

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Something We Do* using Romans 8:18-28.

How can we make use of hope when we see things going awry? Paul, in Romans 8, talks about suffering in light of future hope like groaning in the process of giving birth. He sees hope lived out in endurance. But is enduring all we can do? How might we cultivate, be led by, and share hope?

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
Sanctuary

Children & Youth CE

Pre-K – 4th Grade
Room 11

5th – 8th Grade
Room 8

9th – 12th Grade
Rooms 5 & 7



**Mennonite
Church
of Normal**

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

Order by: Tomorrow, September 3

Get your Commemorative MCN 50th t-shirt! We are planning to order t-shirts to wear for our service projects on September 26th, but you can wear one anytime! **Please place your order [here](#) by Thursday, September 3rd.**



Cultivating Generous Congregations



Sundays, September 6, September 13, & October 4

Last February and March, Everence offered a 6-session seminar on Cultivating Generous Congregations. Four of us attended, Adam, Mary, Lotus, and Lauren. During the Christian Education hour on September 6 (this Sunday), September 13, and October 4, we will have time to share and discuss pieces of that learning experience and what does Generosity mean for Mennonite Church of Normal? We want to hear from you!

Shared by the Administration Commission



Church Building & Office Closed

Monday, September 7

The church building & office will be closed all day on Monday, September 7 for Labor Day.

S'mores and More at Moraine View State Park!

Sunday, September 13 from 1-5 pm at [Moraine View State Park](#)

Community Life Commission invites everyone to the Honker's Island Shelter (25 minutes SE of BloNo) for an afternoon of hiking, fishing, visiting and S'MORES! Let's hang out before the leaves fall! **Date:** Sunday, September 13. **Time:** 1-5pm (Feel free to take a picnic lunch. Reserved all day.) **Bring:** Roasting sticks, lawn chairs. **Provided:** Fixings for S'mores (yum), water and cups.

Shared by the Community Life Commission



September 25-27

We are celebrating the 50th anniversary of MCN September 25th-27th!

- **Friday** - Family Fun Night (5pm-7:30pm)
- **Saturday** - open house (11am), lunch (12pm), service projects (2pm), hymn sing (6:30pm)
- **Sunday** - Worship (9:30), lunch (12pm), memorial tree-planting

Please take a moment to help us prepare by filling out an RSVP form [here](#). And please share [this flyer](#) widely to spread the word.

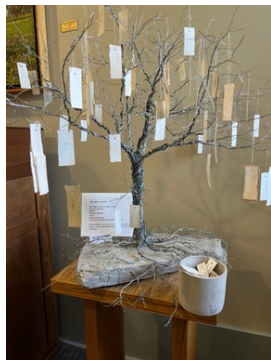


Family Fun Night

Friday, September 25 from 5:30-7:30 pm

Please join us for Family Fun Night on September 25 from 5:30-7:30. For our 50th anniversary celebration, we'll focus on the theme from John 15:5: I am the Vine; you are the branches!" We'll enjoy songs, a lesson, activities and PIZZA!

Shared by the Discipling Commission



Service Projects



If you have filled out your RSVP form, you will have seen some information about the options for service projects on September 26th. Here is some more information.

- **Midwest Food Bank:** Many of you have a close connection with Midwest Food Bank, as MCN has had quarterly volunteer nights there since 2016 with J'ne Augspurger who helps coordinate our efforts there. Often the word is repackaging food so it can be distributed where it is needed for disaster response or food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and churches that directly provide meals to individuals and families in need. **Learn more and sign up [here](#).**
- **MCC Comforter tying:** We have a number of active quilters among us, but even those who are not skilled at sewing can tie comforters (with some instruction) that are sent to places in need around the world through Mennonite Central Committee. You can learn more about the impact of comforters [here](#). This project will be hosted at the church and is coordinated by Gerry, Mary Ann, and Deanna.
- **Carle BroMenn chapel:** There are a number of people already working on this project of making some updated furniture for some meaningful pieces in the hospital chapel. One is the table for their "compassion closet" donations, and the other for their "Tree of Want," a place where people can share in a ritual of naming their hopes. (see attached photos) Volunteers have already been working and these projects will likely be completed by the 26th, but we will take the opportunity on that day to have a commemorative event with the Spiritual Care department. If you sign up for that option, we will make sure you are in the loop for participating in that brief celebratory time.

Shared by the Discipling Commission



Membership

If you are interested in becoming a member of MCN, we want to hear from you! A membership class will be put together based on the needs and the availability of those interested. please reach out to Pastor Kevin (kevin@normalmennonite.org).

Funding for 50th Anniversary Weekend Expenses

Planning for the upcoming MCN 50th Anniversary celebration did not kick off until after the final 2026 Spending Plan was proposed. For that reason, there was limited funding set aside to pay for expenses the church would incur to make this weekend possible. Recently, Vision Team, Pastoral Team, and the five commissions discussed and decided to reallocate a part of the Vision Team's portion of the Spending Plan. These funds were originally put into the Spending Plan for paying someone to fill our open ¼-time pastor role beginning July 1. Since that role remains open, the funds set aside for this position from July 1-September 30 would likely go unused. Collectively we made a decision to reallocate these funds to serve as a budget for the celebration weekend. If you have any questions about this decision, please contact Ben.

From the Vision Team

A Note from Vision Team



Your Vision Team met on August 27 and the meeting discussion included:

- Reports from the Pastoral Team and Commissions and discussion on how VT can be supportive
- Status of items being planned for the 50th Anniversary Celebration weekend in late September
- A review of initial drafts of revised MCN constitution and discussion on next steps
- Plans to process and discuss feedback and insights received from the Aug 2 congregational conversation during worship

Find Vision Team meeting minutes and resource documents in the Vision Team folder on Google Drive [here](#).

From the Vision Team



Mezzanine

The entire upstairs is currently serving to store Worship Commission materials, extra sanctuary chairs, Relief Sale materials, and various other items. In an effort to carefully maintain everything that is currently housed there, as well as ensure the safety of all, the upstairs area is being restricted and accessed only by those actively using the materials housed there. Please support each other and our youngsters by reminding everyone that the upstairs area is not for general exploration. Your help is appreciated.

From the Administration Commission

Call for Photos



As we approach the 50th celebration, we would welcome photos of the last two decades. Do you have photos of camp outs? MYF activities? All church gatherings? Special occasions? Any and all would be appreciated. If you could provide a digital file, please email these to church@normalmennonite.org. If you have only hard copies, please drop them off at the church office. Thank you!

The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). The August issue of the Connector showcases some of the important work that both congregations and the conference are doing to build solidarity with marginalized people. We hear about the work of Grand Rapids Mennonite Fellowship with detained immigrants and we hear from Conference Minister Doug Luginbill about the Palestine Resolution passed at Annual Meeting this year, along with lots of announcements. **If you would like a paper copy, they are now available to take from the Library Table.**



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. **September 6 - Hope.**

MCN 50th Factoid

Bite-sized pieces of our shared history leading up to our 50th anniversary celebration 9/27/26.

Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: kevin@normalmennonite.org.

We have many historical connections with Carle BroMenn, and one is the history of spiritual care there. Our own Ron Ropp (d. 2024) helped shape pastoral care and chaplaincy at Mennonite Hospital from the time he started there in 1970. In his understanding, healing body and spirit are part of the same task. As he expressed, "Jesus said to go out to preach, teach, and heal. We do a lot of preaching and teaching, but healing is often left to medicine." Ron remained connected with the Spiritual Care department at Carle BroMenn long after he left (then BroMenn Healthcare), and this is one of the "Prayers for Hope and Healing" he shared with them as well as MCN in 2020:

Hear my prayer, oh Lord
as the shepherd o'er my fears
for loneliness and pain
have led my heart to tears

Grant peace within my mind
as your Spirit's waters flow
into the pastures of my heart
that hope and love may grow



Sharing of Joys and Concerns



MCN IS ASKED TO BE IN CONTINUED PRAYER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AT CARLE BROMENN MEDICAL CENTER—OUR PARTNER IN HEALING FOR 2026

Prayer Requests and Announcements

Prayer requests can be shared during the Sharing Joys and Concerns portion of our Worship Service. For other announcements, please send them to Lauren Satchwell (lauren@normalmennonite.org) ahead of time so that these can be shared by the worship leader during the Community Life portion of the service. When sharing, it's helpful if your requests are succinct.

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, September 2

1:00 pm Quilting

Thursday, September 3

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

9:30 am Women's Bible Study

Friday, September 4

Afternoon Limited Office Functionality

Monday, September 7

All Day Church Building & Office Closed for Labor Day

Tuesday, September 8

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

9:30 am Community Life Commission

Wednesday, September 9

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

7:00 pm Fellowship Committee (Zoom)



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



Everence Medicare Mondays

Sept. 14, Nov. 2, and Dec 14. at 1 and 7 pm CT and Oct. 12 at 7 pm CT

Everence Financial will host a monthly Medicare Mondays webinar starting this September. Topics will include: when and where to sign up for Medicare, what Medicare covers, plus an explanation of Medicare Parts A, B, C, and D. Attendance is recommended for those ready to sign up for Medicare. Webinars will take place Sept. 14, Nov. 2, and Dec 14. at 1 and 7 p.m. CT and Oct. 12 at 7 p.m. CT. The webinars will be presented by Everence professionals and there will be plenty of time for your questions. **Click [here](#) to register and learn more. View a flyer [here](#).**

Unarmed Civilian Accompaniment

Around the world, authoritarianism continues to rise, targeting dissent and/or vulnerable communities. In these moments it is critical that we build strong communities of solidarity. Read and share CPT's mini guide on how to use Unarmed Civilian Accompaniment to clap back against authoritarianism! Reach out to us for our full guide or to book a training session. **Read Community Peacemaker Teams' post [here](#).**

Pretend poor

Yes, I'm frugal. But I try to live with a sense of abundance.

I'm congenitally frugal. My mom has said, "I've been pretend poor all my life," by which she means she saved money obsessively. I'm pretty sure this is a common trait among Mennonites. When I was growing up, we avoided spending money, and that is a habit I've continued into adulthood. I'm profoundly bad at shopping, because I haven't practiced. I walk into a store and struggle to imagine wanting any of it. I do think values can be expressed through the use of money, but it's much more complicated than the save-at-all-costs mentality that signals virtue in the form of self-control. Financial constraint is a real thing. I know this well as a farm business owner. During the first decade of Humble Hands Harvest, we paid ourselves half of minimum wage, worked winter jobs to make our personal finances work and constantly faced decisions about what pieces of infrastructure we could or couldn't afford. Even though finances are less of a constraint in our farm business now, we're still frugal. We struggle at times to remember that there are solutions to our problems that are easily at hand by spending a little money. I'm starting to understand that the instinct toward frugality is less about spending money and more about doing well by the Earth's resources. Or, as Wendell Berry says in "Vision," my favorite poem of his, "asking not too much of earth or heaven." The stereotype of frugality is one of clutching miserliness, even selfishness — or, alternatively, a virtuous but cold, self-denying restraint. But frugality paired with generosity — toward oneself, others and the planet — feels warmer. It's an embodiment of humility, simplicity and active hope in a world that can provide all we need. **Read the rest of Hannah Breckbill's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

A little bit of everything that refuses to add up

There is a way people talk about life like it is supposed to resolve itself if you are faithful enough, or disciplined enough, or emotionally intelligent enough. Like if you can just get the right habits in place, the right prayers said, the right systems running, everything will finally stop hurting in random places. That is just not how it works. Most people are not living a story. They are carrying fragments. A voicemail they still have not deleted. A hospital waiting room chair that still feels too hard when they remember it. The receipt in a coat pocket from a grocery store trip where they had exactly 18 dollars left and pretended it was fine. A text they should not have sent at 1:47 a.m. and the silence that came after it. You can sit in a church on Sunday and still be holding all of that in your hands like it is normal. People get good at it. We learn how to sing while our insides are elsewhere. We learn how to say "I am doing okay" with the right amount of eye contact so nobody asks a second time. There is a kind of grief that does not really announce itself. It just becomes part of the way a person moves through a room. Shoulders slightly tighter. Smile slightly faster. Exit slightly earlier than they used to. And still, something keeps pulling people forward. Not clarity. Not certainty. Not resolution. Just the next small thing. A shared meal. A phone call returned. A morning where we get out of bed without negotiating too hard for it. Nobody gets a single story. Nobody gets a clean line through it all. It is more like carrying a handful of moments that refuse to agree with each other and still somehow belong to the same life. Somewhere in that mess, people keep living anyway. **Read the rest of Chris Scott's blog post for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

Tree Care, Soul Care

Mennonite forester Bob Atchison says that planting trees for him is an act of prayer. Caring for trees can also be an act of prayer. Tree care, like gardening, is life-giving as it reconnects us with God's creation and our first role in the Garden of Eden to care for the Earth (Genesis 2:15). While tending trees, we can also tend our souls, both of which require care for their health, growth and fruitfulness. As Jesus extended an image from arboriculture to spiritual life (John 15:1-8), consider soul care while doing tree care. **Read more on seven practices of tree care and soul care in Steve Thomas's blog post for Mennonite Men [here](#).**

Idaho students hunt lost graves with radar technology

Two educational institutions in Idaho used ground-penetrating radar this spring in an effort to locate unmarked graves dating to the late 1800s in the cemetery of the former Nampa Mennonite Church. College of Western Idaho research analyst Lazaro Martinez has been working with churches, historians and property owners to restore the cemetery. "The end goal is to have it open to the public so the history is not forgotten," he said. Historical records show a range of individuals buried at the site, now located on private property. Some graves, believed to belong to infants, remain unidentified, highlighting the challenges and hardships faced by early settlers in the region. "It's important to find them now because this generation may be the last to have any connection," Martinez said. "These people laid the foundation of our city." CWI associate professor of geosciences Ander Sundell and student Kaylene Cecil partnered with Boise State University faculty Andrew Gase and his students to use Boise State's radar equipment. **Read the rest of the *Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

Era of realignment

Mergers, splits, shifting affiliations have transformed the U.S. Anabaptist landscape. In the first quarter of the 21st century, mainstream Anabaptists in the United States have reshuffled like a pack of Dutch Blitz cards. Call it an era of realignment. By "realignment" we mean mergers, splits, changes of affiliation and births of new denominations. By "mainstream" we mean Anabaptists who aren't Plain — not the Amish, nor the Hutterites, nor the Old Order Mennonites, to name a few. By "denomination" we mean any group, no matter how small, that isn't subordinate to another. We know this isn't everyone's preferred term. "Network" and "fellowship" are increasingly popular. Some of the shifts this article describes were underway before the turn of the century but sped up in the past 25 years. Why has realignment happened? Conflicts over sexuality, while crucial, don't tell the whole story. Reaffiliations arise from differences of theology, biblical interpretation, church polity (rules and governance), beliefs about diversity and definitions of unity. Realignment in the church reflects polarization in society. Denominations, conferences and congregations that once held greater diversity have split along conservative/progressive lines. Beyond a picture of the shifting landscape, this article offers a glimpse of trends shaping mainstream Anabaptism as denominations establish new identities and chart new paths of ministry. **Read the rest of Paul Schrag's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Sublimity found in historic harmony

Harmonies Workshop, an Anabaptist music ministry that sponsored hymn sings and concerts for 33 years, concluded at the end of 2025. Beyond its core area of Lancaster, Pa., thousands of people have listened online. “Over the years, a community rose up to support this effort, so this ending is filled with much gratitude,” said Glenn Lehman, who directed the nonprofit corporation since its founding in 1992. Board chair Rhoda Denlinger said: “Even though it’s ending, there are many echoes of our work that continue to bring peace to our hearts and to the world.” Harmonies began when the late Hiram Hershey asked Lehman to write a manual for “song leaders who couldn’t use a pitch pipe.” The manual, *You Can Lead Singing*, was published in 1996. Hershey and Lehman both went to Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J., where Lehman got a master’s degree in church music. Two choirs led by Lehman soon became signature projects. The Table Singers — a 40-voice auditioned amateur choir with singers from Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania — explored six Mennonite hymnals, from the first English-language hymnal, *Church and Sunday School* (1902), to *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (1992). **Read the rest of Harmonies Workshop’s article published by the Anabaptist World [here](#).**

Language school and sensory adventures in Taiwan

After a few weeks here on Taiwan’s beautiful east coast, our days have settled into a steady rhythm: focused language study on weekdays and recovery and exploration on weekends. We began full-time Mandarin classes on March 9 at National Dong Hwa University (NDHU), a spacious state university located in Shoufeng Township, roughly a 25-minute drive from our apartment. Caleb and I are in different classes — I’m in Level 2 and he’s in Level 3. While this means we spend long days at NDHU (my morning class and his afternoon one creates a schedule that runs a little more than 9-to-5), it’s proving to be the best arrangement for our individual progress. While one of us is in class, the other can focus on reviewing or homework without distraction. Even though language study is our focus right now, we were excited to begin an English-language Bible study at the hospital recently. This weekly group brings together hospital staff — nurses, development team members, supervisors, and others — to learn about biblical leaders while practicing English conversation. It’s been a fun way to build relationships with our new colleagues. **Read the rest of Stephanie Schrock-Hurst’s article for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

Lancaster Mennonite School student wins MCC essay contest

Rachel Fisher calls us to turn faith into climate action in her grand-prize essay.

Rachel Fisher, a junior at Lancaster Mennonite School (LMS) in Pennsylvania, won grand prize for her essay on climate and peace in Mennonite Central Committee U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries' (NPJM) annual public policy essay contest. Ella Binkley and Olivia Zook, both seniors at LMS, received honorable mentions for their essays. As the top essayist among nine national finalists, Fisher will receive a grand prize of \$1,000. Binkley and Zook will each receive \$250. In Fisher's winning essay, "Peace through Climate Justice," she examines the relationship between climate change and peace and explains why Anabaptists must take action. "Conflict can be triggered by climate change," she writes, "and global warming can be furthered by conflict. It is our duty to protect the Earth and its ecosystems and care for people around the world." Fisher identifies how climate change can create and exacerbate issues such as food insecurity, forced displacement and resource scarcity. Highlighting the disparity between emissions and impact, she notes that countries in Africa, South Asia and South America are some of the most impacted by climate change but least responsible for emissions. **Read the rest of Margaret Schrag's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

<u>Building Open:</u>	Standard Hours: Monday-Friday 9AM-11AM & 1:30PM-3PM Pastor Kevin designated office hours: Wednesdays, 8am-12pm (or call to plan a visit)
<u>Lydia Hedberg:</u>	Office Administrator; church@normalmennonite.org ; 309-452-6622
<u>Rita Munkakusi:</u>	Custodian
<u>Kevin Chupp:</u>	Pastor for Community Life Commission, Outreach Commission, Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team, & Worship Commission; kevin@normalmennonite.org ;
<u>Lauren Satchwell:</u>	Pastoral Team Lead & Pastor for Administration Commission, Discipling Commission, & Vision Team; lauren@normalmennonite.org ;

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!