

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This week, Rev. Jim Bortell will preach a sermon titled *Cast Your Cares* using the scripture 1 Peter 5:1-11.

This sermon will look at coping with anxiety in your life.



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)

Group B (40's-50's)

Group C (60's and above)

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

"Last Call" 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. **Deadline: Midnight tonight!**

From the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



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 Friday, September 8 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

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 Ups are requested by September 8.

SIGN-UP CLOSING THIS FRIDAY (9/8)

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.

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: <https://forms.gle/nEHa6m9CoGG3ousH7>
- 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

Comforter Bash Preparation Group



FRIDAY, September 8

This week this group will be meeting on Friday, September 8 from 1-4 **instead of on Thursday as normally scheduled.**



Check In With Our Commissions!

This Sunday, September 10 after the Christian Education Hour

The Vision Team will host a "Commission Check-In" for the congregation on Sunday, September 10, in the conference room immediately following the Christian Education Hour. Representatives of each of our 5 commissions (Administration, Community Life, Discipling, Outreach, Worship) will provide brief updates on their ministries followed by a time of open conversation. We will dismiss at 12:30 PM. Snacks will be provided to get us through to dinnertime!

Hosted by the Vision Team

Blood Pressure Checks



This 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 this month. Please avail yourself of this opportunity in the third office (next to the mailboxes).

Congregational Care Committee



Let's Celebrate Autumn

Sunday, September 17 at 4:30pm

Everyone is invited to Reeser farm on Sunday, September 17 @ 4:30. Please bring your own lawn chairs, hotdogs & buns, and a dish to share. Plates, cups, drinks & s'mores will be provided. Contact Louise Reeser with any questions.

Office Closed



Thursday, September 7 - morning

The church office will be closed the morning of Thursday, September 7th.

Card Shower



Duane's 50th Birthday is soon, so I would like to request people mail birthday cards **by or before 9/7.**

--Stephanie



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

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

Peace & Justice Statements on Christian Nationalism

In a recent article from Anabaptist World entitled “Why Christian Nationalism makes American Christians less Christlike,” Andrew Whitehead proposes that “Christian nationalism weakens the church by demanding it seek earthly, self-interested power, rather than seeking to support and serve the marginalized.” The Outreach Commission encourages you to think about Christian Nationalism and the impact that it has on our country at this time. Jesus encouraged us in Matthew 22:37-40 to love the Lord our God and to love your neighbor as yourself. How does Christian nationalism oppose this commandment? For more information, please read the article [here](#).

We need to resist and reject Christian Nationalism (CN) since it does not comply with what Jesus taught nor does it support a democratic society. CN supports the rights of particular groups of people over other groups of people. These groups may be white people, men, heterosexuals, Americans, and other groups. CN supports the use of power to negatively impact groups of people with less power. CN incites violent acts against innocent people. CN does not recognize historical events in a truthful manner such as slavery in the U.S., the treatment of Native Americans, the role of autocrats such as Hitler, the role of immigrants, and the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Submitted by Elsa Raab and Phil Dick for the Outreach Commission

Journey Groups

Beginning last 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



Update from the Vision Team

Your Vision Team met on August 29. Following the meeting, Vision Team (VT) has the following items to share with the congregation:

- We received reports on the activities of the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (SGDT), the Pastoral Team (PT), and the Commissions and identified ways we can support them.
- We discussed plans to meet with the Pastoral Team Search Committee (PTSC) on September 5, as we prepare to move forward in searching for and hiring additional permanent pastors to the Pastoral Team. See separate update on this process in today's Midweek for more details.
- We discussed drafted revisions to the church constitution and congregational objectives which are being done following the implementation and evaluation of the church structure.
- We shared updates from our quarterly check-ins with the chairs of the commissions.
- Find Vision Team meeting minutes and resource documents in the [Vision Team folder on Google Drive](#).

From the Vision Team

MDS Illinois Unit



Below is a note from Ronn Frantz, Mennonite Disaster Service Region 2 Board Chair.

You may have heard about the historic rainfalls of nine inches in a 12-hour period in St. Louis, July 25, 2022. You probably did not hear that the same storm resulted in widespread flooding in East St. Louis, Illinois. Volunteers from Illinois and Indiana have been working on a handful of homes this summer repairing damage from those floods. I am happy to share the report of our project director this week that those homes MDS has repaired did not have water in their basements after ten inches of rain fell on July 29, 2023. You read that correctly. A larger rainfall occurred the same week, one year after the historic storm to which MDS has been responding this summer. The fall is the start of our heavy repair and rebuild season for MDS. [In this newsletter](#), you will find links to our larger projects, most of which continue to be in our region. We are experiencing storms growing in size but also in number, affecting more and more local communities, which do not receive widespread acknowledgement. This is where the work of our local units and the regions becomes so important. For the homes MDS worked on in Illinois that flooded last year but not this year, the change has a huge impact for those families. Your units have that same impact regardless of how small and spread out the work may be. Fall is also the time when most of our units have their annual meetings. Watch for information about locations and dates for those meetings so that you can keep your congregations updated on what is happening both locally and nationally as we join to be the hands and feet of Jesus responding to the disasters near to home and elsewhere.

From Ronn Frantz, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Region 2 Board Chair.



From Your Vision Team

Vision Team shared with the congregation in July that we feel it is time to transition to a 'permanent' pastoral team to meet the needs of our church. We invited the congregation to pray about this as we discern together how it will take place. Vision Team has been praying, thinking, and talking about this. Here is a summary of where we find ourselves now.

How much pastoral time does Vision Team think we need?

- One full-time (FT) person and three 1/4-time equivalents. This is our current arrangement, and it works well.
- This would allow the Pastoral Team to continue to provide the leadership and support needed by the congregation.

Why does the Vision Team feel we need this now?

- The congregation and the Vision Team cannot expect the current Pastoral Team to continue indefinitely.
- We need to plan now for the church's 2024 Pastoral Team expenses.

Who would be on the Pastoral Team?

- Pastor Kevin (FT), two 1/4-time individuals added to the staff, and another 1/4-time equivalent of unpaid lay coverage of the Team's responsibilities.

How would this affect the church's spending plan?

- Ending the service of our interim pastors and hiring two 1/4-time pastors would lead to an increase of about 6% (\$24,000) in the congregation's total spending plan if all other expenses remained the same.

How will we do this?

- All members of the Pastoral Team Search Committee (PTSC) that brought Pastor Kevin to us have agreed to continue to serve. (Thank you!)
- Doug Luginbill, Central District Conference minister, will facilitate this process.
- Vision Team, with input from the PTSC and the Pastoral Team, is developing a plan for hiring additional pastoral staff.
- **Vision Team and the PTSC invite the congregation to meet with them on September 24** (following the Christian education hour) to hear more, ask questions, and offer input.

Please share your questions and comments with any member of the Vision Team: Shelly King, Shannon Neely, Ben Roeschley, Barry Weaver.

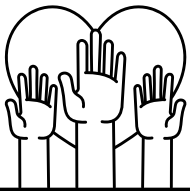
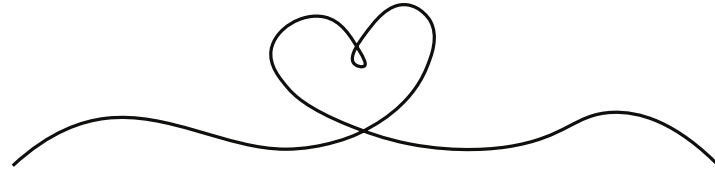
From the Vision Team

Did You Know?

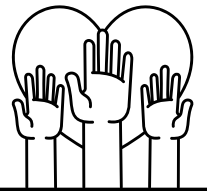


- Steve Stenger proposed a kiosk for us to communicate with each other.
- We're developing a gender neutral bathroom.

From the Administration Commission



Those Serving This Week



South Greeters: Marge & Barry Weaver

West Greeter: Nancy Fisher

Welcome Table: Mary Jantze

Ushers: Hoffmann family

Offering Counter: Kristen Hartwig

Worship Planner & Leader: Meredith Schroeer

Sharing Prayer Leader: Ron Ropp

Children's Story: Gail Fisher

Scripture Reader: Tshitshi Tshiseleka

Technology: Caleb Augspurgen

Song Leader: Wayne Hochstetler

Accompaniment, Prelude, & Postlude: Elsa Raab

Infant Nursery – during worship:

Infant Nursery – during CE:

Preschool Nursery:

Gather Round:



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.

This Week at MCN



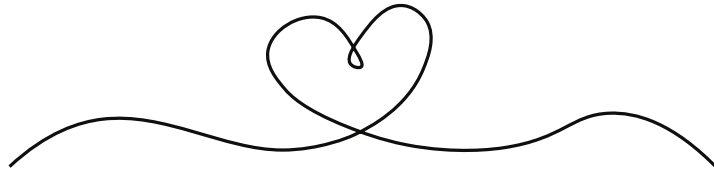
A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN

Anniversaries

Birthdays



Second Annual Further Jazz Festival

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

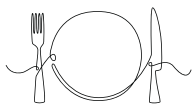
Several Jazz ensembles, including Glenn Wilson/Rory Stuart, will be performing during the second Annual Further Jazz Festival at the Connie Link Amphitheatre from 4-9pm on September 9th. View a flyer with more information [here](#).

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](#).



Will you host a dinner party for CPT?

CPT really needs your support in raising \$10k in September. They are behind their financial targets and are requesting our help. They want to dedicate the month of September to bringing people together around the dinner table. You can choose the date, who you invite and what you cook (though their teams have some great recipes prepared!) They'd love to hear if you'd be interested. There's no commitment needed at this stage. Let them know [here](#).

Camp Menno Haven Fall Getaway

October 6-8 with 9th add-on

Registration for Camp Menno Haven's October, December, and February Family Getaways is now open! Find more information and register [here](#). October 6-9th registration closes on September 22nd at 9am.



MENNO HAVEN
FALL GETAWAY

OCTOBER 6-8 + 9TH ADD-ON

Escape for a long weekend!

Stories | Campfire | Fall Fun

HEAD TO
MENNOHAVEN.COM/FAMILYGETAWAYS
FOR MORE INFO



Soop

Couple experiences shalom and community across the United States

"We love it. We are having a great time." That is how Carolyn Tice responded when asked how her SOOP experience was going. She was describing the past six months, during which she and her husband, Enos, have served in six states, where they have grown, cooked and served food; repaired homes; driven a tractor with a front-end loader; and taken groups of 11-year-olds on nature walks. That is just a sample of all the work they are doing. Both Carolyn and Enos did short-term voluntary service as young adults before they were married. They remained active in their church as they reared their family, and when they neared retirement, they knew they wanted to spend a year in service. They wanted to serve for a year but not in one place; they wanted to travel and worship with different fellowship groups and experience different community cultures. **Read more about Enos and Carolyn's work with Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

Planning for the new biennium



Leaders from the Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) Executive Board and staff gathered in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, on August 18-19 to begin planning for the 2023-2025 biennium. The team discussed new ideas and strategies for living into our Anabaptist identity and MC USA's Renewed Commitments to follow Jesus, witness to God's peace and experience the transformation of the Holy Spirit. Read more about these commitments [here](#).



If everyone's a priest, does ordination matter?

Below is the introduction to Brad Roth's article for Anabaptist World. Roth is lead pastor of Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston, Kan., and the author of The Hunger Inside: How the Meal Jesus Gave Transforms Lives (Paraclete, 2022).

Once, in my earnest young seminary student days, I asked the pastor supervising my congregational internship if I could lead communion. He hesitated. Do you need a credential for that? The pastor decided to check up the line, and eventually, though I was not ordained for ministry, I got the green light to break the bread and bless the cup at the Lord's table. Why does the church grant credentials for ministry? What does ordination mean? In my experience, we Mennonites often don't have much in the way of a working theology of ordination. I sat on a conference's credentialing body for a number of years, and nearly to a person, the men and women who came before us struggled to articulate the significance of ordination. They wanted it, but they didn't know what for. Most of the people identified ordination in functional terms, something akin to obtaining a professional license — like what you need to become a nurse or a lawyer or a barber. Some of their puzzlement could probably be chalked up to a wayward understanding of the "priesthood of all believers" (1 Peter 2:9). If everybody's a priest, so the thinking goes, then what would ordination offer that any God-fearing nurse, lawyer or barber couldn't do already? **Read the rest of Brad Roth's article for the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Climate justice and the poop loop



Watch or read an interview with Sarah Naharis about her work with youth and climate justice that was published by Mennonite Church USA. Sarah Naharis is a non-violent action trainer and inter-spiritual theologian. She is the former executive director of Community Peacemaker Teams and is currently a doctoral student at Syracuse University and SUNY-ESF in Syracuse, New York, which is traditional Onondaga land. She is studying ecological regeneration and spiritual activism. **Watch a video of the interview [here](#) or read a transcript of it [here](#).**



Book Review: Blessed Youth

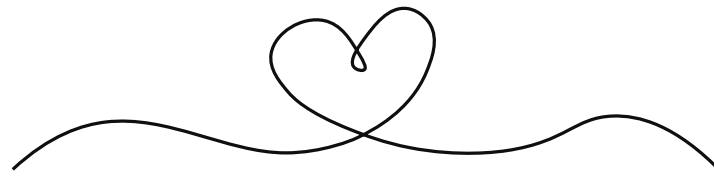
Read a book review from Anabaptist Disabilities Network's Communications Director Emily Hunsberger for the book *Blessed Youth: Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness with Children and Teens* by Sarah Griffith Lund. Hunsberger says about the book, "For congregations and youth leaders who are beginning to evaluate the role they play in supporting their youth's mental health, Blessed Youth is a brilliant and compelling introduction." Read the full review [here](#) and purchase the book [here](#). Find more book and media recommendations from ADN [here](#).

Eglise Solidarité et Harmonie Helps Immigrants

[Eglise Solidarité et Harmonie \(Solidarity and Harmony Church\)](#), a Mosaic Mennonite Conference congregation in Philadelphia, has a special missional outreach: the congregation holds clinics to help Haitian immigrants complete immigration-related paperwork. These sessions provide assistance in how to apply for a permit to work in the U.S. Providing legal aid clinics was initially an outgrowth of Pastor Benjamin Toussaint's work with Parents as Teachers (PAT), an organization that provides in-home visits to help parents understand early childhood development. In this setting, Pastor Benjamin noticed some families experienced a lot of stress when it came to filling out their immigration paperwork. He decided to do something to help. Pastor Benjamin spoke with ChiChi Oguekwe of Mennonite Central Committee, who recommended some attorneys who were willing to work pro bono or for low fees. These attorneys help families to apply for work permits and green cards, as well as to begin the process of filing for political asylum. Eventually this legal aid ministry became an outreach of the Eglise Solidarité et Harmonie. Now families request appointments, and legal clinics take place on Monday evenings at the church building. Attorneys and people from the church assist with paperwork throughout the evening. Pastor Benjamin coordinates the program, and the church disperses the funds to attorneys and interpreters. Eventually Pastor Benjamin saw that, in addition to legal aid, recent immigrants needed assistance with furniture and clothing, so he brought families to the Care and Share Thrift Shoppes in Souderton, Pa., a Conference Related Ministry. The Care and Share Thrift Shoppes have extensive experience with refugee resettlement, and staff give several hours of individualized attention to each family. Along with finding a larger meeting space, Pastor Benjamin has many other hopes and dreams. He would like to start a program in which immigrant families would volunteer at Care and Share, and he also plans to organize an entry-level English class in the fall. **Read the rest of Eileen Kinch's article for the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

South Central Mennonite Conference withdraws from MC USA

[South Central Mennonite Conference](#) (SCMC) delegates voted to withdraw from Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) on July 22, 2023, during a hybrid delegate assembly, which met in person at Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, Harper, Kansas, and via Zoom. Eighty-one percent of delegates voted (64 yes votes, 15 no) to support the "Resolution Regarding the Affiliation of SCMC with MC USA," which called for withdrawal from the denomination. SCMC is comprised of 30 congregations, representing approximately 1,640 members, or about 3% of the overall MC USA constituency. Of the 30 congregations, 10 churches had already voted to disaffiliate from MC USA. The primary issue driving the disaffiliation was inclusion of LGBTQ persons and same-sex marriage. **Read more about the vote and coming next steps [here](#).**



Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

Building Open

Standard Hours:

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

Closed: Monday 9/7 in the morning.

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

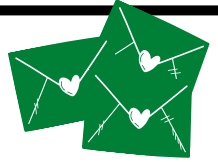
Items for the Midweek



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](#)