4). This May, Mennonite Women USA's Coffee & Conversation gathers around that one thing. "Behold the Beauty" is our theme, and Cyneatha will be leading us in an evening of storytelling, reflection, and holy noticing. Beholding the beauty is more than a passing glance. To behold is to purposefully gaze, to contemplate, to linger. It is finding the Creator in wind moving through trees. It is sitting with Scripture or in quiet prayer and letting Goodness... **RSVP for the Zoom link [here](#).**

Shared by Mennonite Women USA

MCC shares meals with displaced people in Lebanon

More than 1 million people are displaced in Lebanon by Israeli military attacks.

As the Israeli military strikes began in Lebanon in early March, Zahra* and her four children, ages 6 to 15, left their home in Boudai behind and traveled 3 miles away to find shelter in a neighboring village. "From the first day of the war, I left my home out of fear for my children because they cannot bear the sounds of bombardment, shelling and aircraft," says Zahra, a widow. Although the locations are near each other in the Bekaa Valley, Boudai is considered a more likely target than the village Zahra went to. She knew there was a school there that had been transformed into a shelter for displaced people, like more than 340 other schools across the country. Zahra found a space among the classrooms and hallways that have been converted into living areas for multiple families. With little privacy, people sleep on blankets and mattresses on the floor and share the school's bathroom. Like most schools, it has no kitchen facilities. "It is difficult to stay like this," Zahra says. "And it is hard to leave our home and our memories. There is no peace of mind when someone is away from their home." **Read the rest of Linda Espenshade's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

Healing and listening for the whisper of God

A few months ago, I sat under bright doctor's office lights, shoulders hunched as I waited in the plastic chair in the corner of the room. I tucked my car keys into my purse; a packet of inconclusive blood tests folded in my hands. I fantasized that someone would come sweep me away, save me from the forms, calls to insurance, and blood pressure cuffs. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf tells Frodo that "A wizard is never late, nor is he early; he arrives precisely when he means to." However, as I sat in the doctor's office, I began to suspect that my rescuer, my beleaguered wizard, was not arriving, which meant he was never intending to come save me. **Read the rest of Alamosa, Colorado, MVS unit participant Emily Keefe's blog post for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

A blossom of hope in Bolivia

In Bolivia, an MCC partner helps women grow nutritious food, and their sense of resilience, through urban greenhouses.

In a small, concrete and otherwise lifeless patio, Aurora Ibáñez's greenhouse thrives with life. Since she started this urban garden in 2013, she says she's come to know the joy of working with vegetables, holding them in her hands and feeling them. She adds that she embraces the vital role her garden has played in carrying her through sickness, immense poverty, and other hardships. "Through it all," she says, "I have never abandoned my garden." As she speaks about her garden, her face goes from long drawn to a brimming smile, her demeanor from quiet to cheerful, blossoming with laughter. She stands at the front of her greenhouse, pointing and gesturing to show off rows of vibrant green vegetables bursting from the ground. For Ibáñez, the soil she so carefully tends is more than sustenance; it is resilience, resistance, dignity and hope.

Read the rest of Rebekah York's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).

Colombian church community sets Venezuelan migrant up for success

An MCC church partner in Bogota helped a single mother and migrant find her footing in a new country

When Dairy Yamillet Ruedas Marquez migrated from Venezuela to Colombia in 2019, she couldn't know how her life would look seven years later. Those first steps would take her through sorrow and joy, challenges and triumphs — a winding path that today, finds her supported and successfully running her own small business. Marquez had two daughters in school in Colombia (she welcomed a third daughter, Alaysha, to the family in 2024), was working to support them and mourning the loss of her son. She needed support, but with the massive increase in Venezuelan migrants coming into Colombia over the last few years, resources were scarce, and local sentiment towards migrants wasn't always positive. Then one day, a woman from her neighbourhood suggested she reach out to a local church that had helped her when she needed support, Iglesia Cristiana Menonita de Teusaquillo (Teusaquillo Mennonite Church). The church partners with MCC to provide support for migrants from Venezuela in Bogota. When Marquez visited, they were well-equipped to help her. Over the next few months, she and her girls received monthly food baskets, rent and health assistance, regular visits with a psychologist and a supportive church community to help them rebuild their lives. With the support from the Teusaquillo church, Marquez is running her own small business, called Caseritas Maxfull. She makes a variety of baked goods, snacks and coffee at home, and sells them at local markets or events. She's building up a following on social media and was invited to cater the church's Christmas party last year. **Read the rest of Jason Dueck's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

Meet the new executive director of MCC U.S. Rukshan Fernando

Rukshan Fernando begins as MCC U.S. executive director in July 2026 as Ann Graber Hershberger retires. Through this video, learn more about Rukshan and listen in as Rukshan and Ann reflect on MCC, its mission and their hopes for its work in relief, development and peace in the name of Christ. **Watch the video from Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

Many gifts of a little life

A pet's love kindles hope that overcomes despair.

The summer I finished college, I found an injured mama cat on my friend's farm. She was a black cat with bright green eyes, hiding in the barn, having just delivered kittens. The little cat family had been attacked by animals, and the mama had been grievously injured trying to save her kittens. Something in me called out to try to save her. We put them all in a cardboard box and took them to the emergency vet. The mama cat had a spinal-cord injury and was unlikely to live long. But the vet thought a steroid injection to her spine might buy her more time. From the day we found her, I felt a love for Laney that was wholehearted and irrationally hopeful. Against all odds, she survived, and so did her kittens. Laney lost her tail and her sense of balance to her injuries, recovering to be a slightly off-balance kitty with a nubbin of a tail. When we moved from North Carolina to Oregon, Laney settled quickly into our new life in an urban apartment, watching the city below from our windowsill. As long as she was with us, Laney was at home. Not too long after that move, I started to realize something was very wrong within my body. At 35 years old I was losing my sense of balance, along with my stamina and my hearing. Laney and I wobbled along together while I underwent tests. I was diagnosed with a tumor that was compressing my brain stem. I needed major brain surgery. There were discussions of in-patient rehabilitation. I pleaded to go home. I missed my bed and the quiet of my apartment. Most of all I missed Laney, who always curled into my arms when I was sick. I knew I would feel better if I could make it home to curl up with her. It took us a little while to realize she was sick, too. She held on fiercely, watching over me through my recovery. But once I began walking again, she slipped away fast. On her last day, I held her in my arms and cried. The vet told me, "She has seen you through so much. And you have given her such a good life." Laney enriched my life, too. If her life had a purpose, it was to love her little family, animal and human alike. I think my purpose is similar: to love the lives entrusted to me or entwined with mine. I imagine that is how we, and all of creation, are loved by God: with a constancy and a wild hope and a faithfulness that does not end. Laney changed me in her living and her dying. Love and grief expand us, opening our hearts through these shared experiences that connect us all. Laney taught me about both, and I am grateful for her lessons and for the many gifts of her little life.

Read the rest of Caroline Harkins McCarty's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).

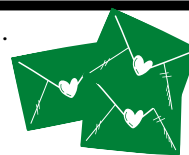
European peacebuilders hold roundtable in Paris

The [Paris Mennonite Center](#) hosted the European Peacebuilders' Roundtable March 26-29, 2026, bringing together 22 peace workers from 10 countries for three days of conversation, collaboration, and mutual encouragement. The gathering, convened by [Mennonite Central Committee](#) (MCC), drew participants from across Europe and beyond to share their experiences and strengthen connections in a time of rising global tensions. The center serves as "a hub of Mennonite relationships, uniting ministries in worship, education, and hospitality to offer a peace witness in the heart of the French capital." In a continent where many fear a drift toward wider conflict, the weekend offered a hopeful counter-narrative. Participants represented a wide variety of peace initiatives, demonstrating that peace work takes many forms. **Read the rest of Ben Woodward-Breckbill's blog post for Mennonite Mission Network [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

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 Meeting Minutes

Commission, Team, & Committee Members

Past Midweeks

Item Check-Out Request Form

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

Facility Use Agreement

Commissions and Teams Contact List

Structure Documents
