

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Pillars* using Philippians 1:1-18a.

Paul wants the church in Philippi to know that his situation is not dire, but that his imprisonment has ironically worked in favor of his message—freeing him to speak more boldly, and giving him a wider audience. Can we, like Paul, imagine our challenges in such a light? How does our construal of success measure up with Paul's account of the gospel?

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

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 composting 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



Shared by Bess



Meal Train

Correction to Joys and Concerns Item



As reported in the Pantagraph of April 25, forty years ago the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl in Ukraine exploded, sending clouds of radioactivity over much of Europe. That radioactivity has decayed by now, but the immediate vicinity of the reactor is still too contaminated for humans to enter, except for research purposes. That area, about one-and-a-half times the size of McLean County, is being reclaimed by nature, with trees growing through buildings, and repopulated by deer, brown bears, lynx, moose, and the almost extinct small Przewalski horse.

Shared by Meredith

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.

Sharing Our Gifts



The "Sharing Our Gifts" slideshow 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 church@normalmennonite.org. We're all eager to see how you are serving in your community!

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team

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



Bite-sized pieces of our shared history leading up to our 50th anniversary celebration 9/27/26. Location, Location, Location! Mennonite Church of Normal resides on a relatively busy corner across from West Normal's only grocery store, and along the route for thousands who commute to the Rivian plant. Is that what motivated the decision to build the church there? Well, perhaps some foresaw what might become of this area, but at the time it was a much quieter spot. The Jewel-Osco set up shop across the street in 1986, and before Rivian, the car manufacturing plant was conceived by Mitsubishi in 1985 and completed in 1988, all several years after MCN had settled in. Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: kevin@normalmennonite.org




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.

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, May 6

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

2:00 pm Worship Commission (Zoom)

7:30 pm Discipling Commission (Zoom)

Thursday, May 7

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

6:45 pm Administration Commission (Zoom)

Monday, May 11

7:30 pm Vision Team (Zoom)

Tuesday, May 12

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, May 13

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

6:30 pm Fellowship Committee (Zoom)



Racial Justice Pilgrimage | South Africa



with Sibonokuhle Ncube and Stanley Green

JUST PEACE PILGRIMAGE
Sept. 8-22

This pilgrimage invites you into a deep and reflective exploration of South Africa's history, shaped by the intertwined forces of settler colonialism and apartheid — a ruthless socio-political system that entrenched racial segregation and inequality; and the pivotal part played by South African faith communities.

Cost: \$3,100 + international airfare, includes transportation in South Africa, lodging, meals and entrance fees. The optional safari is an additional \$1,000.

 Mennonite Mission Network

Reflections on the Potawatomi Trail of Death pilgrimage

In an article that originally appeared in the [January 2026 Connector](#) of Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA, Alaina Dobkowski, MDiv, reflects on the Potawatomi Trail of Death pilgrimage.

"I grew up in western Michigan and currently live in Grand Rapids. Even though I've lived in Michigan for the majority of my life, history books taught me far more about the Trail of Tears (the forced removal of southeastern Indigenous nations) than about the Trail of Death: the 1838 forced removal of Potawatomi people from their ancestral homelands in southern Michigan and northern Indiana (just two hours south of where I live). This history, deeply connected to the land on which I live, has been largely erased from the collective memory of White culture. Our connection to the story of the land we live on has been severed through intentional forgetting, selective retelling and the manipulation of large portions of the historical narrative. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Indigenous author Robin Wall Kimmerer writes, 'We can't meaningfully proceed with healing, with restoration, without 're-story-ation.' In other words, our relationship with the land cannot heal until we hear its stories. But who will tell them?' Who tells the story matters a great deal. The quotes above present two accounts of the same experience: an arduous journey across the Great Plains on the Trail of Death in 1838. Both were recorded by White men, yet they had vastly different roles and relationships to the Potawatomi. One, believed to be Jesse C. Douglass, was a military agent overseeing the forced removal of the Potawatomi. The other, Father Benjamin Marie Petit, was a priest who served among the Potawatomi people and whom they deeply loved, according to historical accounts and ongoing Potawatomi oral history." **Read the rest of Alaina Dobkowski's reflection [here](#).**

Shared by the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

When wars begin, Christians cry

A living-room memory, a quiet elder and the temptation that never leaves the church.

When I hear pastors preaching that our wars are helping bring about the return of Jesus and that our nation's citizens should all be Christian, and when I see those sermons carried into the halls of the Pentagon — hands laid on Pete Hegseth, soldiers blessed with the armor of God while bombs fall on children in schools, someone's street, someone's house, someone's child — I cry. Like my living-room ancestor. Following Jesus means saying no to Satan's offer. No to power gained through violence. No to war. I think about those hymn books. About us teenagers attempting a joyful noise. About a quiet elder who had been formed by Jesus deeply enough to cry when he heard more bombs were falling. Nothing exposes the temptation of power gained through violence like seeing past it to the suffering of our neighbor. Ordinary people who don't want bombs falling on their heads for someone else's cause. So when wars begin, we Christians cry. We long for those tears to heal. And to help us remember how to be human together. You can wrap your aims in moral language, but you can't stop me from feeding somebody. Cruelty forgets something about ordinary people. It forgets that we can see the temptation. And like Jesus in the wilderness, we refuse it. When wars begin, we Christians cry. May we keep remembering how. **Read the rest of Brian Sauder's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Steve Thomas announces retirement from Mennonite Men

As of April 30th, Steve Thomas has retired from Mennonite Men after nine and a half years of service. Health challenges following cancer have guided his discernment, though he trusts his departure creates space for younger leadership. His tenure included leading men's retreats, co-developing two books on Anabaptist masculinity, and facilitating resource-sharing between established and emerging churches through JoinHands. His JoinTrees campaign has planted 336,000 trees toward a goal of one million. His final act of ministry brought him to Palestine, planting olive trees alongside Palestinian farmers — a fitting conclusion to a rich season of faithful service. **Read Steve Thomas's reflection published by Mennonite Men [here](#).**

Canadian history group celebrates new documentary

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada released a documentary about Russian Mennonite migration to Canada during its annual general meeting Jan. 23-24 in Winnipeg, Man. The *Russlaender Migration: From Revolution to Reflection* commemorates 100 years since the migration in the 1920s and the cross-country train trip that followed. It was produced by Refuge 31 films and guided by the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies. It will be shown in locations across Canada before being available on YouTube. Funding was provided by the government of Canada and private funders. **Read the rest of Mennonite Historical Society of Canada's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Documentary retells drug-running story many would rather forget

"The shocking rise of a Mennonite clan who turned faith, family and farming roots into one of North America's most elusive drug networks." That's how Crave, a Canadian streaming service, bills *Narco Mennonites*, a recently released true-crime documentary it calls "*Breaking Bad* in the countryside." The investigative series follows the family of Leamington, Ont.-based drug smuggler Abraham Harms, who fled to Mexico in 1989 after being charged for smuggling marijuana from Mexico into Canada. Sherry Fynbo of Last Word Entertainment in Sydney, Australia, wrote, directed and produced *Narco Mennonites* for Toronto-based McGillivray Entertainment Media. She said the documentary "opens a hidden underworld that has never been documented on this scale." Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, isn't so sure that's the case. His first reaction after watching the documentary is that it's an old story covered by the media before. This includes a documentary by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. in 1992 called *The Mennonite Mob* and another one in 2017 on the same network titled *The Mennonite Connection*. While the makers of *Narco Mennonites* proclaim the material is shocking, Nobbs-Thiessen said it didn't shock him. But he acknowledged some viewers will be surprised to learn Mennonites were smuggling drugs. While the documentary is accurate and well-sourced, it doesn't detail the forces that propelled some in that direction, he said — things like poverty, drought and pressure from cartels in northern Mexico. While some may be dismayed to see this old material made public again, Nobbs-Thiessen said it is important that the story is not overlooked — even if *Narco Mennonites* does it imperfectly. **Read the rest of John Longhurst's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Documentary: Mennonite Voices from Minneapolis and St. Paul

Rachel Ries, in cooperation with Mennonites from Mennonite Church USA's Faith Mennonite and Third Way Churches in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, has created a 34-minute documentary that shares stories from the recent immigration enforcement action known as Operation Metro Surge. **View it [here](#).**

Shared by Mennonite Church USA

Ecotheology studies at AMBS

Explore ecological concerns across theological disciplines through Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary's ecotheology offerings! Distance-friendly options include guest courses, a 21-credit-hour Graduate Certificate in Ecotheology, and an 80-credit-hour Master of Divinity with a major in Peace Studies: Ecotheology. A 52-credit-hour campus-based Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies with an Ecotheology concentration is also available. **Click [here](#) to learn more.**

Shared by Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Liminal space: Listening for God between thresholds

In a Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA, Spiritual director Rebeka Moeljono invites us to explore how liminal space — in-between seasons of transition — can become sacred ground for spiritual discernment. **Read Rebeka Moeljono's Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

When a witness becomes a victim

In an age in which the act of bearing witness carries heightened risk, accompaniment comes with an increased personal toll. Here, two members of CPT Palestine reflect on a particularly tense morning. **Read CPT Palestine's blog post for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**



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

Our Members in Care Facilities

PLEASE REMEMBER THESE MEMBERS IN YOUR PRAYERS.
SEND A CARD IF THE SPIRIT LEADS YOU!



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!

Commissions and Teams Contact List

Past Midweeks

Commission, Team, & Committee Members

Item Check-Out Request Form

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

Facility Use Agreement

Commission Meeting Minutes

Structure Documents
