

# THE MIDWEEK



## WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *There Lives More Faith* using John 20:19-31.

Thomas is remembered for his doubt, but perhaps we have been unkind to him. Having been left out of Jesus' appearance to the rest of the disciples, he is only wishing to share in their experience and blessing. Is that wrong? What can we expect of our experiences of faith?

## After Worship

### Adult CE

Rooms 5 & 7

### Children & Youth CE

Pre-K-5th Grades  
Junior High  
High School

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



## Office/Building Closed

**Tomorrow, April 9 at noon**

The church office and building will be closed the afternoon of Thursday, April 9. Thank you for your understanding!

*From the Lydia in the Church Office*

## 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 **this Sunday, April 12**. Thank you!

*Shared by the Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team*



## Midwest Food Bank Volunteering

**Tuesday, April 28 from 6-8pm**

Our next volunteer night at Midwest Food Bank (MFB) is April 28 from 6-8pm. MFB wants us to sign up two weeks ahead of time to facilitate their project planning, so if you think you will go, **please sign up as early as possible using [this link](#)**. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Outreach Committee.

*From the Outreach Commission*

## Dutch Market Thank You



The Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale Board and Dutch Market Committee wish to extend a very special thank you to all those involved in baking, selling, organizing, setting up, and buying delicious products at our 68<sup>th</sup> Sale. Chair Kathy Miller has reported that we received 714 pies, 175 jars, and 300 baked treats. According to Kathy and Wesley most everything was sold by 11:30 A.M. on Saturday. The Board deeply appreciates the excellent leadership and the many delicious products that were donated again this year to the sale. Finally, thank you to all who participated. May God richly bless you!

*Shared by Mrs. Ruthie Roth, Relief Sale Executive Secretary*



## CDC Connector

The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). In this Earth Day issue of the Connector we hear from two congregations about their experiences with outdoor worship services. There are also articles about the recent discussion on Article 19 at the Mid-Year Gathering, a new book from Mennonite Action, and a yard sign campaign by a congregation in Virginia, along with the latest edition of Doug's Mug. If you would like a paper copy, they will be available to take from the Library Table soon.



## Good Friday Service Recording

Whether you missed the Ecumenical Good Friday Service at Centennial Christian Church or you want to revisit the powerful messages from our community's Christian clergy, you can access the recording of the service [here](#).

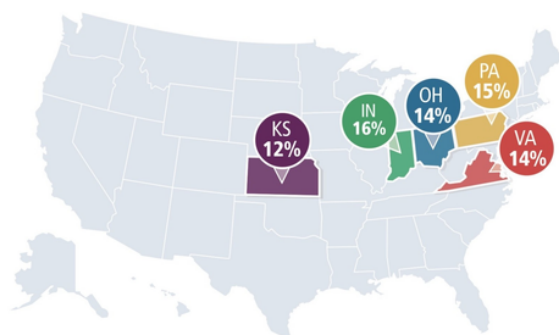
Shared by Pastor Kevin



## Another Bicycle Adventure

I start cycling this Friday on my first bike tour of the season, "The Key to Florida's East Coast." My friend and I will cycle from Jacksonville, FL to Key West. If you are interested in following along, I will be posting a daily online journal and photos [here](#). Please keep us in your prayers for a safe journey.

Shared by Joe



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

In Bloomington-Normal, we have a hospital, and a college of nursing bearing 'Mennonite' in their name, and we host the Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale. It leads one to wonder, is Illinois a Mennonite stronghold? As of a 2021 report, we're not at the top of the list! Two-thirds of Mennonites in the US reside in five states: Indiana (16%), Pennsylvania (15%), Ohio (14%), Kansas (12%), and Virginia (14%). *Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: [kevin@normalmennonite.org](mailto:kevin@normalmennonite.org)*



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



# 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



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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



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A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

### **Wednesday, April 8**

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

**1:00 pm** Quilting

**6:30 pm** Fellowship Committee (Zoom)

### **Thursday, April 9**

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

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

6:45 pm Administration Commission (Zoom)

### **Monday, April 13**

**5:00 pm** Outreach Commission

### **Tuesday, April 14**

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


### **Wednesday, April 15**

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


**1:00 pm** Quilting



**2026 Bloomington/Normal  
Town Hall**



HOSTED BY  
EQUALITY ILLINOIS  
and  
PRAIRIE PRIDE COALITION



**Monday, April 20**

**6:30 - 8 p.m.**

Astroth Community Education Center  
Heartland Community College

**An opportunity for LGBTQIA+ residents to share our concerns and feedback with the elected officials who represent us in Springfield**

We are inviting elected state representatives and state senators who represent parts of McLean County to a forum where we will discuss legislation that is of importance to the LGBTQIA+ community.

Thea tabling event of organizations providing voter information including voter registration. We also invite county candidates who are on the November ballot to table at our event.

**About Equality Illinois**

*On behalf of 500,000 LGBTQ+ Illinoisans, Equality Illinois is the state's oldest, largest and most effective advocacy organization dedicated to defending rights for LGBTQ+ Illinoisans.*

**About Prairie Pride Coalition**

*The Prairie Pride Coalition (PPC) is dedicated to the implementation of full civil rights protections for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people and we, on the board, are honored to serve the LGBT community of McLean County, Illinois.*

**Questions? Contact us**

**Prairie Pride Coalition**  
info@ppc-il.org

# Spiritual Practices: Trees of Life

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**Friday, May 29, to Saturday, May 30**

Instructor Janeen Bertsche Johnson, MDiv, DMin candidate, Core Adjunct Faculty. This retreat will weave together study of biblical texts about trees; understanding of trees as organisms and within ecosystems; ecological issues; and spiritual practices. Participants will also consider how to engage trees within their faith communities. The retreat runs Friday, May 29, to Saturday, May 30 (10 a.m. – 5 p.m. EDT both days). The first day will be held on the AMBS campus in Elkhart, Indiana, and the second day will be held at Camp Friedenswald near Union, Michigan, so that participants can experience forest ecosystems. The course can be taken for one hour of academic credit (\$621 total) or as a noncredit retreat (\$140 total). Both amounts include lunch on Friday and Saturday and the use of Camp Friedenswald. (Lodging is not included.) Register [here](#) by May 4 for the for-credit course and by May 22 for the noncredit retreat.

*Shared by the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

## Mennonite Action report backs from No Kings Day April 29

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Across the U.S. on March 28th, many in the Mennonite Action community participated in a local No King's Day effort. **Click [here](#)** to read insights and see pictures from a handful of participants, each showing up to a different context, but united in our goal of collective liberation.

*Shared by Mennonite Action*

## MC USA's Hispanic Anabaptist Bible Seminary partners with Mosaic and Church of the Brethren

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The [Hispanic Anabaptist Biblical Seminary](#) (SeBAH) of Mennonite Church USA has formalized a collaboration with Mosaic Mennonite Conference and the [Church of the Brethren](#). SeBAH is a Spanish-language theological training initiative aimed at leaders and individuals serving in ministry within local congregations. This agreement seeks to strengthen SeBAH's certificate-level training program for pastoral and ministerial development from an Anabaptist perspective. Through this alliance, SeBAH will continue to offer an accessible training program for Spanish-speaking leaders. The program includes an orientation session that introduces students to academic reading and writing, as well as to the use of the educational technologies that will support the learning process. A minimum of 12 courses is offered, focusing on the ministerial competencies that are integral to the Anabaptist tradition and to the training expectations within MC USA conferences and churches. **Read the rest of Mennonite Church USA's article [here](#).**

## A bridge with two ends

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Sami Rasouli, founder of Muslim Peacemaker Teams and long time friend of CPT, reflects on a life of peacemaking between Najaf and the Twin Cities, on the legacy of the US occupation of Iraq, and the principles we must hold on to in wartime. Born and raised in Najaf, Iraq, Sami moved to the USA before returning to Iraq during the US occupation. **Read Sami Rasouli's blog post for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

## Artist Spotlight: Emily Smucker-Beidler



Read an interview with artist Emily Smucker-Beidler published by *Anabaptist World* [here](#).

## Confronting Israel's Occupation of Palestine

Our joint peace and tree-planting delegation of 25 people, representing Mennonite Men and the Mennonite Palestine-Israel Network, recently returned from Palestine. We heard firsthand reports of the brutal reality of Israel's occupation: a history of ethnic cleansing, concentration of families into refugee camps, random acts of violence to terrorize Palestinians, the demolition of homes and schools, the seizure of farmland, the choking restriction of movement. All of this is designed to make life miserable, to push Palestinians off their land or to provoke resistance so Israeli military can unleash greater violence against them. Illegal Israeli settlements and outposts are spreading like a cancer across Palestinian land. While we could not enter Gaza, we are acutely aware of the horrific genocide occurring there since October 7, 2023. Despite this suffering, we were deeply moved by the resilient spirit of the Palestinians we met and the creative, nonviolent ways Christian and Muslim peace organizations continue to resist. Our delegation's mission aligns directly with the aims of Mennonite Men: "standing with marginalized people for diversity and inclusion" and "transforming oppressive systems for freedom and justice" as we seek to "live into God's shalom." **Read the rest of Brook Musselman's article for Mennonite Men [here](#).**

## Siberian success keeps families home

*Majority 'Mennonite' Russian village expanding farm and church initiatives.*

Siberia's farmers had a rough autumn in 2025. An abundant wheat harvest kept prices down. Transport issues limited the number of markets. The entire harvest often could not be sold, and a significant number of the region's farmers lost money. David Epp, the technical chief of Willock Farm near Apollonovka, said in December that it was the firm's farm implement branch that kept the operation afloat. But that's an understatement: The last of five new construction halls is nearing completion, and Sevmaster, Willock Farm's industrial branch, is running out of space at its factory site in Medvezhe 11 miles to the west and 100 miles from Omsk, a city of 1 million residents. Apollonovka is one of Russia's few majority-Protestant villages, peopled largely by people of Mennonite background who [arrived at the turn of the 20th century from today's Ukraine](#). Willock Farm is surely the largest firm in Russia doing much of its production work in Plautdietsch (Low German), a dialect still spoken by people around the world who trace their ancestry to Mennonites in northern Germany. Roughly 50 of Willock Farm's 60 employees are of German ethnicity. Wheat accounts for half of the farm's crops, which also include peas, flax, sunflower, and canola. **Read the rest of William Yoder's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

## MCC partner keeps children in Gaza warm with winter clothing distribution

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When it was finally safe for Amal\* and her family to return to their home in Gaza City, they could barely recognize it. The roof was partially destroyed. A thin layer of plastic sheeting stretched over the large gaps was all that kept wind and rain out of their living space. And nothing could prevent the water from dripping through the cracks that ran up and down the walls. As the setting sun brought with it cold nighttime air, Amal and her younger sister\* now had to decide which one of them would get to wear the one thin sweater they shared to keep warm. Amal's family had been forced to flee their home months ago as the Israeli military's relentless bombardment of Gaza destroyed buildings and killed many. It was finally deemed safe for them to return home, but the home they returned to was now without infrastructure, reliable markets or access to basic necessities like food and clothing. MCC partner Al-Najd Developmental Forum heard from members of their community that children like Amal were suffering without the right clothes. In February, they bought and distributed 1,500 packages of children's winter clothing to families in Gaza City. The winter clothing packages included items like fleece sweaters and gloves, winter hat-and-scarf sets, socks, winter shoes and high-quality winter tracksuits. All the items were new, durable, appropriate for winter weather and culturally suitable. **Read the rest of Jason Dueck's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

## Disability, Safeguarding, and Inclusion in Cambodia

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*Content warning: The following blog post contains descriptions of violence against children with disabilities.*

The book [Cry of the Gecko: History of the Christian Mission in Cambodia](#) contains the 2004 account of Min Sor, a Cambodian working for World Vision, who learned that a newborn girl in a nearby village had recently been crushed to death because she was born with a cleft palate. The local soothsayer told her family that her birth defect was a sign of spiritual disfavor and that the baby needed to be killed to avoid future disaster. Min Sor kept in touch with the family and when their next baby was born, a boy who also had a cleft palate, he intervened before the infant was crushed and took him to live with the Sisters of Mercy. After Maryknoll paid for surgery to repair the baby's cleft palate, the boy was happily taken back by his birth family. Across the world, people with disabilities are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Several international studies have shown that women with disabilities are sexually assaulted at rates at least double that of the general population. Women with cognitive or communication disabilities, due to their lack of comprehension of the situation or their inability to say no, are wrongly claimed to be consenting. General safeguarding strategies often fail to protect people with disabilities because of cultural beliefs ("they are unclean"), social stigmas ("they are crazy, don't believe them" or "getting involved would hurt my reputation"), fear ("if I report, who will care for them"). These cultural factors are compounded by the fact that most reporting mechanisms require a high degree of cognitive and communicative ability. MCC Cambodia is working on ensuring the safeguarding and inclusion of people with disabilities in our projects using the following approaches. **Read the rest of Charles Conklin's blog post for the Anabaptist Disabilities Network [here](#).**

## Wild spirituality

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*If we listen with our hearts, God's sacred creatures offer life support.*

I grew up on a small farm surrounded by the natural world and its creatures. From the cats I cozied up to at night, to my pet rooster who would crow on my shoulder, to the birds we rescued and nursed back to health, I was connected to other-than-human beings for as long as I can remember. They were part of my community, and I was part of theirs. The Mennonite world I grew up in taught me that humans had dominion over the natural world. We should be good stewards, of course, but the natural world was there for our use, to serve us. Words mixed into this theology include hierarchy, patriarchy, extraction, scarcity, compartmentalization, objectification, disconnection. In recent years I have been paying careful attention to where I encounter God. I'm asking, "Where is the Spirit beckoning me?" I have encountered God in the natural world and its other-than-human beings. I believe we can experience kinship and communication with God's creatures. The Spirit beckons me through them, both in the woods and in the city where I now live. Words I have found helpful in describing this journey include embodied knowing, emergent growth, feminist, mysterious, internal, contemplative. I used to say I grew up loving nature. Now I would say I grew up with a spirituality that was wild. I just didn't have words for it. I think our dominant worldview doesn't serve us well and never did. Believing that we have dominion over other creatures — and that we can dominate other people — has led to extraction, violence and exploitation. Our Earth is suffering because of this. **Read the rest of Carol Martin Johnson's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

## \$2.5 million Everence pastor financial program concludes

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Everence has concluded its \$2.5 million Pastoral Financial Wellness Program after 10 years of partnership with Lilly Endowment Inc. through the National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. Three Lilly Endowment grants enabled Everence to first serve pastors within Mennonite Church USA and the Rosedale Network of Churches and later extend support to credentialed pastors across more than 30 denominations and church networks Everence serves. The program provided financial assistance, long-term financial planning support and financial education to pastors. Everence awarded 399 pastoral financial assistance grants totaling \$2.1 million, issued 160 financial planning subsidies and hosted 124 financial education and wellness events engaging more than 4,000 pastors and church leaders. Pastoral financial assistance grants addressed urgent needs such as medical expenses, tax liabilities, housing insecurity and high-interest debt. Many pastors said the assistance helped them remain in ministry during times of significant financial strain. **Read the *Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

## One month of Iran-linked attacks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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*Since the start of the US-Israel war on Iran, 14 people have been killed and 93 have been injured in Iraqi Kurdistan* Since the beginning of joint attacks by the US and Israel against Iran, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and its affiliated groups in Iraq have conducted at least 474 attacks in Iraqi Kurdistan. Fourteen have been killed and 93 have been injured in Iraqi Kurdistan. CPT IK has verified these attacks, as well as their impact on civilians. **Read CPT Iraqi Kurdistan's blog post for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

## Ohio MB church reopens after pastoral misconduct allegations

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A Mennonite Brethren church made up primarily of Congolese congregants near Cincinnati has closed and reopened following allegations of sexual misconduct by the pastor. Denominational magazine [Christian Leader](#) reported leaders from Eastern District Conference of the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches learned in December of allegations involving Jules Mukaba, then pastor of Restoration Church in West Chester, Ohio. As more details came to light, the EDC Board of Faith and Life revoked Mukaba's pastoral license and removed him from his role. He then left the United States, and attempts to contact him have been unsuccessful. *Christian Leader* reported EDC leaders met resistance when they tried to engage and support Mukaba's family. They learned later the pastor's wife was arrested on related charges, including child endangerment. Restoration Church formally closed at the end of 2025 and relaunched in February under the name Evangelical Mission Church Redeemer. Deacon Michael Tenga, who served as a deacon and elder in the Democratic Republic of Congo until relocating in 2015 to the U.S., has been appointed to serve as pastor. The congregation has been in existence for about two decades. In 2024 it became the second [USMB immigrant congregation to receive CORD funding](#) (Connecting, Organizing, Retooling and Developing) with \$55,500 over three years to connect such churches to USMB resources and develop leaders capable of shepherding healthy churches. **Read the *Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

## Dignity is the only way

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*War is dignity violation at its extreme. This is why violence can never lead to lasting positive change.* Talking on the phone with a friend in Iran, in the middle of a U.S. bombing campaign, my intention was to offer condolences. But to my surprise, the main thing he wanted to say to me was, "You need to come back. Let me know what I can do to make this happen." What my friend is communicating, even as his country is being bombed, is that there is only one way out of this mess: deeper attachment to one another — as Christians and Muslims, as Iranians and Americans. The U.S.-Israeli war on Iran has elicited all kinds of reactions. Some focus on the human toll — the number of lives lost, disrupted or displaced. Some highlight the economics of it — the staggering cost of war, its economic impact. Others draw attention to the rationale, theology or eschatology behind it, still others the security implications for the region and beyond. What is often missing is perhaps the most fundamental to understanding how something like this could happen and how to find our way out of it: the power of *dignity*. Donna Hicks describes dignity as the glue that holds all of our relationships together. It's the desire to be understood, heard and treated fairly. It's the need to feel safe in the world. Dignity violation, on the other hand, is the hijacking of those basic needs. Our brains are wired to be super sensitive to dignity violations, because they represent a threat to us. Dignity violations can be physical, emotional or even symbolic. The assassination of the supreme leader of Iran at the outset of the war was a basic and symbolic dignity violation. Even Iranians or other Shia Muslims who are critical of the country's authoritarian government experienced the killing of a clerical leader as an attack on their identity. **Read the rest of Peter Sensenig's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

# Church leaders explore "Resistance, Resilience, Rest" at annual conference

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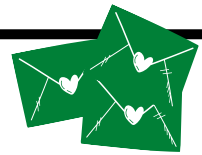
What do resistance, resilience and rest look like for Anabaptists at a time like this? That was the focus of [Pastors & Leaders 2026](#), held Feb. 23-26 at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Indiana. The conference on "Resistance, Resilience, Rest," drew around 190 in-person and 15 online participants from across the U.S. and Canada. Speakers included Drew Hart, PhD, an author, educator and speaker from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and Dan White, Jr., MA, and Tonya White, pastors, counselors, authors and co-founders of the [Kineo Center](#) in Puerto Real, Puerto Rico. **Read the rest of John Longhurst's blog post for the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary [here](#).**



## Our Members in Care Facilities

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



## Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

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<u>Building Open:</u>	<b>Standard Hours:</b> Monday-Friday 9AM-11AM & 1:30PM-3PM
	<b>Pastor Kevin designated office hours:</b> Wednesdays, 8am-12pm (or call to plan a visit)
<u>Lydia Hedberg:</u>	Office Administrator; <a href="mailto:church@normalmennonite.org">church@normalmennonite.org</a> ; 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; <a href="mailto:kevin@normalmennonite.org">kevin@normalmennonite.org</a>
<u>Lauren Satchwell:</u>	Pastoral Team Lead & Pastor for Administration Commission, Discipling Commission, & Vision Team; <a href="mailto:lauren@normalmennonite.org">lauren@normalmennonite.org</a>

# Items for the Midweek



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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

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## 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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