

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Lauren Satchwell will preach a sermon titled *Koinonia* using Acts 4:32-37.

This passage in Acts 4 features Barnabas, who was very generous with his possessions. But it illuminates a larger picture of oneness. What does it look like to generously invest in our community and the needs of others pushing for the common good and unity?

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



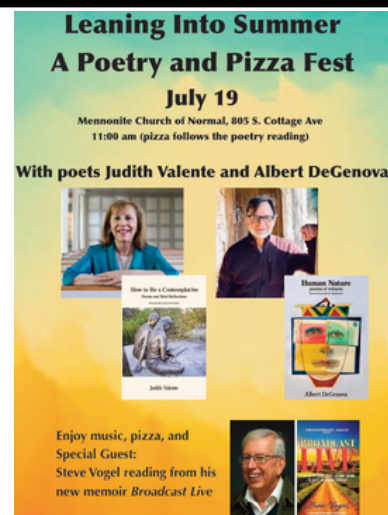
**Mennonite
Church
of Normal**

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

This 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



Adult CE

Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation class **will not meet on July 19**. Chapters 8 and 9 will be discussed on July 26.

If you still need a copy of the book, a limited number are available for checkout. Stop by the church during the week or at the beginning of class to pick one up.

Shared by Bess & Joe

Ruth Keidel Clemens



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 Flanagan, 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 Flanagan Library on Saturday, July 25, giving a talk about her new book, [A Quest for Purpose](#). **View a flyer for the MCN event [here](#). View a flyer for the Flanagan Library event [here](#).**

Midwest Food Bank Volunteering



Monday, July 27 from 6-8pm

Our next volunteer night at Midwest Food Bank (MFB) is Monday, July 27 from 6-8pm. MFB wants us to sign up at least 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

Sunday, August 16 at 10:00 am

WHEN: Sunday, August 16

WHERE: Menno Haven Camp and Retreat Center, Tiskilwa, IL

WHAT:

- Worship Service, 10:00 a.m.
- Lunch, noon.
- Afternoon activities available - swimming, canoeing, paddle boating, lawn games, fishing (bring your gear), zip lining (sign up available soon), hiking, relaxing and visiting

DETAILS:

- There will be a lifeguard on duty.
- Lunch suggested donations: **Adults** \$15.00, **Children 10 and under** \$7.00, **Children 3 and under** free
- Sign up information coming soon.
- There will be no services at MCN on this day.

Please join together for a fun filled day of worship and fellowship!

From the Community Life Commission



Vision Team Nominations

Ben's term as Vision Team chair will end on December 31, 2026. He will step down from the Vision Team at that time. Helen will also leave Vision Team on December 31, 2026—the end of her term. The congregation will need to select two people to join Amy and Joe and Pastoral Team representative Lauren on the Vision Team ([Vision Team member Ministry Description](#)).

The Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (SGDT) is responsible for organizing the nomination and voting processes for filling this position. The members of the SGDT are Janet-chair, Barry-secretary, Helen-Vision Team representative, and Kevin-Pastoral Team representative.

The process:

- July 12 – 22 Nominations for two Vision Team members are submitted.
- July 22 SGDT prepares a slate of candidates including the names of the 5 people who received the most nominations.* July 26 Election slate announced.
- July 26 – 29 Ballots are submitted. (Paper ballots and online voting available.) July 29 SGDT reviews the ballots. The people receiving the most votes are contacted and invited to prayerfully consider this call. If a person does not feel called to this role at this time, SGDT will discern who to call next.

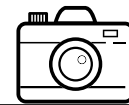
*One may not request that their name be removed from the slate. We want the Spirit to speak through the congregation in this process. You may not want to serve, but if the congregation calls you, we want you to prayerfully consider it. And if at that point it still does not coincide with your sense of call, it is appropriate to decline.

Please send your nominations for two members of the Vision Team to Barry today.

Shared by the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



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 at church@normalmennonite.org. We're all eager to see how you are serving in your community!

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



Bags for School Kits

If you are interested in sewing the bags for the Mennonite Central Committee School Kits we will be assembling next month, please contact Deanna. View instructions for sewing the bags [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.

- **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



CDC Delegate Report

Central District Conference (CDC) Annual Meeting was held at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Virginia, from June 25 through 27. This was my first experience on the EMU campus; it's a lovely hilly campus that's pretty accessible. I attended as the MCN delegate. **Read the delegate report [here](#). View photos and highlights shared by CDC [here](#).**

From Mary Dyck

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 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, Amy. Please 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

MCN 50th Factoid



Bite-sized pieces of our shared history leading up to our 50th anniversary celebration 9/27/26. We realized during last week's movie night that one of our elementary students did not know what a DVD or blu-ray disc is (since streaming has been ubiquitous during their lifetime). Meanwhile, a call to worship from June 30, 1996 includes the line "we leave our cars, computers, and CD players and kneel before the Lord our maker." Just one small reminder of how quickly things can change! *Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: kevin@normalmennonite.org*

CDC Connector



The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). The July issue of the Connector is full of photos and reflections from last month's Annual Meeting at EMU. We also celebrate recent graduates from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, including the first DMin program graduates! If you would like a paper copy, they will be available to take from the Library Table soon. p. 5



Those Serving This Week



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



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



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, July 15

1:00 pm Quilting

Thursday, July 16

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

9:30 am Women's Bible Study

Sunday, July 19

11:00 am Leaning Into Summer: A Poetry and Pizza Fest

Wednesday, July 22

1:00 pm Quilting



Waging Peace: A Militarism Summit

Nov. 6-7, 2026 in Leola, Pennsylvania

This conference seeks to bring Christians together to explore faithful responses to war, political polarization, nationalism and violence. Opening keynote speaker is speaker, activist and best-selling author Shane Claiborne. Hosted by Mennonite Church USA, in partnership with Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Central Committee. **Learn more and register [here](#).**

Central District revisits Confession's article on marriage and family

Discussion responds to divergence between 1995 document, LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA is revisiting its relationship to the "Family, Singleness and Marriage" article in the denomination's [Confession of Faith](#). The reassessment is prompted by questions from congregations interested in joining the conference but hesitant because the Confession defines marriage as between a man and a woman. The congregations are concerned that the Confession does not match [denominational and conference statements on LGBTQ+ inclusion](#) and marriage and family life. Central District has begun discussions to refine its welcoming message, both for its own benefit and to help the discernment of congregations seeking to join the conference from outside the Anabaptist tradition. While both MC USA and Central District have affirmed statements of repentance and transformation, the Confession's language remains a barrier for those unfamiliar with the work of repair with LGBTQ+ people. At their annual meeting June 25-27 at Eastern Mennonite University, Central District delegates discussed [Article 19](#) in the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, the 1995 document that serves MC USA and Mennonite Church Canada. They shared a desire for a positive statement about the covenant relationship between two people and the valuing of many types of family beyond the traditional nuclear family. Central District plans to use the information gathered during the discussions to create a statement on Article 19 as a guide for congregations and those seeking to join. **Read the rest of Sarah Werner's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

ADN Statement on Community

On June 18, 2026 the [U.S. Department of Justice released an opinion](#) questioning the constitutionality and mandates of the [Supreme Court Olmstead decision](#). The 1999 landmark Supreme Court ruling in Olmstead v. L.C. established that the unjustified segregation and institutionalization of people with disabilities and mental illness is a form of discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Since then, millions of people have benefited from its provisions. The resulting policies and shift in funding allocation have allowed them to live with or near family, friends, schools, and community, including their congregations. Anabaptist Disabilities Network is deeply troubled by this recently released opinion. Anabaptists have been at the forefront of the reform of housing and support for disabled people and people who experience mental illness since the 1940s. Over time, from institutional reform, to deinstitutionalization, to supported living in community, we have continued to advocate for everyone to live their best possible life. We do not want to go back to a time when people with disabilities and mental illness were forced to live in institutions, isolated and separated from those who love them. Disabled people belong in their homes and in our communities. While we are primarily concerned about the wellbeing of our brothers and sisters, it should be noted that [home and community-based services are generally far less expensive than institutional care](#). We are concerned that the opinion could undermine the policies and funding that have improved the lives of so many people. We stand with other national religious organizations in speaking out for people with disabilities and their families, affirming that disabled people belong in our communities. **Read the rest of Mennonite Disabilities Network's statement [here](#).**

Seeking BMC Oral Histories Project Coordinator

We recorded oral history interviews with 23 individuals at our 50th gathering to add to BMC's collection. We're seeking a video/audio editor and project coordinator to continue this project in Fall 2026. Is this you? Is this someone you know? Email bmc@bmclgbt.org with interest! A stipend is available.

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

The effort to stop the U.S./Israel military merger continues!

Last month, we shared about a measure in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would advance the Israeli-American war machine collaboration in unprecedented ways, effectively merging the data and technology of the two militaries. Over 500 of us wrote members of Congress together, and now, we must urgently [turn our attention to the Senate](#). Senators Van Hollen, Sanders, Merkley, Welch, Markey, and Warren are working to oppose moving forward on the Senate NDAA to allow time for section 1217 (the Israel Tech Merger) to be removed. **Read the rest of Mennonite Action's announcement [here](#).** Today, it's important we all contact our Senators to urge them to 1. Support the efforts of Senators Van Hollen, Sanders, Merkley, Welch, Markey, and Warren to oppose cloture on the Senate NDAA, to allow debate on further military integration with Israel. 2. Oppose Section 1217 of the NDAA, and Section 619 of the Intelligence Authorization Act.

God made me whole and holy

In an ableist culture, a welcoming church is a joyful surprise.

Last September I had the honor of being ordained at Columbus Mennonite Church in Ohio as a minister of the Word in Mennonite Church USA for my work in theological education and leadership of Olentangy Wild Church. I am grateful to have been a member of Columbus Mennonite for eight years because I am welcomed for all of who I am, including my disability. As a wheelchair user, I have often visited churches where the sanctuary is accessible to laypeople, but the pulpit and front chancel are up a flight of steps. The message is clear: I am welcome to participate in worship but not welcome in leadership. The wisdom I have gained from my experience of embodiment is not valued enough to share in these places, and so coming to Columbus Mennonite after a move from the South was a joyful surprise. There are push buttons that open the front doors, accessible restrooms, an elevator and, best of all, the chancel and pulpit are accessible via a ramp built into the architecture of the sanctuary. When I lead worship, a shorter podium is made available to me. When I sit in the pews, there are several wheelchair cutouts to choose from. I feel a profound sense of belonging. My fellow members relate to me as just another person who happens to move through the world in a different way. My faith and my insights are valued, and if I need a particular accommodation, it is provided without argument or comment. Removing physical barriers to participation is just the first step in making churches welcoming spaces. But it is a step I hope congregations continue to take as they live into a commitment to inclusion and belonging. In a world permeated by ableist attitudes and barriers, the church should be a place where people of all abilities are valued, heard and cherished. **Read the rest of Sarah Werner's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Troupe spotlights harm in garment industry

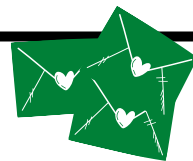
Theatre of the Beat recently concluded a cross-Canada tour of a new play, inspired by Mennonite ministries in Toronto, about exploitive conditions in global retail systems. The play, *Invisible Threads*, was performed mainly in Mennonite congregations May 2 to June 7 from British Columbia to Ontario. One performance was in a women's federal penitentiary. The touring theater company was founded in 2011 when it produced Rebecca Steiner's *Gadfly: Sam Steiner Dodges the Draft* in partnership with Conrad Grebel University College. The play follows a retail worker, Mark, who stumbles upon a hidden note while folding a new pair of jeans. The message is from a factory worker in Bangladesh asking for help to escape unjust labor conditions. As Mark begins to pull at the threads, something that started overseas leads right back to home. *Invisible Threads* was written over seven years by artistic director Cedric Martin, a Mennonite who began the piece after volunteering with Aurora House. Started by Toronto United Mennonite Church and Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto, the house provides transitional housing and services to survivors of trafficking and exploitation. After volunteering to help prep the house for guests, Martin thought of another way to contribute. He researched and developed the play in consultation with experts and people with lived experience. **Read the rest of the *Anabaptist World's* article [here](#).**

'Thank you' from FARM NGO in Mongolia

Long-time Mennonite Mission Network worker Laura Schlabach recently received a moving thank-you from [FARM \(Family Agricultural Resources Mongolia\) NGO](#), an independent Mongolian organization that grew out of [JCS International](#), a longtime partner of Mission Network. Schlabach served 32 years with JCS International in various roles before concluding her ministry at the end of March. She shared the message of gratitude on behalf of FARM, highlighting the lasting impact of years of faithful support. FARM NGO focuses on providing essential agricultural resources to Mongolian families, including clean drinking water. A key tool in this work is a well-drilling rig made possible through generous support from the [Mongolia Mission Partnership](#) and Mission Network. Over the past 15 years, this drill has helped provide reliable access to clean drinking water for more than 4,000 households. The wells have been strategically placed near schools, hospitals, and family homes to benefit entire communities. This tangible fruit of long-term partnership reflects the lasting legacy of Schlabach's ministry and the ongoing commitment of Mission Network and our supporters in Mongolia and the U.S. **Watch the video and read Mennonite Mission Network's blog post [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!

Useful Links
