

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled Not What Ought using James 5:13-20.

James is straightforward in his instruction: "confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed." How do we carry our disappointment and guilt together as the body of Christ? How might we?

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 Friday, July 10 at 6:30 pm

WHAT: Movie Night!!!

WHO: Everyone and friends

WHEN: Friday, July 10, 6:30 p.m.

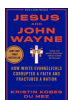
WHERE: MCN, indoors

WHY: FUN, FUN, FUN!!!

BRING: Water bottle, blanket or lawn chair (or you may choose to sit in a church chair)

FOOD: Popcorn will be provided

Sponsored by the Community Life Commission



Adult CE

This Sunday, July 12

Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation
Class discussion will focus on Chapters 6 & 7.

Shared by Bess & Joe

Connection Sunday Event: Picnic at Sugar Grove Nature Center

Sunday, July 12 after Worship

Pack a picnic lunch and head out to Sugar Grove Nature Center (4532 N 725 East Rd, McLean, IL 61754) for an afternoon of fun. Sugar Grove has a picnic shelter, a small creek, walking trails, trees to climb, and outdoor toys. Plan to leave immediately following the service and stay as long as you like. For those unable to join, coffee and fellowship will also be available.

From the Discipling 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*

Condolences to the Family of Ardys Serpette

We extend heartfelt condolences to the family of Ardys Serpette who passed away yesterday, July 7, 2026. Services are pending. Please remember Ardys's family in prayer as they grieve.

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



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

Project SACRED



Outreach Commission has heard the call to respond to the troubling history of Mennonite participation with Indian residential schools for indigenous children. These were places that actively alienated children from their native language, culture and many died in such schools due to illnesses. You can read more about this [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#). It feels complex to seek repair in such situations, but Project SACRED (Mennonite Church USA) is working toward tangible acts of solidarity with indigenous people such as the repatriation of children who were buried at these schools. Outreach Commission has committed to give \$500 toward this project, and we invite you all to join us by contributing through MCN (memo note: Project SACRED) or by sending funds directly to Koinonia Indian Mennonite Church, with Project SACRED in the subject line, at 10348 N 2270 Road, Clinton, OK 73601.

Shared by the Outreach Commission

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](#). View a flyer for the Flannagan Library 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.

- **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

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

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.



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

One of the open-ended pieces in the 1987 “Meetingplace” book that chronicles MCN’s history is the story of the Mennonite Residential Community (MRC). Shortly after the church building was complete, there was a committee formed to pursue the idea of a “planned unit development” that would serve to strengthen relationships within the congregation and intentionally make new ways to engage the geographic area surrounding the church with the hope of “a renewed expression of community in their own lives” (Meetingplace, 138). In January 1987, the congregation approved the MRC plans, and now, almost 40 years later, that community is well-established around us, as is well-illustrated in the recent sign made of rock. *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



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, July 8

1:00 pm Quilting

Thursday, July 9

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

9:30 am Women's Bible Study

6:45 pm Administration Commission (Zoom)

Friday, July 10

6:30 pm Movie Night @ MCN

Sunday, July 12

11:00 am Picnic at Sugar Grove Nature Center

Monday, July 13

9:30 am Community Life Commission

Tuesday, July 14

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, July 15

1:00 pm Quilting



You're invited to ...

The Immigration Project's
Annual Fundraising Luncheon

DATE: OCTOBER 9TH, 2026
TIME: 12:00PM - 1:00PM
LOCATION: BROWN BALLROOM,
ISU BONE STUDENT CENTER

[RSVP HERE](#)

JOIN US FOR A LUNCHEON IN SUPPORT OF IMMIGRANT JUSTICE!

A lifeline for me, a face for the church

BMC has shown the way to an honest, integrated life.

Discovering the Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests and the existence of other queer people from a Mennonite background was a lifeline when I had no other place to turn. Since adolescence I had struggled with same-sex attraction. I learned very early that I could not trust friends or youth pastors to keep my secret. I coped by denying who I was and suppressing my sexual self all during my formative years at Mennonite elementary, secondary and college educational institutions. I realized my prayers for change would not be answered in the way I had hoped. Through BMC, I discovered a network of Mennonites who had walked this journey. They gave me a path forward as a gay man. BMC provided a framework to support my faith journey. I did not reject all the teachings I received in my formative years but attempted to integrate my faith and sexuality. My life partner of 43 years and I did not receive initial blessing from the church, but we found a supportive congregation willing to accept us as members and to marry us when that became possible in 2010. I'm saddened to see conferences deciding to leave Mennonite Church USA. I think about young people growing up in these conferences and believe BMC still has a relevant mission to those who experience a disapproving church. My biological family did not disown or reject me but stayed in relationship despite differences in beliefs. My hope is that, like my own family, these conferences can find a path to remain together. **Read the rest of Christian Yoder's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

The potluck is political

Last Sunday somebody brought a green bean casserole to our weekly fellowship meal and put it next to somebody else's arroz con pollo, and I stood there for a second looking at the table before anybody touched it and thought: This is it. This is the whole argument. We live inside an economic order that is good at making us forget other people exist. Not through malice exactly, more through architecture. The whole system hums along on the fuel of our isolation and calls it convenience. And we have mostly accepted the trade. The potluck refuses that trade. It is not convenient. It requires you to cook something, or at least stop and buy something, and show up with it and find a place to set it and then stand around in a room with people across several generations who have different politics and different tastes and different ideas about how much salt is appropriate. You cannot algorithm your way out of the woman who wants to tell you about her knee replacement. You cannot skip the part where the toddler puts his hand directly into your hummus. There is a reason the early church was so threatening to Rome, and it was not primarily their theology. Rome was fairly tolerant of theologies. What Rome could not abide was a community that ate together across the lines that were supposed to hold society in its proper order. Slave and free at the same table. Jew and Gentile passing the same bread. The meal was the message, and the message was that Caesar's order was not the only order available. Another way of organizing life was not only imaginable but already happening, every time they pulled up a chair. Something is happening in this country that I do not have clean words for. It is a narrowing. A slow sorting. By documentation, by zip code, by who the algorithm decides you should know. The culture is getting smaller and meaner and more convinced that the people on the other side of whatever line are not quite real. **Read the rest of Chris Scott's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

A pastoral letter to Anabaptists in DR Congo

Beloved sisters and brothers: Members of Communauté Évangélique Mennonite, Communauté Mennonite au Congo, Communauté des Églises des Frères Mennonites au Congo, Communauté Mennonite de Kinshasa. We hold you in our prayers. You bring gifts to the global family: the emotional vibrancy of your connection to Jesus inspires us. Your deep faith instructs us. Your practice of community and sacrificial hospitality models for us the way of Jesus. The hardships you endure grieves us. The ravages of resource extraction for the very devices that connect us. The underdevelopment of your vast country as its riches benefit only the already-wealthy. The warring factions who squabble over power and money while people caught in the middle suffer. At this time, we call on our global communion to pray with our siblings in DR Congo and beyond amid an Ebola outbreak. We pray for the spread of hygiene information to shut down the spread of the virus. We pray for the provision of soap and gloves and other tools to protect the carers from paying a cost for their compassion. We pray for governments to be wise and judicious in their implementation of preventive measures. We pray for a stop to local and regional violence that would interfere with medical aid reaching those who need it. We pray for churches to be a refuge for the spirit in this time of fear. May our members take care to be sharers of truthful information. May our communities be generous in tending to the needs of all. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. In the name of Jesus, Prince of Peace, amen. **Read the prayer from Henk Stenvers, President of Mennonite World Conference, [here](#). Lee esto en español [aquí](#).**

Lettre pastorale aux anabaptistes en RD Congo

Sœurs et frères bien-aimés: Membres de la Communauté évangélique mennonite, de la Communauté mennonite au Congo, de la Communauté des Églises des Frères mennonites au Congo et de la Communauté mennonite de Kinshasa: Vous êtes dans nos prières. Vous apportez des dons à la famille mondiale: la dynamique émotionnelle de votre lien avec Jésus nous inspire. Votre foi profonde nous enseigne. Votre pratique de la vie communautaire et de l'hospitalité sacrificielle est pour nous un modèle pour suivre Jésus. Les épreuves que vous endurez nous attristent. Les ravages causés par l'extraction des ressources dont dépendent les appareils mêmes qui nous relient. Le sous-développement de votre vaste pays, dont les richesses ne profitent qu'aux personnes déjà riches. Les factions en guerre qui se disputent le pouvoir et l'argent tandis que les populations prises au piège souffrent. En ce moment, nous appelons notre communauté mondiale à prier avec nos frères et sœurs de la République démocratique du Congo et d'ailleurs, alors qu'une épidémie d'Ebola sévit. Nous prions pour que les mesures d'hygiène soient largement diffusées afin d'endiguer la propagation du virus. Nous prions pour que du savon, des gants et d'autres équipements soient fournis afin de protéger les soignants et leur éviter de payer le prix fort pour leur compassion. Nous prions pour que les gouvernements fassent preuve de sagesse et de discernement dans la mise en œuvre des mesures préventives. Nous prions pour que cessent les violences locales et régionales qui empêcheraient les soins médicaux d'atteindre ceux qui en ont besoin. Nous prions pour que les églises soient un refuge pour l'esprit en cette période de peur. Puissent nos membres diffuser des informations véridiques. Puissent nos communautés faire preuve de générosité en répondant aux besoins de tous. Seigneur, dans ta miséricorde, écoute notre prière. Au nom de Jésus, Prince de la Paix, amen. **Lisez la prière de Henk Stenvers, président Conférence mondiale mennonite [ici](#).**

First person: Priscillah Mulwa

A Kenyan woman shares how she's working to turn her eroded farm into an oasis.

I live here in Emale village, Kenya. My two children work in Nairobi, but I stay here with two helpers, Lena and Catherine. We take care of four grandchildren. Two of them are twins. My 4-acre farm used to be eroded. I didn't know how to prevent it. I would plant a lot of trees but most of them would become dry. I called my farm the "sand farm" because I was not harvesting much of anything. In 2023, I learned from the village head that Utooni Development Organization (UDO) was offering trainings to help farmers adopt new practices and restore the land. When I heard about the activities they were doing, I told my children I wanted to stop working at the market and stay at the farm. They agreed. After a UDO meeting, our village formed a village savings and loan association (VSLA) group. The VSLA members made me the chair of the group. From there, the staff from UDO started training us. I saved money in the past, but at the end of the year, I would just buy chapati flour in bulk. Now that I've been trained through the VSLA, I've learned that I should not use those savings to buy flour, but to invest in activities that generate income. Even though my son and his wife live in Nairobi, they are part the VSLA, too, and work with me to make improvements to the farm. In 2024, from our savings, we were able to buy a water tank. We are planning to take it to our tree nursery so that we can store fresh water for planting trees. **Read Priscillah Mulwa's story as told to Linda Espenshade for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

Visibly mended

When an old friend died far away, I grieved for words left unsaid, at chances for reconnection not taken. The sorrow was compounded that fall when I brought out my winter wraps and found one of his gifts — a pair of hand-knitted wool mittens, torn and raveling in a dozen places. The moths had ignored everything else in the bin and chewed up the soft heather-colored wool. I couldn't bring myself to throw away this last reminder of my friend's warmth and care, so I mended the mittens. I'm no expert in the fiber arts, but I have internet access and a trove of inherited supplies. I stitched up every hole, using spiderweb rosettes and blanket stitches, cross-stitches and sunbursts and filled in most of one palm with a basket weave. The mending didn't cure my grief, but it honored my friend and my regrets. Our uneasy relationship with our tattered national history in the United States remains in the news. The current administration's push to eliminate troubling reminders of America's past in national parks and monuments threatens to remove the truth of the injustices that were part of our country's founding, built our wealth and underlie systems that persist today. Memorials and storytelling that keep these broken places visible strengthen the fabric of our democracy and keep us honest as we seek to improve the ways we do government and community and to repair lingering inequities. When we teach the truth to our children and remember these historical failings at our places of national pilgrimage, we bind our history in indigo wool; we etch it in gold. (But even these metaphors are not innocent — both indigo and gold have their own histories written in blood.) I needed to keep the mittens close — and, as a country, we must curate places of truthful memory and pilgrimage. May these tangible reminders of our past keep us wise as we live forward into our future. I wonder how, as churches, we remember or might remember the broken places in our own histories in ways that make us stronger and wiser. **Read the rest of Kirsten Eve Beachy's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Al-Khalil: the untold layers of Hebron

To understand Palestine, you must understand Hebron.

Hebron. The place where I was born and where I grew up. It's a city filled with layers of history, shaped by the many people who have lived here over the generations. Hebron is known for its crafts and traditions: the glow of the glass factories, the art of pottery, the taste of the famous sweets, and a rich and diverse food culture reflecting the spirit of its people. **Read Shahd Al Junaidi's blog post for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

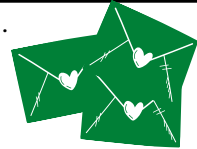
"Border management": death and criminalisation

February started with yet another shipwreck. The Coast Guard caused it, this time in Chios. Once again we saw the results of the criminalisation of migration and the border violence that accompanies it. For years now, migration policies and "border management" in Greece have been based on pushbacks and the criminalisation of people on the move. **Read CPT Aegean Migrant Solidarity's report for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**



Our Members in Care Facilities

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



Useful Links



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