

THE MENNONITE CHURCH OF NORMAL | JULY 22, 2026

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Ruth Keidel Clemens will preach a sermon titled *What is your function?* using Isaiah 58:6-7, Micah 6:8, and 1 Peter 4:10-11.

After Worship

Adult CE
Rooms 5 & 7

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



"Last call" for Vision Team Nominations

Deadline for Nominations: Today, July 22 at 5 pm

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 Satchwell on the Vision Team ([Vision Team member Ministry Description](#)). The Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (SGDT) is responsible for organizing the nomination and election processes for filling this position. **People already serving on commissions, teams, or committees may be nominated**

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 today to Barry, secretary of SGDT. Deadline: 5 p.m. tonight!

Shared by the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team

Ruth Keidel Clemens



This 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](#). View a flyer for the Flannagan Library event [here](#).**



Adult CE

Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation class will discuss Chapters 8 and 9 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

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.

Menno Haven Sunday



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:

- **Sign up** at the table in the fellowship area or contact Marge
- There will be a lifeguard on duty.
- Lunch suggested donations: Adults \$15.00, Children 10 and under \$7.00, Children 3 and under free
- 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



Yard Hymn Sing

Wednesday, July 29 at 6:30 pm

You are invited to sing with Mark and Jane at their home on Wednesday evening, July 29 at 6:30 pm. This is a time of deep connection and support for Mark and Jane and their family as well as those who know and love them well. Please bring a hymnal (*Voices Together*) if you have one and a lawn chair. Hymnals will also be available for those that don't have a copy. Come and share in this time of care and compassion.



Celebration of Life for Ardys Serpette

Saturday, August 1: Visitation at 9:00 am and Service at 10:00 am

A Celebration of Life service for Ardys Serpette will be held on August 1 at the Mennonite Church of Normal. Visitation will be at 9:00 am, Service will be at 10:00 am, Lunch will follow immediately afterwards. The Interment service will be at 3:00 pm at Pike Township Cemetery in Graymont, Illinois. Read Ardys's obituary [here](#). Please remember her family in prayers as they grieve.

Meal for Celebration of Life



There will be a shared meal following the Celebration of Life for Ardys Serpette on August 1. If you are willing to provide a salad (to serve 10) or dessert for this, contact Marge. Thank you!

Ian Presentation on MMN Service Adventure

Sunday, August 2 at 5 pm at the MRC Community Building

Our own Ian will share about his year in Alaska with Mennonite Mission Network's Service Adventure, a 10-month gap-year program. Everyone is welcome at the Mennonite Residential Community Community Building at 5pm.

Shared by the Community Life Commission

Help Wanted: MRC Financial / Office Manager

The Mennonite Residential Community is seeking a person or persons to learn the financial system and run the community office. Financial work includes preparing monthly invoices, depositing funds, paying vendors and real estate taxes, preparing monthly financial reports for the Board and investment management of funds. Knowledge of QuickBooks accounting system is essential. Office manager tasks include monitoring mail both regular and electronic, securing office supplies, scheduling periodic furnace & AC inspections, elevator inspection, computer updates, etc. The position(s) are part-time and are paid by the hour. Please submit a resume as part of the interview process to MRC, 711 S. Cottage Avenue, Unit 113, Normal, IL, 61761.

Shared by Roger, Mennonite Residential Community Board Chair

It's that time of year again. SCHOOL KITS FOR MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. You have all been so supportive in the past so LETS DO IT AGAIN. Each kit costs approximately \$5, give or take. We did over 300 last year, lets do more this year!!! We have several ways you can help.

1. Go and buy the supplies yourself. There is a list of recommended supplies below.
2. Donate to the church and designate for SCHOOL KITS. This allows us to order bulk quantities, tax free, and it comes right to the church.
3. Sew bags. Deanna has precut bags and fabric. See her, or you can do your own. View instructions [here](#).
4. You can help assemble kits when we have all the supplies

QUESTIONS SEE: Deanna and Louise

Contents of a School Kit (NEW items only)

- 4 spiral or perforated-page notebooks: 8.5 in x 10.5 in; 70 sheets each
- 8 new unsharpened pencils
- 1 ruler: flat, good quality; must indicate 30 cm (inch markings optional)
- 12 colored pencils in packaging
- 1 large eraser
- 4 new black or blue ballpoint pens
- MCN will provide pencil sharpeners that meet MCC requirements

Little Free Library



If you know where the book cabinet went that was damaged in a storm for the free little library at our South entrance, please contact Lauren Satchwell (lauren@normalmennonite.org). Thanks!

Shared by Lauren Satchwell



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 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



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.

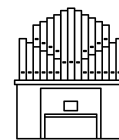
From the MCN 50th Committee

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.

MCN 50th Factoid



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

While it remains quiet most Sundays, our organ is a very special instrument. Being such a large construction, just where did we find such a thing? Well, the answer is that it was moved here from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, nearly 800 miles away! Would you like to learn to play the organ? You can apply for the Dorothy Loepp scholarship or learn more [here](#). Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: kevin@normalmennonite.org





Those Serving This Week



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.



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, July 22

1:00 pm Quilting

7:00 pm Vision Team (Zoom)

Thursday, July 23

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

9:30 am Women's Bible Study

7:30 pm Vision Team (Zoom)

Monday, July 27

6:00 pm Volunteering at Midwest Food Bank

Tuesday, July 28

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, July 29

1:00 pm Quilting

6:30 pm Hymn Sing at Mark & Jane's Home

7:00 pm Vision Team (Zoom)



Welcoming the Stranger: Stories of Faith, Immigration, and Hope

Tuesday, July 28 at 1 pm CDT

Mennonite Central Committee Webinar *Welcoming the Stranger: Stories of Faith, Immigration, and Hope* – Tuesday, July 28 at 1 p.m. CDT (for 1 hour and 15 minutes). In this webinar, we will share stories from three churches and leaders like you who are putting faith into action — welcoming and supporting immigrants, facing challenges in their communities, and building congregations that respond with compassion and courage. Speaking from a variety of perspectives across Anabaptist traditions, we'll talk about themes like faith in action, ministry with immigrant communities, lessons learned, and practical ways churches can respond to the reality's immigrant families are facing today. Pastors, church leaders, and congregants looking for inspiration and practical ways to get involved are invited to attend. **Register today for this free event [here](#) or contact abrahamdiazalonso@mcc.org with any questions.**

Shared by Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes

SCAI Conference at Hungry World Farm

October 1-4

SCAI (Sustainable Christian Agriculture Initiatives) Conference at Hungry World Farm: The conference happens October 1-4 at the farm near Princeton, IL. Come and learn from an exciting lineup of [speakers](#) about how sustainable, regenerative agriculture connects with our faith, our health and our human spirit. To register or sponsor someone else's attendance, scroll way down on the [conference web page](#) to the Magic Buttons. Thanks for your interest and support!

Shared by Susie Kauffman, Hungry World Farm Board Member

Coffee and Conversation: Healing toward Solidarity

Thursday, August 6 at 5:00 pm CDT

You're invited! Story as medicine, healing as justice: join Amanda K. Gross, author, intersectional anti-racist organizer, and mixed-media fiber artist, for a grounding conversation on Post-Traumatic Mistress Syndrome. This August, MW USA's Coffee & Conversation will talk about the trauma patterns that so often keep white women from showing up fully in anti-racist ministry. And we'll turn toward the healing that makes real solidarity possible. Bring a comfortable seat, your favorite beverage, and join us Thursday, August 6 at 5:00 pm CDT for this honest, grounding conversation. **Click [here](#) to RSVP for the Zoom link.** *Shared by Mennonite Women USA*

Strengthened by rejection

I am Mennonite. My family history and culture, my deepest ethical values, my orientation to scripture and my last name are all inextricably tied to the Mennonite story. I am Disciples of Christ. I have been since I was ordained a Disciples pastor in 2015 and before then, too. For the past 23 years, whenever I needed welcome, somehow in front of me there appeared the Disciples' open table. I was in seminary a little too soon to find a pastoral place in Mennonite Church USA. I came out in college and learned that Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary wouldn't be a welcoming environment for me in the mid-'00s. Without regret, I landed at Vanderbilt Divinity School. I internalized the school's commitments to (as phrased at the time) opposing racism, sexism and heterosexism. Exclusion based on sexuality and gender was about power and prejudice, not personal morality or biblical truth. Confident in myself and these values, I went looking for an internship in a Mennonite church that would take me as I was. I wrote to a few congregations and pastors who had been in trouble for their public welcome, some of the early members of the Supportive Communities Network and Inclusive Mennonite Pastors. Thus began a long friendship with Seattle Mennonite Church. In 2008 I spent a beautiful summer as a ministry intern there, and I left knowing I would be a pastor. A year later I met Carol Wise, the longtime executive director of Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests. Carol was a faithful presence during the next years of struggle as I tried to pursue my calling to serve and was rejected outright, or asked to keep my sexuality quiet, or encouraged to wait a little longer. The sense of home I feel in both worlds is a gift from BMC that will continue well into the future. Denominational multiplicity, dual (and more) identities, life beyond binaries, expansive commitments, a grounded and resilient faith — these are the gifts of my queer pastoral life. **Read the rest of Sarah Klaassen's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

July E-memo: Events

- **Every third Thursday: Borderlands and beyond: Monthly charlas with MCC (virtual):** The MCC U.S. Immigration Network facilitates casual virtual monthly charlas to engage with MCC's community partners, programs and leaders working in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and beyond. [View the program calendar, watch previous recordings and register.](#)
- **July 28: Welcoming the stranger webinar (virtual):** Hear from church leaders putting faith into action in this webinar hosted by the MCC U.S. Immigration Network. [Register for Welcoming the stranger: Stories of faith, immigration and hope.](#)
- **Sept. 24-June 10: Creation Justice Ministries' Ecopreacher cohort:** Are you a pastor eager to address creation justice from the pulpit, but need support? Register for Ecopreacher, a ten-month cohort facilitated by MCC partner Creation Justice Ministries that equips preachers with theological grounding, practical tools, and a community of peers who get it. Early bird registration is open until August 1. [Learn more.](#)
- **Sept. 14-18: Immigration law training (Akron, Penn.):** MCC and World Relief are hosting an in-person Basic Immigration Law Training September 14-18. This course will help provide the necessary training component for individuals who wish to apply for accreditation from the Department of Justice (DOJ - formerly known as BIA recognition and accreditation). [Learn more and register.](#)
- **Oct. 18-24: Puerto Rico Peace Camp:** What does it mean to work for peace on Earth when there is constant conflict and exploitation? Join this young adult Peace Camp to explore how the life of Jesus and the clamor of the land call us together to cultivate peace. [Register now!](#)
- **Oct. 30-Nov. 1: The art of being creatures: A gathering for peace, climate and advocacy (Winnipeg, Canada):** Save the date for this Anabaptist-led gathering for young adults and those who support the next generation of faith and climate leaders. Led by the Spirit, we will pray, create, share food and learn from each other about peace, climate and advocacy. [Sign up](#) to be alerted when registration opens!
- **Nov. 14-20: Borderlands learning tour (Tijuana, Mexico, and San Diego, Calif.):** Join West Coast MCC for a week of experiential learning in Tijuana and San Diego to explore migration, borderland communities, and the impact of current immigration policies through the lenses of peacebuilding and hospitality in Christian scripture and tradition. [Learn more and register.](#)

Shared in the [Mennonite Central Committee US National Peace & Justice Ministries July E-Memo](#)

Theologian who led writing of Confession of Faith dies

Helmut Harder, 92, a theologian and denominational leader who co-led the writing of a statement of beliefs used by many North American Mennonites, died May 7 in Winnipeg, Man. A longtime professor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Harder co-chaired the committee that wrote the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective for the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church. MC and GC delegates approved the Confession at a joint assembly in Wichita, Kan., in 1995. When the denominations merged in 2002, the document became the Confession of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. **Read the rest of the Anabaptist World article [here.](#)**

Pioneering woman leaves legacy of generous service

Doris Kramer, the first woman appointed to the Mennonite Board of Missions, died on May 20, 2026, in her St. Jacobs, Ontario, home. She was 102. Doris served as secretary of the Women's Service Auxiliary and made history as the first woman appointed to the Mennonite Board of Missions (a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network). In this role from 1972 to 1980, she helped shape the church's vision for international service and peacemaking. **Read her story in Jane Morrow's blog post for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

Africa mission director dies while traveling to Canada

John Fumana, 60, executive director of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, died May 15 en route to Canada. [AIMM said](#) Fumana's "sudden and unexpected passing" occurred as he and his wife, Lucie, were landing in Montreal to begin a monthlong trip to visit Canadian churches. Fumana had directed the mission agency since 2020. Tany Warkentin, Africa liaison worker for International Witness, the mission agency of Mennonite Church Canada, said Fumana blessed the AIMM community with his ability to bridge many areas of international ministry. **Read the rest of the *Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

Repair of harm should be visible

In my last column, I discussed visible repairs — practices that mend fabric with brightly colored threads, as well as the art of kintsugi, which repairs cracked pottery with veins of gold — and suggested we need visible reminders of our nation's history of slavery to keep us wise for our future. Then I asked: What do visible reminders of past harms look like in our churches and church institutions? I've been struggling with the question. Please understand that I'm not talking about reminders of our martyr history. I am talking about remembering institutional sins from recent generations. The metaphor of beautiful repairs began to unravel as I thought about institutional harms. We have sometimes taken opportunities for confession, growth and attempts at reconciliation. But these harms cannot be repaired as easily as gluing a broken pot back together: Native children die at church-sponsored residential schools, far from home. Institutions turn a blind eye to the sexual violence of a charismatic theologian and lose much of a generation of women theologians. A church relief organization helps Nazi collaborators emigrate, and they escape accountability. The painful consequences remain after the reports are filed, policies updated, funds opened and rituals performed. And so our churches and institutions need sites of memory and pilgrimage where we can go, sit with those pieces, take our children, search our hearts and consider our own sometimes overlapping roles as survivors, enablers or perpetrators — and commit to be part of a better future. **Read the rest of Kirsten Eve Beachy's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

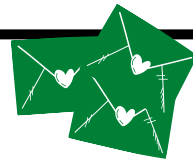
Items for the Midweek



Please send items to be included in the Midweek to the [Church Office](#) no later than **8am on Wednesday**. Thank you!

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