

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Solidarity Quote-Off* using Romans 12:9-16.

Solidarity, we learn from Paul is not just proximity to those in need, or even charity, but to a commitment to "rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep"—to somehow share in life with others. How do we grow our circles of solidarity and deepen them?

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

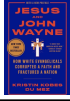
Church Building & Office Closed



This Friday, June 19

The church building and office will be closed on Friday, June 19 for Juneteenth.

From the Church Office



Christian Education

Beginning this Sunday, June 21

[Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted A Faith And Fractured A Nation](#) by Kristin Kobes Du Mez will be the book study beginning June 21. The book has been described as a "sweeping account that reveals how American evangelicals have worked for decades to replace the Jesus of the Gospels with an idol of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism." Class participants will be asked to secure their own copy of the book. Discussions will be facilitated by Joe and Bess.

Camp Friedenswald Survey



Deadline: June 24

We are excited for MCN to find new ways to relate to Camp Friedenswald! To share with us in our discernment, Community Life Commission asks that you take a few moments to share your thoughts about what we might do there in this next season. **You can find a brief survey [here](#).** Please respond Wednesday, June 24.

Shared by the Community Life Commission

Sunday, July 19 at 11:00 am

Dear friends, please join us for another enjoyable chance to hear poetry and enjoy fellowship and pizza together. Judith Valente, whom many of you know, will read poems from her latest collection, "How To Be A Contemplative" and talk about writing poetry as a contemplative practice. She will be joined by award-winning Chicago poet Albert DeGenova, editor of the literary magazine *After Hours* who will read some of his delightful poems. Longtime WJBC broadcaster Steve Vogel has agreed to come and read a passage from his new memoir, "Broadcast News" about growing up and working in radio in McLean County. There will also be a few musical selections by flutist Mary Beth Godfrey of Bloomington. Feel free to bring your own favorite summer poem to share with all. Hope to see you!

Sponsored by the Discipling Commission

Leaning Into Summer
A Poetry and Pizza Fest
July 19
Mennonite Church of Normal, 805 S. Cottage Ave
11:00 am (pizza follows the poetry reading)

With poets **Judith Valente** and **Albert DeGenova**

Enjoy music, pizza, and
Special Guest:
Steve Vogel reading from his
new memoir *Broadcast Live*

CE Special Guest



Sunday, July 26

Our July 28th worship and Adult Sunday School will feature Ruth Keidel Clemens. Ruth grew up in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where her parents had traveled from Flannagan, IL to serve as Mennonite missionaries. She went on to serve with Mennonite Central Committee for 27 years in Congo, Cambodia, and the United States, holding a variety of leadership roles. She and her husband are active members of North Baltimore Mennonite Church, where Ruth plays piano and manages a house for asylum seekers. She will also be at Flannagan Library on Saturday, July 25, giving a talk about her new book, [A Quest for Purpose](#). **View a flyer for the MCN event [here](#).**



Summer Worship Series

Collaborative Formation: How Working for Peace Forms and Connects Us.

One very tired claim from religious people is that those committed to social justice tend to neglect spiritual life. However, if we recognize how working for justice is itself formative, we can offer a counter argument. Perhaps those who are committed to "spiritual life," at the expense of justice work are in fact, ironically, neglecting their formation. And just like spiritual practice, justice work ought to be unifying, shared work rather than isolating, private piety.

- May 31 - Openness
- June 7 - Anger
- June 14 - Empathy
- **June 21 - Solidarity**
- June 28 - Harmonizing (Hymn-sing Sunday)
- July 5 - Candor
- July 12 - Confidentiality
- July 19 - Investment
- July 26 - Guest preacher: [Ruth Keidel Clemens](#)
- August 2 - Divestment
- August 9 - Mutual Aid
- August 16 - Menno Haven
- August 23 - Patience
- August 30 - Impatience
- September 6 - Hope

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

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

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team

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



Bite-sized pieces of our shared history leading up to our 50th anniversary celebration 9/27/26. Time moves quickly! The Pantagraph recently shared this archived news item from 75 years ago about "a new Mennonite Church," which was really an expansion project for First Mennonite Church: "May 6, 1951: A new Mennonite Church at University and Church Streets in Normal is scheduled to be completed about July 1. The building is of white Indiana limestone and is being constructed by J.L. Wroan and Sons." What was new then is no longer standing today! 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



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, June 17

1:00 pm Quilting

7:30 pm Vision Team (Zoom)

Thursday, June 18

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

Friday, June 19

All Day Church Building & Office Closed for Juneteenth

Tuesday, June 23

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, June 25

1:00 pm Quilting



Joint Executive Committee gathers in Ontario

The executive committees of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada gathered May 22-24, 2026, at Jackson Point Retreat Center in Ontario for a Joint Executive Committee meeting hosted by MC USA. Representatives from MennoMedia and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary also participated in the gathering. The weekend began Friday evening with dinner, introductions and prayer, followed by a full day of reports, discernment and conversation on Saturday. The Joint Executive Committee meets twice a year. The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 14, 2026, by Zoom. An in-person meeting is planned for May 14-16, 2027, at AMBS in Elkhart, Indiana. **Read a recap of the meeting published by Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

All In Kickoff Retreat at Laurelville

In April, 41 participants from 19 congregations in 9 states gathered for a retreat to kick off the All In Project at Laurelville Retreat Center in Mt. Pleasant, Pa. We enjoyed three days of fellowship, worship, and engaging seminars with project consultants David Csinos and Betty Pries. Executive Director Jeanne Davies and All In Project Director Keli Boyer also shared their expertise in belonging and inclusive worship. The retreat started with dinner and opening worship on Tuesday evening, where Seth Crissman of the Soil and the Seed Project led us in a few of the songs written specifically for All In. As a way to get to know one another, participants from each congregation shared a story using an item that was meaningful to their community. Several congregations brought works of art created by members, while others shared photos, mementos, and even a pair of soccer shorts to illustrate the life of their church. Sheila Gruenhagen, a participant from Peace Mennonite Fellowship in Archbold, Ohio shared, "I loved hearing about things that other churches have had success with. There were so many great ideas shared among the speakers and the participants." **Read the rest of Sarah Werner's blog post for the Anabaptist Disabilities Network [here](#).**

Rooting Our Stories: BMC 50th Anniversary Recap

What an incredible 50th Anniversary weekend in Minneapolis! Over 130 BMCers gathered to activate BMC's archive, revel in the gifts of our community and 50 year movement, root in story and multi-generational wisdom, sing and make art together, and hold sacred space for joy, loss, and memory. We are so grateful! Anna Lisa Gross offers a [beautiful recap](#) of our gathering. Hayley Brooks reflects on instincts, [ancestors](#), and 50th record collecting. See also a 50th [article](#) and [editorial](#) in *Anabaptist World*, whose reporter attended this historic convening, and Jonny Rashid's [tribute](#) to 50 years of queer people living in fullness. We have so much more we want to share with our community from BMC's 50th! And yet, we are taking time to metabolize. The news cycle is 24 hours but we are claiming this 50th YEAR to share our reflections, photos, lessons, and fruits from our celebration together.

Shared by the Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Interests (BMC)

Blessings by the bucketful

Through MCC kits and canned meat, a church partner in Cuba has found new ways to accompany communities across the island.

Lively music and soft Sunday sunlight bounce against the crisp white walls at Iglesia de los Hermanos en Cristo en Palmira (Brethren in Christ Church of Palmira), in south-central Cuba. People rise from their seats, swaying to the music. Beside them are towels, soap and other items they've just received from MCC relief kits. In a nearby room, children joining a Sunday school lesson hold new notebooks, pencils and other items from MCC school kits. After the service, people head to the courtyard, shaded by a pergola and gently hanging ferns, where a small, bright-blue pool of water stands. They cheer as 30 people, one by one, are immersed. Many of those just baptized dry themselves off with their new towels. From there, the community moves back inside, where they mill about, catching up with one another as they enjoy a spread of homemade, savory sandwiches, paired with refreshing fruit punch. The meal they share, 300 sandwiches in total, was made with just about seven to 10 cans of MCC canned meat. The fruit punch was mixed in a large bucket that once held the contents of an MCC relief kit. The food and fellowship both provide welcome nourishment. A partnership between MCC and the Brethren in Christ Church in Cuba has facilitated moments like this across the island. MCC canned meat, and kits packed by MCC supporters in the U.S. and Canada, are shared with church members and their broader communities, and in children's homes, nursing homes and prisons where the church has ministries. **Watch a video and read the rest of Sienna Malik's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

The shared call of pastor and congregation

In a Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA, Rachel Ringenberg Miller, MC USA denominational minister for Ministerial Leadership, encourages congregations to unlock their full ministry potential by embracing the shared calling of pastors and church members through the Anabaptist belief in the priesthood of all believers. **Read Rachel Ringenberg Miller's Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

Island of mercy, source of joy

Honoring the dignity of all, LGBTQ+ group became 'the church we needed'.

Because music makes words indelible, there's a phrase that lingers from the [50th anniversary celebration of the Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests](#): "This joy that I have, the world can't take it away. The world didn't give it, the world can't take it away." There was a lot of joy at the BMC gathering May 29-31 in Minneapolis. It was a particular kind of joy that the song hints at. It's only a hint, because the song says where the joy doesn't come from, not where it does. The source has to be inferred from the context. In this case, the context was a celebration of "50 years of queer and trans Anabaptist resilience," as the event's title described it. The singers were LGBTQ+ Mennonites and Brethren, including spouses and partners who "married in" and other people of faith who've found refuge in more affirming church traditions but claim Anabaptism as an immutable part of their identity. Their specific reasons for singing might have been as diverse as the 130 people present. Music leader Pax Ressler offered one reason: "Singing is an antidote to the fear and dread we feel in the world." And yet there was joy. Joy in being a community that survives and thrives despite a history of exclusion and persecution. Joy in recognizing the dignity and beauty of each person. Joy in solidarity to continue the journey for justice. The growth of LGBTQ+ acceptance in North American society and in some churches over half a century is a source of joy. Progressive Anabaptist denominations have come a long way, too. Mennonite Church USA took notable strides with its LGBTQ-affirming Repentance and Transformation Resolution in 2022 and subsequent apologies by two conferences to two pastors whose ministry credentials were removed in the 1980s because they were gay. Any denomination — whether it's moved toward LGBTQ+ acceptance or holds fast to traditional beliefs about sexuality, as most Anabaptist churches do — will include people with a range of theological convictions. But that range has narrowed as Anabaptists have abandoned big-tent denominations and sorted themselves into smaller, more like-minded affiliations. This is regrettable but perhaps inevitable. Realignment has happened as debates over sexuality, scripture and church polity have proved unresolvable. (Let's be clear: Church splits aren't LGBTQ+ people's fault.) Ending the pretense of unity might be healthier for all concerned. As one person said during the BMC celebration, it felt demeaning to constantly live with "our identity being a debate topic." As one person testified, the church can feel like "hostile terrain." It's no wonder LGBTQ+ people needed an "island of mercy," as one person described BMC. The need is mutual: LGBTQ+ people need a welcoming church. Anabaptist churches need them and their spiritual gifts. **Read the rest of Paul Schrag's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Lament of U.S. Supreme Court ruling on voting rights

In a Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA, Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, MC USA denominational minister of Peace & Justice, laments the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling weakening the Voting Rights Act and calls Christians to advocate for voting rights, racial justice and the inclusion of historically marginalized communities. **Read Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz's Menno Snapshot for Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

As children die, military members look for ways out

Interest in leaving the U.S. military increased dramatically in March after the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran began. [National Public Radio](#) reported calls to the GI Rights Hotline from service members asking how to apply to become a conscientious objector were on the rise as the war increased disquiet in the military due to low morale or ethical concerns. The Center on Conscience and War helps run the GI Rights Hotline, which includes Mennonites and Quakers. The CCW reported it took on more than 80 new clients in March — almost twice as many as in an average year. Military retention began to rebound in 2024, prior to President Trump's reelection. But one career counselor with the Army told NPR anonymously that the climate and cultural shifts under the current administration were the main reasons people gave for leaving. "It has been a mess, and many individuals feel frustration throughout the ranks," the counselor said. CO discharges are one path out, but many others simply choose to retire early or not reenlist. Others apply for medical separation or even break the terms of their enlistment contracts early regardless of consequences. CCW counseling director Bill Galvin said nearly all callers he spoke with mentioned the bombing of a girls' school on the first day of the war that killed at least 165 civilians. "It comes up almost always," he said. "It's like, 'I can't be a part of something that's doing that.'" **Read the *Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

Pride 2026 Worship Resources

Happy Pride! We're lifting up a new [2026 Pride worship series](#) created by In This Together, an lgbtqia+ Mennonite network in Canada. We wish everyone a safe, joyful and liberatory Pride season. We remember that Pride started as a riot against police brutality, led by gender-expansive queer people of color. And Pride calls us into the streets today. We call on congregations and allies to actively stand with queer and trans people not only during Pride month, but the whole year round.

Shared by the Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Interests (BMC)

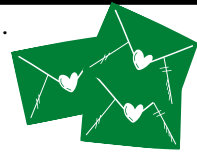
Despite the ceasefire, Iran and affiliated groups continue attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Despite the ceasefire, Iran and affiliated groups continue attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Following the escalation of the conflict and the start of joint attacks by the US and Israel against Iran, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has faced sustained drone and missile attacks from the IRGC and affiliated groups operating in Iraq. **Read CPT Iraqi Kurdistan's post for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**


Past Midweeks

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!

Item Check-Out Request Form

Commission, Team, & Committee Members

Commission Meeting Minutes

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

Facility Use Agreement

Commissions and Teams Contact List

Structure Documents
