

# THE MIDWEEK



## WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Boy See* using John 20:1-18.

Resurrection might as well be the name of our faith—it determines both the shape of our hope and of our enacted witness. Mary encounters resurrection even before she considered it as a possibility, mistaking Jesus for a gardener, and then she is the first to talk about it. How does she talk about the resurrection? How should we?

## After Worship

The service will be live streamed on YouTube at this [link](#).  
The bulletins get posted under the Worship tab of our [website](#).



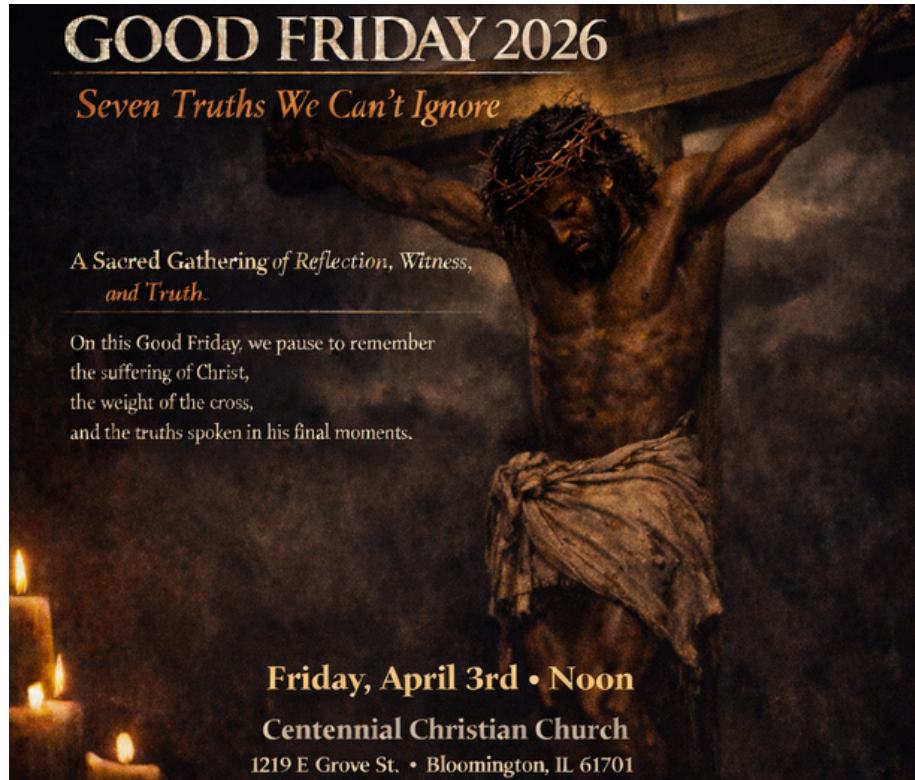
Mennonite  
Church  
of Normal

A congregation of  
Mennonite Church USA

# Holy Week Events



- Good Friday - The Ecumenical Good Friday service (we hosted last year) will be held at Centennial Christian Church in Bloomington from 12pm-1pm on Friday. Join with us as we partner with ten other local congregations to commemorate Jesus' crucifixion on the theme: *Seven Truths We Can't Ignore*.
- Easter Sunday - We will worship together at the regular time. Come ready to sing and to celebrate resurrection together! We will also be sharing communion.



## Communion This Sunday

### This Sunday, April 5

We will celebrate Communion in worship this Sunday with Wayne Hochstetler leading. In preparation, we are all encouraged to engage in self-examination of both our relationships with God, and with others. We also receive specially designated gifts for our Mutual Aid Fund on Communion Sundays as a means of assisting others in need through being the Body of Christ. There will be a special basket in the back of the sanctuary for those funds. If you would like to take communion at home, please contact Kevin Chupp.

## Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team



The Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team, in consultation with the chair of the Community Life Commission, has called Nancy to serve as a member of the Community Life Commission. Please send any feedback to Janet by **Sunday, April 12**. Thank you!

*Shared by the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team*

# Prayer Request from Hope Mennonite Church (Winnipeg, MB)

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"The building in which we've been meeting has been conditionally sold and we have been notified that our lease will be ending on May 31. The timing is not terrible given we have been meeting outdoors (with an indoor option for inclement weather) for the summer months. However, we wonder what other options might be out there for a Sunday morning gathering (the strong meeting time preference of most of the congregation). We have a Space Exploration Task Initiative (SETI) in place whose task it will be to explore options in the neighbourhood (another strong preference) but we're not exactly sure where we might be in September and beyond. What might our Sustainer have in store for us?"



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

Today Artemis II is planned to launch its 10-day lunar flyby mission, the first time a crew has left low earth orbit since Apollo 17 in 1972. What was happening among Mennonites in Bloomington-Normal in 1972? Both Bloomington Mennonite and First Mennonite called new pastors with the expectation that they be committed to "inter-Mennonite cooperation," and a joint session was held to inquire about thoughts about a potential merger—our own kind of "lunar flyby," paving the way to the merger in 1976. *Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: [kevin@normalmennonite.org](mailto:kevin@normalmennonite.org)*



## Prayer Requests and Announcements

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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](mailto:lauren@normalmennonite.org)) ahead of time so that these can be shared by the worship leader during the Community Life portion of the service. When sharing, it's helpful if your requests are succinct.



# Sharing of Joys and Concerns



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

## This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

### **Wednesday, April 1**

**9:30 am** Wednesday Morning Book Group

**1:00 pm** Quilting

### **Thursday, April 2**

**7:00 am** Next Man Bible Study

**9:30 am** Women's Bible Study

### **Tuesday, April 7**

**3:00 pm** Pastoral Team (Zoom)

### **Wednesday, April 8**

**9:30 am** Wednesday Morning Book Group

**1:00 pm** Quilting

**7:00 pm** Fellowship Committee



## Those Serving This Week





# Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN

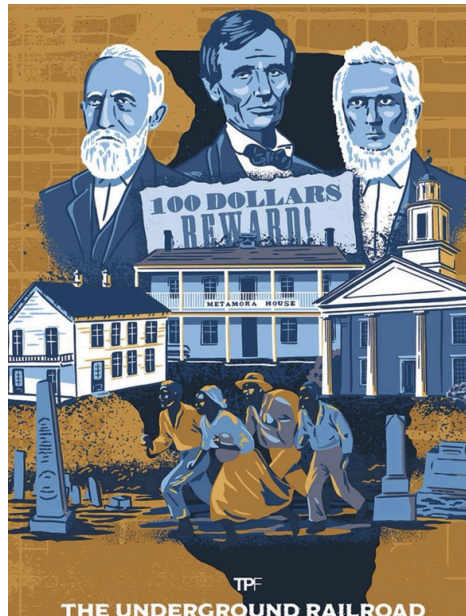


## COFFEE WITH THE DIRECTOR!



On **Saturday, April 11th, 2026 at 12PM EST**, Melissa Berkey-Gerard will host an online space to share about CPT's work around the world.

This year CPT celebrates its **40th year** of peacemaking and we are looking forward to sharing with you some of the lessons we have learned and answering your questions. As authoritarianism and war continue to arise around our world, our teams and the people we work with have had a difficult year. But in the face of violence, **they remain steadfast** – building solidarity in the face of war, repression and hate.



**THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD  
PRESENTATION BY JACK WEDDLE  
FOR**

**THE ILLINOIS MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
SATURDAY, APRIL 18 at 10 a.m.  
675 STATE ROUTE 116, METAMORA  
Fellowship lunch to follow-please RSVP for lunch at  
309 367-2551 or mennmuseum@mtco.com**

# MCC Action Alert: Urge Senate to oppose the SPEED and PERMIT Acts

**Background:** The U.S. Senate will vote soon on two permitting reform bills (the SPEED Act and the PERMIT Act) which would weaken the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), expose water sources to pollution, and create barriers to building climate resiliency. In 1969, Congress passed NEPA in response to increased pollution of waterways and degradation of ecosystems from widespread industrialization and growth. NEPA ensures that federal agencies will review the environmental consequences of projects and take measures to prevent harm. The SPEED Act and the PERMIT Act would prioritize expediency over thoughtful consultation, corporate profit over public benefit, and the acceleration of fossil fuel and mining projects over renewable energy—undermining the purpose of NEPA and codifying climate denial into law. These Senate negotiations are happening in the midst of Trump administration rollbacks to environmental protections, rescinded funding and permitting for renewable energy, and U.S. withdrawal from global climate treaties. Permitting legislation should ensure that the voices of impacted communities are heard. Policies must be centered on a just transition from fossil fuels to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and climate resiliency, and must protect the health of our water, land and air for future generations. **Faith reflection:** “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7, NIV) **Take action:** [Urge your senators to oppose the SPEED Act and the PERMIT Act](#)

## Were you there?

“Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” These words from an African American spiritual are not about one’s physical location. They are about one’s social location. According to the late James Cone, the words of this spiritual transported Black Christians, who experienced hardship and oppression, to the foot of the cross. The song helps to shape the identity of those who are oppressed by connecting them with Christ, who also suffered. In *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, Cone argues that one cannot reflect theologically on the meaning of the cross without noting its similarity to the lynching tree during the era of Jim Crow. Cone argues that just as the Roman Empire used crucifixion to deter resistance to its rule, so too was the lynching tree used to keep Black people in oppression. When someone threatened the empire’s power, Rome used the threat of execution on a cross to strike fear. It reminded people who was in control. As violent and as horrific as the cross and the lynching tree are, Cone says suffering is what links the oppressed to Christ. The paradoxical nature of the cross is that, though it was a tool of death, Jesus brought life through it. Although lynchings in America were horrible, God demonstrates, through Jesus’ death, solidarity with those who suffered in this way. To be clear, I do not mean suffering is good. It is terrible. Christians should try to alleviate suffering. Yet suffering is inevitable. We saw this during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. We see it in the story of Jesus. We see it today. Lately we have witnessed the harm and fear that agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement have caused in communities throughout the United States. People have been beaten, kidnapped and killed, none more prominently than in Minneapolis. As I write this, the killings of Renée Good and Alex Pretti are the latest outrageous acts to shock the nation. As I have watched what is happening in our country, I’ve often thought of Jesus and the cross. I pray that God will free us all from suffering. But if we suffer, may it be used for liberation. **Read the rest of Jerrell Williams’s article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

## What good can we do?

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We're back from Palestine and Israel – just eight days before the US bombed Iran. From February 2–20, a delegation of 25 people from the U.S. and Canada traveled to the region as a learning, peace, and tree planting mission. This trip was a joint initiative of Mennonite Men and the Mennonite Palestine-Israel Network (MennoPIN) with three Mennonite Action staff. Before we left, someone asked me: “What will you actually do, and what good can it possibly do?” I told them that, among other things, we were going to plant trees and plant for peace. It sounded small, given the scale of the conflict. But after spending 18 days seeing various sites, listening to Palestinians, and planting with farmers, I have a better answer. In Palestine, an olive tree isn't just agriculture; it's an ancestor. Some of these trees have been tended by the same families for over 1,000 years. They are the backbone of the economy and the heart of Palestinian identity. Yet, over a million of these trees have been destroyed by Israeli forces: a calculated move to strike at Palestinians don't replant or they leave, Israel can claim “empty land” as state land.) We planted trees at Tent of Nations and Sarras Farm. As followers of Jesus, these families are committed to nonviolent resistance, yet they live under the constant shadow of demolition orders or having their land confiscated. In the West Bank Israelis destroy Palestinian homes and infrastructure and then require residents to pay for the bulldozer work. Since 1967, Israel has confiscated more than 750,000 acres of land from the 1.5 million acres comprising the West Bank and Gaza and the rate of current land theft is increasing. So, what good did we do? As we planted trees and listened to Palestinians, we realized the “good” wasn't just in the soil—it was in the solidarity. We went to provide support. While we encouraged them, they inspired us: we witnessed them following the way of Jesus' nonviolent love in a world of staggering violence and oppression. Read more about this in next month's issue of Engage. We're back now, but we aren't the same. We went to “come and see,” and now we “go and tell.” Our group of 25 has returned as witnesses, joining a growing chorus of voices demanding a stop to violence and oppression and calling for justice and peace. What good can we do? We can refuse to let our neighbors be invisible. We can plant a tree today so someone else can eat tomorrow. And we can stand in the gap until the bulldozers stop. **Read the rest of Steve Thomas's article for Mennonite Men [here](#).**

## Repair & revival

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*Summit sparks vision to repay debts, restore God's creation.*

A room full of Anabaptists weary of the world's empires gathered Nov. 15 at Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., to imagine the future of Anabaptism at a Reparations Summit. Pastors Karl Shelly and Julia Gingerich welcomed 125 people with these words: “The call to reparations for the massive, multigenerational theft of power, agency, wealth, land, hope and truth about Black and Indigenous lives in this nation has been made for hundreds of years by Black and Indigenous peoples. Today is an invitation to our churches to stop ignoring that call.” Building on the efforts of other Black Anabaptists, Drew G.I. Hart, a professor at Messiah University, called on Anabaptist churches to reclaim their historic courage by teaching history honestly, without sanitizing the church's involvement with slavery, segregation, Indigenous land theft, white supremacy and colonialism. **Read the rest of Lisa Schirch's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

# Oak Flat is being handed over to crucifixion. Do we believe in the resurrection?

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Oak Flat's injunction has been denied. The United States now initiates land transfer to Resolution Copper. We the people still pray and fight for sacred land. Oak Flat has been on death row for a while now. With Jesus this Lent, Oak Flat is handed over for crucifixion. On March 13, 2026, the courts again refused to protect that which is holy. It reminds me of an ancient system of courts that shuffled Jesus between hearings without really hearing anything. It's also like Pontius Pilate claiming to have power over life and over death, power that is God's alone. The courts' inaction allows Resolution Copper to move towards their crucifixion of Oak Flat. The Ninth Circuit Court declined to continue an injunction that would protect Oak Flat from destruction while the people's cases are heard. This also happened [in May 2025](#) at the Supreme Court level with the still active case of Apache Stronghold, which includes so many of us who joined as friends through Amicus Briefs. This denial of protective justice also happened to the other three cases for Oak Flat, brought by young women and their parents whose lives are tied so deeply to the land through Sunrise Ceremony, by environmental organizations and by the San Carlos Apache Nation. After the court's decision, the U.S. administration then immediately initiated the process to transfer the land to the foreign mining corporation that has plans for the complete destruction of Oak Flat. (See [here](#), particularly page 11, for more details of the attempted land transfer process and Resolution Copper's claims.) Resolution Copper no doubt now believes themselves free to flog Oak Flat with bulldozers carving more roads, to nail Mother Earth to the cross beams of their erected metal towers and to pierce the side of sacred land, drilling and pumping until the deep reserves of pure water bleed out completely. What is there for us to do?

- Pray, especially for the young women and their families whose case for religious freedom moves forward, and for the judges who will hear it and the other three cases.
- Advocate for congressional action. Encourage your representatives and senators to sponsor, in both the house and the House and Senate, the [new legislation introduced by Rep. Adelita Grijalva](#).
- Listen to the land, and come to it to pray when you hear the call. Resolution Copper has publicly promised not to close the campground for years to come. We hold them to that.

As a Christian whose life is deeply tied to Oak Flat, I wonder, what did it take for Jesus' beloveds to listen outside the trial, to witness the miscarriage of justice and to stand at the foot of the cross? What was the sound of their laments? I also wonder:

- What does it take to believe that love is stronger than death?
- Which is more powerful: God in the land, or false human claims to own that which is sacred?
- Do I — do we — believe in resurrection?

**Read Carol Rose's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

*Peace for migrating people*

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**Watch a video and read more from Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).**

## Jesus Embodies Solidarity and Nonviolence

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Back in July at Follow Jesus 2025 in Greensboro, I had the pleasure of meeting Michael Martin, a Mennonite man from Colorado Springs, CO. He was staffing an exhibit hall table for RAWTools, an organization he founded in 2013. Walking up to the table, I saw a display of incredible tools and pieces of art made out of transformed weapons. As someone who uses garden tools for a living, I was drawn in immediately. Suddenly, I remembered attending a RAWTools event in my hometown years ago where Shane Claiborne gave a talk and Michael was present in a support role. I did not get a chance to talk to Michael at that event, but I am very grateful to be getting to know him now. RAWTools' work of turning donated firearms into garden tools and works of art generates searing visual symbols and powerful emotions. But their work goes much farther and deeper than forge and blacksmithing activities. In my observation and in talking to Michael, the work of RAWTools is rooted in a commitment to walk with people who want to experience healing and who want to turn away from violence. The organization seeks to unleash creativity, foster dialogue across divides, and teach new ways of peacemaking and problem-solving. On their website, RAWTools asks the question, "What if we made a commitment to solve our problems without guns and violence?" **Read the rest of Jon Zirkle's article for Mennonite Men [here](#).**

## MCC U.S. appoints new executive director

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The board of directors of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. has named Rukshan Fernando as the next MCC U.S. executive director, effective this July. "The board is excited that Rukshan both appreciates the history and mission of MCC and can help partner to discern God's mission for MCC in the years to come," said board chair Emerson Leshner. Fernando has served as associate executive director for MCC U.S. since July 2024 and came to MCC with more than two decades of experience in community development, education, and financial and program management. "Rukshan brings a unique set of personal and professional gifts and experiences to the position. His strong Christian faith, living for an extended time in different countries, leadership roles in large complex organizations, ability to bring people together, and commitment to an Anabaptist approach to relief, development and peace will serve MCC well," Leshner said. "And he has shown during the last 20 months as associate executive director his ability to build trust among staff as well as the Anabaptist churches that support MCC." **Read the rest of Mennonite Central Committee's statement [here](#).**

## Built for Everyone: Accessibility at Camp Friedenswald

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Camp Friedenswald, a Mennonite camp in southern Michigan, has worked hard to make their camp a place that is accessible and welcoming for people of all abilities. On my first visit to Friedenswald in 2019, I was surprised and impressed at how accessible it was to me as a wheelchair user. I stayed with my youth in an accessible cabin near the dining hall that was fully equipped with an accessible bathroom and ample room to maneuver between the beds. Paved paths connected the main buildings where we ate and worshipped, and there were also handrails along all paths that were on an incline. The whole weekend, I felt like I was just another member of the group as we learned, sang, and played together. It was an incredible blessing to be able to go on retreat to such a welcoming place. **Read the rest of Sarah Werner's blog post for the Anabaptist Disabilities Network [here](#).**

# Girl Named Tom driven by faith, justice amid Kennedy Center turmoil

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*Postponed collaboration with National Symphony Orchestra inserts band into political firestorm.*

With [a new album](#) coming out and [a national tour](#) starting in early April — along with a return to NBC's *The Voice* — [the folk trio of Mennonite siblings](#) Caleb, Joshua and Bekah Liechty found time in March to reflect on getting caught up in controversy surrounding President Donald Trump's dictate to put his name on the John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for the Performing Arts. After growing up in Pettisville, Ohio, as part of Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, the band [won The Voice's 2021 competition](#) and moved to Nashville. Joshua said they developed a relationship with Nashville Symphony's principal pops conductor Enrico Lopez-Yañez. "He recommended us to the board of the NSO," he said, in reference to the National Symphony Orchestra. "Then the NSO reached out to us in November of 2025... The NSO commissioned four different arrangers around the country to collaborate with us and create orchestral versions of our original music." Two dates, Feb. 13 and 14, were shaping up to be a very special Valentine's Weekend in the nation's capital. "When Enrico came to us with an opportunity to play with the National Symphony, we were immediately stoked," Caleb said. "...The fact that the performance happened to be at the Kennedy Center was certainly icing on the cake, until suddenly it very much wasn't." The Kennedy Center's board, overhauled with Trump appointees since his election as U.S. president, voted Dec. 18 to add Trump's name to the building, though renaming the memorial to President Kennedy requires congressional approval. "In the end, we felt like dodging the stress was also dodging a necessary challenge," he said. "We and our communities back home are always wanting to 'do something.' To call our state representatives is important, yes. To join with the already massive wave of cancellations at the Kennedy Center would be important, yes. To share our music and message in that place and this time — to be gracious, courageous, generous yet subversive — this is what we heard as our unique call in this case." Already in November the band was skeptical about being part of what was billed to be "a celebration of America's 250th birthday." "This set off early alarm bells for us Mennonites," Caleb said. "We were concerned the show could turn into some nationalist celebration of empire. We voiced these concerns in several conversations with the conductor, the programmer and others affiliated with the event. **Read the rest of Tim Huber's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

## It's a contest of creativity

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*Sanctified imagination isn't just for artists. It's needed in the public square.*

The arts build a bridge between heart and mind. Mennonites, Lederach says, have approached our efforts for peace and social change with too much mind and not enough heart: "We have failed to nurture the artist." But sometimes we succeed. In Minneapolis in January, Mennonites joined with other people of faith to resist deadly aggression by federal immigration agents. Bringing out their inner artists, young and old made signs for protest marches and sang songs at candlelight vigils ([see Juan Moya's report](#)). These were not empty gestures. Multiplied by thousands who took to the streets, they sent a powerful message. Alongside acts of compassion for immigrant neighbors, these everyday artists showed a lot of heart. And they made an impact, as public opinion turned against the federal agents' cruel and violent assault on the people of Minneapolis. **Read the rest of Paul Schrag's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**



## Our Members in Care Facilities

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



## Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

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

## Commission, Team, & Committee Members

# Commissions and Teams Contact List

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Past Midweeks

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Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

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Facility Use Agreement

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Item Check-Out Request Form

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Commission Meeting Minutes

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Structure Documents

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Directory

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