

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the merger that formed Mennonite Church of Normal, we are glad to hear from a range of people connected to the life of MCN throughout the years. Our guests, Tom Kauffman, Mag Richer Smith, Tim Schrag (via video), and Michael Danner, will be reflecting on our foundation, our roots, our tree, and our hope—the ways our connections and rootedness carry us across time.

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



This Friday-Saturday, 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

And please share [this flyer](#) widely to spread the word.



Carle BroMenn Chapel



This Friday, September 25 at 3pm

MCN folks are wrapping up work on furniture for 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). We have been invited to mark the occasion of these items with a blessing led by Carle BroMenn Spiritual Care staff Friday, September 25th at 3pm in the chapel. All are welcome to join!



Family Fun Night

This 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



50th Celebration Meal

This Sunday, September 27

A big thank you to all who offered to do a dessert for our Sunday celebration lunch at 12:00. I can't wait to see all your yummy creations!!

Shared by Louise



Oak Flat Presentation

Sunday, October 4 at 5 pm

On Sunday, Oct. 4, Meghan will share the about her experiences at Oak Flat (AZ) and other work she is doing with the Dismantling Coalition. Come learn history and updates. All are welcome at the Mennonite Residential Community's Community Building at 5pm.

Shared by the Community Life Commission

New Sunday School Class: God's Spirit/Our Stories

Beginning Sunday, October 4

Do you ever wonder how members of our congregation discovered their spiritual gifts? Well, you can find out by coming to this class. Barry and Janet will co-facilitate a Sunday School Class titled God's Spirit/Our Stories. Each week they will interview a person or a couple about their stories regarding their spiritual gifts, and you can ask them questions too. This class also ties to our 2026 church theme of Connections. As we hear and affirm each other's stories we deepen our connections with one another. You are welcome to join Barry and Janet for as many Sundays as possible for this eight-class series. It will be held October 4, 11, 18,25 and November 8, 15, 22, 29.

The Story of the Mennonite College of Nursing

**Saturday, October 10 at 10 am Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center
675 State Route 116, Metamora, IL 61548**

Join the Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center for "Pioneers in Healthcare Keepers of the Flame: The Story of the Mennonite College of Nursing" on Saturday, October 10 at 10 am. Lunch will be served and donations are appreciated. RSVP to Lori at (309) 303-6950. **View the flyer [here](#).**

Dementia Friendly Communities Workshop

Sunday, November 1 during the CE Hour

On November 1, Kathryn Johnson, Community Liaison for East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging will share with us about Dementia Friendly Communities. Since most of us at MCN know someone with dementia, please plan to attend this important teaching and Q & A time on November 1. Kathryn has been invited by the Congregational Care Committee. Below is a description of the information that will be shared: *Dementia Friends is a global awareness initiative aimed at educating the public on how to better support people living with dementia and family caregivers in their communities. Unlike professional clinical training, this session is designed for everyone, from students to neighbors, and focus on small, actionable steps. Participants learn fundamental facts about dementia, such as it not being a normal part of aging and that it is possible to live well with the disease. After the session, participants become a "Dementia Friend" by committing to one practical action, such as being more patient in public or visiting a friend living with dementia.*

MCN Timeline

On the North side of the atrium, you can see a 16-foot banner that displays the timeline of the history of Mennonite Church of Normal. It is not only large for the sake of being easy to read, but because we hope to build on it. There is space between some of the benchmark events for all of us to add our own points of interest to the timeline. You can simply grab one of the little circles provided, write whatever personal event you'd like—the time you joined us, a milestone like a wedding or baptism, a favorite experience, or whatever else you imagine (and the date)—and stick it directly on the banner wherever it fits. We hope this will be a fun way to revisit memories together the weeks surrounding the celebration weekend, but we can keep adding things for the rest of the year!



MCN 50th Factoid

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

Over the years, we have had many voracious readers among us, but we have also had some writers. Here is a selection of some books and chapters written by folks from MCN over the years. Check out the displays in Room 8 this weekend to find out what books these authors have written!

- Stanley R. Clemens
- Cornelius Dyck
- Rachel Waltner Goosen
- P.K. Pam Hodel
- Gerlof Homan
- D. Paul Miller
- Russell L. Oyer
- Judith Valente
- David Voegtlin
- James Waltner
- A. Emerson Wiens



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



Those Serving This Week



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, September 23

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

Thursday, September 24

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

Friday, September 25

5:00 pm Family Fun Night

Saturday, September 26

11:00 am Open House

12:00 pm Lunch

2:00 pm Service Projects

6:30 pm Family Fun Night

Sunday, September 27

9:30 am Worship

12:00 pm Lunch & Memorial Tree Planting

Tuesday, September 29

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, September 30

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting



Ethiopian church withdraws from Mennonite World Conference

Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, the largest member of Mennonite World Conference, announced its withdrawal from MWC in early September to distance itself from a handful of MWC member churches that accept same-sex relationships. The announcement followed [MKC's November 2025 decision not to host MWC's 2028 assembly](#) and a 98.3% vote of approval Sept. 4 at MKC's general leaders conference hosted by Meserete Kristos Seminary in Bishoftu and attended by more than 200 regional representatives. The withdrawal represents a loss to MWC of more than half a million members. "This means losing roughly a third of the Mennonite World Conference," MWC general secretary César García told AW. "This has been a very sad situation for us. Not only are we losing members, but we are also losing gifts. We are losing the richness that MKC has to share with others around the world. We are losing leaders. "In a more personal way, it has been my privilege to share stories of MKC's faithful witness in many settings, so to have them departing from MWC is a very sad situation we are lamenting." MKC said in a [statement shared by MWC](#) that it holds unwaveringly that Christian marriage is a union between one man and one woman. MWC takes no position on same-sex marriage. Only four of MWC's 110 national churches — MC USA, MC Canada and conferences in the Netherlands and Germany — make room for congregations to endorse same-sex marriage. **Read the rest of Tim Huber's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Screening, detention, and containment on the North Aegean islands

Greece's new draft migration law marks an escalation in deterrence, incorporating frontline regions such as Lesbos into an expanded enforcement architecture.

The evolution of Greek migration has reached a critical stage with the introduction of the new draft law, which has now been submitted for public consultation. Aimed at implementing the European Pact on Migration and Asylum – and preemptively incorporating elements of the upcoming EU Return Regulation – this text represents a sweeping structural overhaul. **Read CPT Aegean Migrant Solidarity's blog post for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

A year of grace in Colombia

Our final month in Colombia has been filled with intentional moments: soaking up time with dear friends, showing visiting cousins around La Mesa and Bogotá, wrapping up our teaching roles, selling and giving away our belongings, and preparing for our return to the U.S. We return to the U.S. as the same people who left Kansas yet profoundly changed. This year deepened our faith, expanded our perspective, strengthened our family, and taught us to trust God in new ways. While we felt clear and peaceful about coming to Colombia, the road ahead feels less certain as we transition back. We are trusting God for jobs and a smooth re-entry for our whole family. Looking back, our expectations were not only met but exceeded. We experienced remarkable hospitality, witnessed God's surprising provision, built lasting friendships, grew in character, and watched our children thrive. We even gained new language skills—though we've learned that fluency is a lifelong journey rather than a final destination. **Read the rest of Laura and Nick Sharp's blog post for Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

Two Amish infants die in Pennsylvania measles-associated cases

Two unvaccinated Amish infants infected with measles died in August in Lancaster County, Pa., the nation's first measles-associated deaths this year. The county was the center of a rapid measles outbreak, with 45% of the state's cases in early September. Its large population of Amish and conservative Mennonites has a low rate of vaccination. Plain Anabaptist groups in the U.S., Canada and Mexico have been identified as sources of measles outbreaks in numerous media reports for more than a year. This year's deaths join the deaths last year of [two Mennonite children in Texas](#) and at least [one Mennonite man in Mexico](#). **Read the rest of Tim Huber's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

ICE deportations delay MDS project in Texas

Construction by Mennonite Disaster Service's Texas unit of a new building for a Mennonite church plant in Lamesa, Texas, has been delayed after deportations by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in late August impacted volunteers in the Old Colony Mennonite community. MDS Region 3 interim regional administrator Jeff Koller said volunteers from the Seminole area about 40 miles away had prepared the site for pouring concrete before hitting a snag with getting architectural blueprints certified. By the time that was resolved, ICE established itself in Seminole, which is home to multiple Colony Mennonite congregations that speak Plautdietsch (Low German), with roots in Mexico. "MDS volunteers from the Seminole Mennonite churches are citizens, but they relate to people who aren't. The presence of ICE is making people scared, and some are self-deporting to Chihuahua in Mexico because they don't want to sit in a prison if they are detained," Koller said Sept. 16. He said MDS does not know of any volunteers being deported, but the ripple effects of ICE activity on area employment impacts volunteer availability. ICE did not visit the church work site in Lamesa, and no one from that congregation — Iglesia Cristo La Roca (Christ the Rock Church) — was impacted by the immigration enforcement activities in Seminole. **Read the rest of Tim Huber's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

MC USA honors a Legacy Peacemaker and a Young Peacemaker with 2026 Bring the Peace Award

Mennonite Church USA is celebrating its peace witness by honoring Weldon Nisly and Fernando Daza-Jabian as its 2026 Bring the Peace award recipients. Now in its sixth year, the Bring the Peace award honors individuals who embody Christ-centered peacemaking in their communities and beyond. "Weldon and Fernando reflect our Anabaptist calling to follow Jesus in the way of peace," said Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, MC USA's director of Peace & Justice. "They both have demonstrated their tireless and consistent efforts to create pathways of peace, reminding us all that the work of peacebuilding is a calling and a daily practice." Sponsored by the [Church Peace Tax Fund](#), the Bring the Peace award recognizes two individuals: a Legacy Peacemaker, who has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to peace and justice, and a Young Peacemaker, who is beginning to make a meaningful impact through courageous witness and compassionate action. Each recipient receives a \$300 grant. **Read the rest of Mennonite Church USA's news article [here](#).**

Denial of access to asylum for alleged drivers/facilitators

CPT Aegean Migrant Solidarity co-publishes a joint statement against the Greek state's practice of denying access to asylum procedures for those accused of driving migrant boats towards Greece. For several months, the Greek state has been systematically denying access to international protection for those accused of driving migrant boats – or facilitating migrants' unauthorised entry – to Greece. For almost every boat that arrives, the authorities accuse someone of smuggling-related crimes, arresting them upon arrival, often with limited or no evidence. **Read CPT Aegean Migrant Solidarity's blog post for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

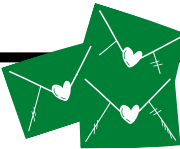
From maize to mangoes

How climate-smart agriculture is helping farmers increase yields, diversify crops, and strengthen livelihoods.

Ruben Mbunza is turning challenges into opportunity. With support from MCC's partner, Utooni Development Organisation (UDO), he learned new ways to farm by building terraces, planting trees, and even making his own natural pesticides to protect his crops. Ruben has learned how to force his 250 mango trees produce fruit up to three times a year, helping him grow and earn more than before. UDO encouraged Ruben and other farmers in the community to sell their mangoes as a group. By working together, they set fair prices and sell each mango by the piece, rather than by their weight. This puts more control, and more income, back in their hands. Ruben shares that the biggest benefit he has experienced is through the visioning journey that UDO promotes. Before doing the visioning journey together, Mbunza says he used to make all the business and family decisions and tell his wife and children (one son and two daughters) what to do. Through the visioning journey, all of the family is involved and united in making decisions about what to do with the business. "Now we are together because the money is for us. And in fact, it has helped us because we have educated our children. So that is one of things UDO has done was uniting the families." **Watch the video and read the rest of Jessica Banninga's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**



Our Members in Care Facilities



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





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

