

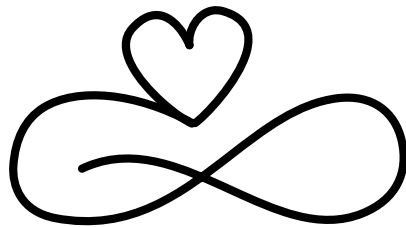
THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This week, Pastor Ron Ropp will preach a sermon titled *Love Never Ends* using the scripture I Corinthians 13:8-13 & I John 4:7-16.

Of all the gifts of the Spirit--Prophecy, Tongues and Knowledge--they will pass away. Love by its very nature is permanent. It has no equal. Love never ends.



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

Journey Groups:
Group A (20's-30's)
First Office

Group B (40's-50's)
Conference Room

Group C (60's and above)
Room 4

Children & Youth CE

Pre-K-K Grade

2nd-4th Grade

5th-8th Grade

High School



**Mennonite
Church
of Normal**

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

Launching Women's Ministry at MCN



Saturday, September 23 at 10 am

Community Life Commission (CLC) has developed a plan for moving forward with a Women's Ministry based on results of the questionnaire that was completed in the spring. The results showed that many women in the church are interested in participating in such a ministry and that there are many different interests to explore.

The Commission has planned for a Launching of Women's Ministry event to be held on Saturday, September 23 at 10:00 am at the church. Jane Roeschley, MACF Threshold Ministries - Spiritual Direction, Retreat, Pilgrimage, will be presenting a talk entitled Women's Wisdom Across the Seasons. This talk will draw upon Celtic places and stories as we think about women's wisdom in the seasons of women's lives, and how sharing our wisdom strengthens and enriches our community with one another.

Following Jane's presentation, CLC will share more about the initial plan for Women's Ministry. Starting out, there will be two kinds of groups meeting. One is for Bible/book study and the other is for Sewing and more.

Coffee and conversation will take place around the tables in the Fellowship area following the presentations. Childcare will be provided for the event. **Click [here](#) to register for the Launching Meeting on September 23.**

From the Community Life Commission

Journey Groups

This coming Sunday, the Journey Groups (Adult Christian Education classes) will begin meeting again after Worship. These groups are age-based, so if you are close to the cut-off between two groups, you can feel free to choose one or the other. Like last year, each group will be reading the same three books in a quarterly rotation, and books can be picked up in the Conference Room (the room next to the nursery). We encourage everyone to find an appropriate group and to join in as we listen to and learn from each other.

Journey Group A (20's and 30's) will be facilitated for Quarter One by Lauren Satchwell, and will begin with *What is the Church and Why Does it Exist?* by David Fitch. They will be meeting in the first office (across from the church office). Read about the book [here](#).

Journey Group B (40's and 50's) will be facilitated by class members, and will begin with *How to Fight Racism* by Jemar Tisby. They will be meeting in the Conference Room, next to the nursery. Read about the book [here](#).

Journey Group C (60's and above) will be facilitated by Lynette Miller and will begin with *To Be Made Well* by Amy Julia Becker. They will be meeting in Room 4, next to the kitchen. Read about the book [here](#).

From the Discipling Commission



Brave and Beloved: A Bible Study for Women

As a component of Women's Ministry, a women's Bible/book study will be offered for women interested in using the book, *Brave and Beloved: A Bible Study for Women Exploring the Wisdom and Diversity of Women in the Bible* by Meredith Storrs. This book looks at the way God weaves the lives of 30 women in Scripture into the redemption story. Reviewers said it is not a "flowers and teacups" Bible study of women, but, using culture and historical context, gives a full picture of these very human women beyond a one-dimensional view. Lynette Miller will lead this study starting the week of September 18. If you are interested, **please contact Lynette, Mary Ann Watkins, or the church office by Tuesday, September 5 so we can order an accurate number of books.** An indication of preferred times to meet would also be appreciated.

From the Community Life Commission

Blood Pressure Checks



Sunday, September 10 after Worship

Mennonite College of Nursing students will be doing blood pressure checks again this Fall. Usually they will be done on the first Sunday of the month after the worship service. However, due to the holiday weekend, September 10 is the scheduled date next month. Please avail yourself of this opportunity in the third office (next to the mailboxes).

Congregational Care Committee



Midwest Food Bank

Thursday, September 21st from 5:00-7:00pm

Our next time to serve at the Midwest Food Bank is Thursday, September 21st from 5:00-7:00pm. We hope you will join us as we have fun while joining the work of this effective ministry in providing food to people in our community and beyond. As always, it is helpful if you can sign up early [here](#).

From the Outreach Commission

An Update on the Medical Debt Jubilee



MCN contributed \$2,411 in the special offering for the Medical Debt Jubilee! Thank you all for giving so generously! Added to the contributions from other congregations and the numbers already tallied from the campaign website, the preliminary total is over \$15,000, well above the \$12,000 goal. This preliminary number will cover \$1.5 million of medical debt for people in Illinois. You can still give, and can follow-up and find final totals when they are calculated on the campaign website [here](#).

From the Outreach Commission

MCC Comforter Bash Registration and Volunteer Sign Up

Friday, September 15 and Saturday, September 16 | 9:00 am – 4:00 pm each day
Registration and Volunteer Sign Up are requested by September 8.

ONE WEEK LEFT TO SIGN UP!

Join us as we gather to assemble comforters that MCC will distribute to those in need around the world. A handmade comforter provides not only warmth but a tangible message to people that their needs are not forgotten. Your participation in the Comforter Bash will go a long way in helping MCC meet the goal of 45,000 blankets by the end of 2023. It is our hope to complete at least 50 comforters.

We invite contributions of pre-made comforters tops (60" x 80") and backs (65" x 85") for assembly at the Comforter Bash. Tops and backs can be brought directly to the Comforter Bash or dropped off at Mennonite Church of Normal in advance. Financial donations are accepted. View photos of comforter tops being made in preparation [here](#).

We invite all women, men, and children to join us. There will be something for everyone to do - tie knots, thread needles, help with food service, and more! Lunch and snack breaks will be available each day. Consider signing up for a few hours, for all-day, or better yet for both days. Please come and go as you are able.

RSVP to attend in one of three ways:

- By using this link:
- By email: church@normalmennonite.org
- By printing and returning this form: [click here](#)

There are several ways to participate in the Comforter Bash. Everyone can knot comforters and there are also other specific Volunteer tasks related to hosting the Comforter Bash. Please sign up on the link above to register for the day and sign up on the link [here](#), or on the bulletin board in the atrium of the church to volunteer for specific tasks.

Registration is requested by September 8 so we can plan for lunch and breaks. If you have questions contact: Gerry Schrock, Deb Stenger, or Mary Ann Watkins.

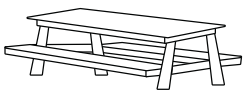
Hosted by the Community Life Commission

Office Closed



Monday, September 4 - All Day

The church office/building will be closed on Monday 9/4 for Labor Day. Thank you for your understanding. --Lydia



Administration Commission Updates

- Head Start has been slow to communicate with us about updates. They have an interim director and don't know when they will be starting classes in our building.
- We had a major water leak in the Head Start hallway last week. It took several tries to figure out what caused the problem. At first, we thought it was a plumbing problem. It was not. It was a condensation drainpipe from one of our furnaces; it cracked and drained gallons into the hallway. The pipe has been replaced.
- Lauren Satchwell and Mary Dyck attended a program on "Protecting Places of Worship Forum" sponsored by the Department of Justice. They learned about a free evaluation that we can request from the US Department of Homeland Security. We've arranged to have the evaluation completed in September. They also shared about a grant application to update some items, if need be.
- There have been requests for picnic tables by the playground for families to use for picnics in the summer. We are working to make this happen.

From the Administration Commission

Vision Team Nominations



Barry Weaver's term as Vision Team Chair ends on December 31, 2023 and he will be stepping down from the Vision Team at that time. Although Shelly King will begin her term as Vision Team Chair in January, we need to nominate and then elect a new member of the Vision Team. This new member will join Shelly, Shannon Neely, and Ben Roeschley. The SGDT is responsible for organizing the nomination and ballot process for this role. You can refresh yourself about the role, purpose, qualifications etc. for Vision Team members [here](#).

The process:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Aug. 27 – Sept. 6 | Nominations for Vision Team Member are submitted |
| Sept. 7 | SGDT prepares ballot; all receiving 5 nominations will be on ballot* |
| Sept. 10 | Election Slate announced |
| Sept. 10 – 13 | Ballots are submitted (paper option available and online voting) |
| Sept. 14 | SGDT reviews ballots; Top person is contacted and invited to prayerfully discern this call; if declined, SGDT will contact the next person |

**One cannot request 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 today for a member of the Vision Team to the co-chair of the SGDT.

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



Narrative Lectionary

We will return to the Narrative Lectionary in worship soon, with Year 2 starting September 10th. We joined this journey through the story of scripture last year with Jesus. This year, we join at the beginning in the story of Genesis, and we encounter the story of Jesus through the Gospel of Mark.

Also, alongside the assigned texts, on September 17th & 24th we will have a special focus on discernment as we prepare for the "Sharing Your Gifts" inventory, facilitated by the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team. Join with us as we reflect on how we can respond to the God who calls us all to take part in God's reconciling work in creation.

From the Pastoral Team and Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team

Card Shower



Duane's birthday is soon, so I would like to request people mail birthday cards by or before 9/7.

--Stephanie Nester



A Note From Connie and Rick

Thank you for the many ways we have been supported following the passing of my mother. We are grateful to be part of such a loving church family.

From Connie & Rick Satchwell

Nursery Helpers



Calling all the amazing Nursery Helpers; if anyone wants their names added or deleted to the nursery schedule or Gather Round for the fall, please contact Carrie Stalter or Spring Neely.



Substitute CE Teachers

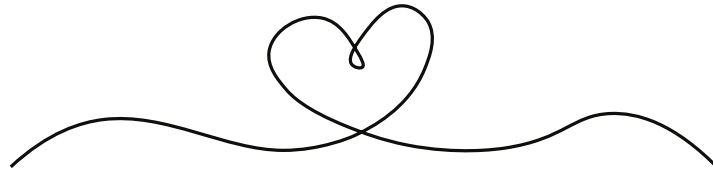
Any joyful hearts that are willing to be a substitute teacher for the pre k-1st grade class this fall please contact Carrie Stalter.

Did You Know?

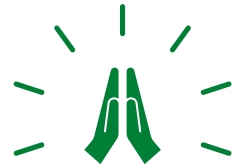


- MC-USA delegates Lauren, Cindy, and Kevin are available between worship and Christian Education and would love to talk with you about their experience in Kansas City.
- There are several outside groups that use our facility during the week. They include Hands All Around Quilt Guild, Cantus Novus, Overeaters Anonymous, Al Anon Family Group, and Wild Ones.
- The Town of Normal recently replaced our water meter.

From the Administration Commission



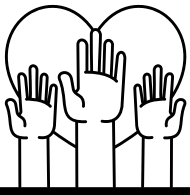
Sharing of Joys and Concerns



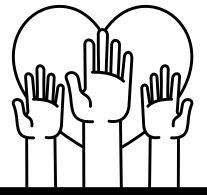
MCN IS ASKED TO BE IN CONTINUED PRAYER FOR FOR THE TOP ADMINISTRATORS AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM CARLE BROMENN MEDICAL CENTER—OUR PARTNER IN HEALING FOR 2023

Prayer Requests and Announcements

Sharing of Joys and Concerns have returned to open mic sharing during the services. Please send announcements to Lauren Satchwell 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 is true whether in person or livestreaming on YouTube.



Those Serving This Week



South Greeters: Rick & Annette Harnish

West Greeter: Bernice Valverde

Welcome Table: David Voegtlin

Ushers: Neely family

Offering Counter: Lotus Hershberger

Worship Planner: Ben Roeschley

Worship Leader: Lynn Reha

Sharing Prayer Leader: Ron Ropp

Children's Story: Nancy Fisher

Scripture Reader:

Technology:

Song Leader: Cindy Ropp

Accompaniment, Prelude, & Postlude: Dorothy Loepf

Infant Nursery – during worship:

Infant Nursery – during CE:

Preschool Nursery:

Gather Round:

Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Thursday, August 31

1:00pm Comforter Tops

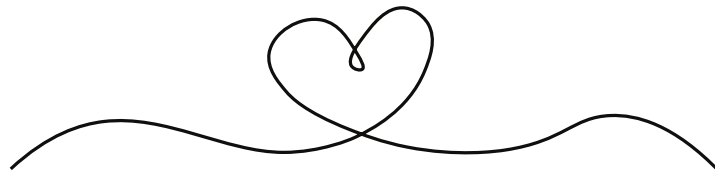
7:00pm Discipling Commission (Zoom)

Monday, September 4

Labor Day - Office/Building Closed

Tuesday, September 5

7:00pm Pastoral Team Search Committee and Vision Team



Green Screen: Film Screenings at Normal Theater



Tuesday, August 29th at 7 pm at the Normal Theater

The Illinois State University Center for Mathematics, Science, and Technology and the Office of Sustainability are excited to announce the fourth season of the Green Screen Film series this fall. Beginning Tuesday, August 29, four films will be screened at Normal Theater in Uptown Normal on the third Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. The films are free and open to the public. **See the schedule and film details [here](#).**



Second Annual Further Jazz Festival

September 9th from 4-9pm at the Connie Link Amphitheatre

Several Jazz ensembles, including Glenn Wilson/Rory Stuart, will be performing during the second Annual Further Jazz Festival at the Connie Link Amphitheatre from 4-9pm on September 9th. View a flyer with more information [here](#).

McLean County Hunger Walk



Saturday, September 16 at Tipton Trails

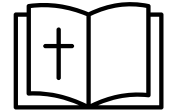
September is Hunger Action Month! McLean County's first annual Hunger Walk will be held on September 16 at Tipton Trails. The walk is free and registration is not required. People are asked to bring food donations that will go to a local food pantry. View a flyer for the event [here](#) and a poster with suggested food donations [here](#).



In Louisiana, hurricane response brings church unity

Two churches have happily become one in Jennings, Louisiana. And one of the bridges between them took the form of more than 2,000 Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) volunteers who have helped the community recover from hurricanes Laura and Delta, which struck in 2020. **Read about the work that brought them together and the path towards merging in Susan Kim's article for Mennonite Disaster Service [here](#).**

MW USA Bible Study Guide



Mennonite Women USA's 2023-2024 Bible Study Guide is now available for purchase on their webstore [here](#)! This year they teamed up with [Samantha E. Lioi](#) for the start of a new trilogy over the next three years.

Samantha is a spiritual director, retreat leader, and writer living on the ancestral lands of the Haudenosaunee and Wenrohronan peoples in Buffalo, NY. She is ordained in Mennonite Church USA and has served as a pastor and conference peace and justice minister.

Samantha's Bible Study Guide explores a theology of Divine abundance and liberation. Included are full Scripture citations to [The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation](#), and each closing prayer is written powerfully in poetry.

Mennonite Women USA encourages us to circle up with your sisters around their latest women-authored Bible Study Guide. May it teach us to see the persistence of life and beauty. May it encourage us to relearn and restore mutual regard, reciprocity, and wholeness.



CPT Summer Newsletter

The Summer 2023 edition of the Community Peacemaker Teams is available [here](#).

Camp Friedenswald Fall Retreats



Women's Retreat 2023 – September 15-17

Join us for spirit-filled worship, relaxation among friends, trails to wander, and water to rest by. This annual retreat, planned by women from across Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA, seeks to provide a place of connection and gathering for women. It is open to ALL women, not only those affiliated with Central District Conference. Brooke Rothshank will be facilitating two workshops focused on integrating art and gratitude. One will be making mini zines using pens and markers to write and illustrate answering the question, “What makes a good day?” The second session will involve water color painting in response to prompts. There will be a focus and demos on pattern making and color blending. No painting experience is required. Learn more and register [here](#).

Restoration Retreat – October 20-22

Connect with the land and life through a weekend retreat centered on restoring healthy relationships with all of creation. Take time to slow down, walk the paths, paddle the water, and simply be in community with all that is around you. Sarah Werner will be leading four core sessions throughout the weekend. Each participant will receive a signed copy of her recent book, *Rooted Faith: Practices for Living Well on a Fragile Planet*. This book offers resources for Christians on how to connect their faith with the earth and better understand the earthy context in which the Bible was written. Learn more and register [here](#).

Construire la paix après un désastre



Below is an excerpt from an article by Mennonite World Conference.

«Ton manuel a fonctionné !» a déclaré Darnell Barkman à son ancienne professeure, Lisa Schirch, après que les eaux aient envahi sa région en novembre 2021. Le pasteur de l'église mennonite unie de Yarrow, en Colombie-Britannique (Canada), a fait appel à toute sa formation sur la construction de la paix pour coordonner les interventions en cas de catastrophe. Au cours des dernières décennies, les plus pauvres de l'Église mondiale ont été directement touchés par le changement climatique, apprennent ses étudiants. «Aujourd'hui, le changement climatique arrive à notre porte, en Amérique du Nord. Notre argent et nos ressources ne sont clairement pas suffisantes pour nous protéger des catastrophes», déclare Darnell Barkman. Mais lorsque la tempête a touché ses voisins, la formation de Darnell Barkman sur la planification de la construction de la paix et l'évaluation des conflits lui a permis de coordonner une réponse communautaire inter-églises. Les étapes d'une intervention en cas de catastrophe sont similaires à celles lors de conflits armés, explique Darnell Barkman. Il faut d'abord un cessez-le-feu, puis évaluer la situation, nettoyer les dégâts et reconstruire. [Lire la suite](#).



Peacebuilding After Disaster

Below is an excerpt from an article by Mennonite World Conference.

"Your textbook worked!" Darnell Barkman told his former professor Lisa Schirch after floodwaters overcame his region in November 2021. The pastor at Yarrow United Mennonite Church in B.C., Canada, implemented all his peacebuilding training to coordinate disaster response. For the last several decades, the poorest parts of the global church have been impacted by climate change directly, her students learn. "Now, climate change is coming to our front door in North America. Our money and resources are clearly not enough to protect us from disaster," Darnell Barkman says. But when the storm affected his neighbours, Darnell Barkman's training in peacebuilding planning and conflict assessment equipped him to coordinate an inter-church community response.

Disaster response follows similar steps to armed conflict, Darnell Barkman explains. First, you need a ceasefire, then you do an assessment, clean up the mess, and rebuild.

Read the rest of the article [here](#).

"Bibles for China" Scam



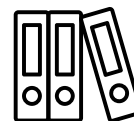
Bibles for China scam defrauds Anabaptist communities of more than \$30 million.

Federal prosecutors have issued an arrest warrant for Jason Gerald Shenk, 45, for allegedly defrauding conservative Anabaptist individuals and groups of more than \$33 million in donations meant to send Bibles and other Christian literature to China. The U.S. Department of Justice alleges Shenk obtained about \$22 million from one charitable organization and \$10 million from another from 2010 to 2019 for printing and distributing the materials. Instead, court documents unsealed Aug. 1 allege Shenk used the funds for sports gambling, gold and gemstones, life insurance policies in various names, stock purchases, funds for his family farm, credit cards and a real estate development in Chile. Department of Justice public affairs officer Barry Paschal confirmed "a large number of the individual donors were from the Amish and Mennonite community" in Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Ontario. Weston Showalter, a spokesperson for Christian Aid Ministries, confirmed on Aug. 4 the organization is one of the two charities specified in the indictment. Based in Berlin, Ohio, CAM is a mission and relief organization supported by Amish and conservative Mennonite groups. **Read the rest of Tim Huber's article for the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**



MennoCon23 Sermons

Recordings of the sermons given during worship at Mennonite Church USA's MennoCon23 are available at their YouTube page [here](#).



Below is the of Anicka Fast's article for Mennonite Mission Network about the work she has done in Mennonite Church USA's archives. Fast, who ministers through Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Mission Network, and Mennonite World Conference, finds joy, sheds tears and dreams of intercontinental, interchurch research in the Mennonite Church USA Archives.

During a busy two-week trip to the United States, I managed to reserve a day and a half to spend some time in the [Mennonite Church-USA Archives](#) in Elkhart, Indiana. I planned to consult the [records of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission's](#) (AIMM) work in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). I became familiar with this collection while doing my doctoral dissertation. The collection contains 139 linear feet of materials that were created between 1905 and the early 2000s. Between 2016 and 2020, I had spent days on four separate occasions frantically scanning these documents for my dissertation research. I had scanned more than what was relevant to my own research, hoping that the scans would one day be useful for Congolese Mennonite historians, and indeed I have had opportunities to share those scans with researchers in DRC. This visit, however, was different. This time, I was coming to look for photos of seven Congolese Mennonite men and women whose biographies will be featured, along with nine others', in an upcoming book to be published in Langham's Global Perspectives Series. These seven people had been members of the [Communauté mennonite au Congo](#) (Mennonite Church of Congo, CMCo) or the [Communauté évangélique mennonite](#) (Evangelical Mennonite Church, CEM), two church communities that were closely associated with the work of the Congo Inland Mission, founded in 1911 and later renamed Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. Participants from [a history-writing workshop we hosted in DRC in March](#) were now busy researching and writing these biographies, and as one of the course instructors, I had promised to look for photos, and perhaps other archival materials, to assist in their research. **Read the rest of Anika Fast's article [here](#). To learn even more about Fast's work, listen to [MissionWary? podcast episode 6](#) and a [bonus mini-episode about Edna Kensinger and Kazadi Matthieu](#).**

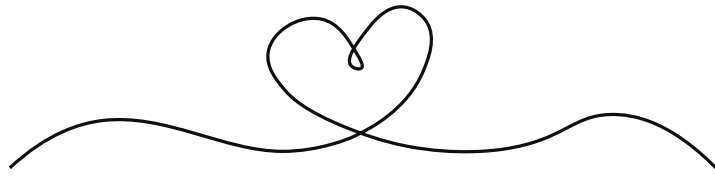
Seeking God's Guidance Through Spiritual Direction

In a time of transition for Ruth Johnston's family, she found herself seeking God's guidance for a new calling. Through the recommendations of her spiritual director, Ruth learned to lean on her passions to discover where God was leading her next. Johnston is an ordained and board-certified chaplain. She's provided ministry and support within various healthcare institutions for 26 years. **Read Johnston's blog post for Mennonite Church USA [here](#).**

MCC's Seek Discipleship Program in Cambodia



Mennonite Central Committee's Seek is a 6-month intentional discipleship program for 18-20-year-olds, with an Anabaptist flavor. Participants will live with a small group of other young adults, exploring what it means to grow as a follower of Jesus. They will study Scripture, volunteer locally, and experience life in the community. The cohort will consist of 6-10 international participants and will run from January 15 - June 24, 2024, in the rich and beautiful setting of Cambodia. More information and an online application are available [here](#). Accepting applicants until October 1 or the cohort is filled.



Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

Building Open

Standard Hours:

Monday, Wednesday-Friday 9AM-11AM
and Monday-Friday 1:30PM-3PM.

Closed: Monday 9/4

Lydia Hedberg:

Office Administrator; church@normalmennonite.org; 309-452-6622

Rita Munkakusi:

Custodian

Kevin Chupp:

Pastor for Outreach Commission, Worship Commission, Congregational Care Committee, and the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team;

kevin@normalmennonite.org

Lynette Miller:

Pastor for Discipling and Community Life Commissions

Ron Ropp:

Pastor for Pastoral Care

Lauren Satchwell:

Pastor for Vision Team & Administration Commissions

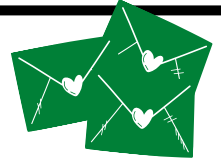
Items for the Midweek



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!



Item Check-Out Request Form

[Google Form Version](#) & [Printable PDF Version](#)

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

[Work Order](#) & [Purchase Request](#)

Commissions and Teams Contact List

[Commissions and Teams Contact List](#)

Structure Documents

Updated structure documents, including ministry descriptions, vision statement with commission assignments for the goals, structure changes, and a list of individuals called to serve in the new structure, are available at this [link](#).

Please click [here](#) for past meeting and other recordings.

Commission Meeting Minutes

Click [this link](#) to be taken to a Google Drive folder which contains meeting minutes from each commission.