

# THE MIDWEEK



## WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Cosmic Jewelry* using Proverbs 27:17.

This Summer we will be reflecting on the essential Christian formation that only happens when we partner together. We start by grappling with the quickly rattled off, rarely reflected upon phrase of Proverbs 27: "Iron sharpens iron." What is it that happens when people come together?

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  
Rooms 5 & 7

## Children & Youth CE

Pre-K-5th Grades  
Junior High  
High School



Mennonite  
Church  
of Normal

A congregation of  
Mennonite Church USA



# Christian Education Summer Sabbatical

**May 31 through August 30**

From May 31-August 30, traditional Christian education during the Sunday school hour will be on sabbatical. This will allow time for our regular Sunday school teachers to rest and also provide time for the congregation to invite new Sunday school teachers for the fall for all levels. In lieu of regular Sunday school classes, there will be occasional scheduled Connection Sundays sponsored by Discipleship and perhaps other commissions as well to go along with this year's congregational theme. If you would like to schedule an event to be held this summer during our normal CE hour, please let Holly know and we can make that happen. Childcare can also be provided if needed. Discipleship Commission encourages you to use this sabbatical to reconnect with spiritual practices that draw you close to God—perhaps that will be a conversation about something that's troubling you, or maybe a walk in the woods. Perhaps you'd like to ask for a time to connect with others in prayer. Watch the midweek for Connection Sundays coming soon!

*From the Discipling Commission*

## Church Building Closed



**Next Tuesday, June 2 in the afternoon**

The church building will be closed the afternoon of Tuesday, June 2. If you need anything that afternoon please feel free to reach out by email to [church@normalmennonite.org](mailto:church@normalmennonite.org)!

*From the Church Office*



## Christian Education

**Beginning June 21**

[\*Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted A Faith And Fractured A Nation\*](#) by Kristin Kobes DuMez will be the book study beginning June 21. The book has been described as a "sweeping account that reveals how American evangelicals have worked for decades to replace the Jesus of the Gospels with an idol of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism." Class participants will be asked to secure their own copy of the book. Discussions will be facilitated by Joe and Bess.

## CDC Connector



The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). This month we are gearing up for CDC's Annual Meeting (June 25-27) with a preview issue filled with all the details of worship, youth programming, seminars, and more! There are also stories about our conference's relationship with Mennonite Church Manitoba and a recent training on power dynamics with CDC leadership. If you would like a paper copy, they will be available to take from the Library Table soon.

# Save the Date: Menno Haven August 16th

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## Sunday, August 16

We will be worshipping together at Menno Haven Camp (9301 1575 E St, Tiskilwa, IL 61368) on **August 16th** this year. Please note, this is a different weekend that previous years. More details to come!

## Give soap full of hope: Help MCC collect bars of soap in April & May

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### Last chance!

Mennonite Central Committee provides soap to hospitals, orphanages and refugee camps in countries where soap is expensive or difficult to source. There is a need for soap beyond what is supplied in kits. MCC Great Lakes invites you to take part in a special collection of bath soap and laundry soap throughout April and May. **Soap collected at MCN will be delivered to the MCC Drop Off Site at Metamora Mennonite Church.** Thank you for limiting your generosity to the items listed below. **Learn more [here](#).** If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Outreach Commission. *Shared by MCC Great Lakes and the MCN Outreach Commission.*

#### Bath soap specifications:

NEW bars of soap

- 85g (3oz) or larger
- Please leave in wrapper.
- Please keep in mind that hotel soaps are too small.

#### Laundry soap specifications:

NEW bars of laundry soap

- Brands such as Fels Naptha®, Sunlight® or Zote®
- Please leave in wrapper.
- Homemade laundry soap blocks of 150g (5oz) or larger are acceptable.

## Share Your Story!

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Submissions have begun to come in for our collection of stories celebrating the 50th anniversary of Mennonite Church of Normal. In the interest of including as many stories as possible, we are extending the deadline to **July 1st**. Do you have a story about MCN that is worthy of sharing? **The answer is yes!** We aren't just looking for historical and monumental stories, but every story that speaks to the experience of this congregation, both big and small. For more information, see the call for submissions [here](#).

*From the MCN 50th Committee*

We, Holly and Amy, recently attended an event called Morning for Mujeres which introduced us to the work of the [Shine Collective](#), an organization whose efforts focus on women and their roles in transforming their communities. The Shine Collective is part of the larger organization [Enlace](#), which works specifically with churches in their local communities and governments to reduce and end multidimensional poverty in Central America. The event we attended highlighted the project of compositing latrines which are built at a cost of \$500 and have had significant impact in reducing illness, protecting water, and protecting dignity for mothers and young women. In honor of Mother's Day, Holly and I, with support from the Outreach Committee, are fundraising for one compostable latrine, a total of \$500. Outreach Committee is supporting this fundraiser with a contribution of \$100. Please consider donating to this fundraiser by registering for our MCN team and donating at this [link](#).

*From Holly and Amy*

## Intergenerational Stories



**What is it?** As part of our 50th Anniversary celebration, we would like to gather intergenerational oral history interviews and record them. We hope to record conversations across various ages about what practicing your faith at MCN has meant to you whether you were someone who helped build the church, someone who has newly joined us, whether you are 94 or four. Some starter questions might include (but are not limited to):

- What is your most important memory of being here at MCN?
- What is it you hope I learn by being a part of MCN?
- And maybe a few silly questions from children, too.

Help us tell the story of who we are. While we do hope to gather some conversations across generations of families that have attended (ie. grandparents and grandchildren, parents and children), we hope to invite conversations across relationships much broader than that.

**What it will look like:** We will be setting up a station with an iPad to record these during fellowship and the traditional Sunday School time through June and July.

**What we'll do with these recordings:** We will share these interviews both in the weeks leading up to our 50th celebration and in a digital display during a portion of our open house in September. We will also keep these in an archive that we draw from for future memory moments. There is no plan to make these videos public facing online in order to protect the privacy of our young people.

If you are interested in being part of this project, please reach out to me, Amy. Please also let me know if you already have an idea of who you would like to conduct this interview with or if you would like to be partnered with someone and we (Amy & Holly Zehr) will work to partner you with someone.

*From the MCN 50th Committee*

## A Note from AC

In August of 2024 the Administration Commission appointed the Safety, Access, and Accommodation Subcommittee. This subcommittee was chaired by Cindy. Members included Mark, Darvis, Marcia, and David. Last year we received their report.

Administration Commission has followed up on their report and accessibility recommendations. We hired DH Pace, a local door company, to implement our accessible doors. They are:

- Accessible doors at the main entrance and north entrance
- Accessible inside doors for the office and south restrooms.

In addition, we are working to change inside door handles to levers from knobs, have inside doors keyed the same except for pastors' offices, main office, and tool room, and "tune up" inside doors so they work easier.

Other accessibility work that is in progress includes reworking the platform with a ramp.

On our Balance Sheet, we have a maintenance fund that receives additional monies each month. Half of the funds will come from the maintenance fund and half from beneficiaries. We are excited to make our building even more accessible for all of us. Feel free to talk with any member of the Administration Commission about these accessibility decisions. Members include Cindy, Heath, Mark, and Mary. Ex-officio members include Lauren and Lydia.

*From the Administration Commission*



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

The Bloomington-Normal urban area is roughly 50 square miles, which sounds rather manageable. However, the area covered by Mennonite Church of Normal people is about 200 square miles. Our farthest flung folks are a 72.9 mile, 1 hour and 11 minute drive from each other! We are so grateful for all who make the trek! *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



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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, May 27**

**1:00 pm** Quilting

**Thursday, May 28**

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

**Tuesday, June 2**

**Afternoon** Church Building Closed

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

**Wednesday, June 3**

**1:00 pm** Quilting



## Those Serving This Week





## A Note from The Immigration Project

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We have an important opportunity to protect access to vital legal services through state budget advocacy—and we need your help. A cut to Illinois Access to Justice (ILA2J) funding has been proposed. We're urging lawmakers to maintain or increase this funding, which has allowed us to:

- Grow from 655 to 1,500 consultations a year
- Respond to clients quickly, with no backlogs or long waits
- Take on cases within weeks in a rapidly changing legal landscape

We're also calling for support for Immigrant Services Line Item, which is more critical than ever. **Take action: Contact your state legislators and urge them to hold the line on ILA2J funding and support Immigrant Services Line Item.** Together, we can ensure our community stays informed, protected, and supported. **Learn who to call [here](#) and learn what to say [here](#).**

*Shared by The Immigration Project*

## Resistance to Oppression, Resilience in Suffering

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“Resistance to oppression, resilience in suffering.” This is what I said when asked to sum up in a phrase what we witnessed with Palestinians. This took me back to December 1987. When I was in Jerusalem for a seminary course during the first Intifada, we visited a Palestinian farmer whose home and entire olive grove, which had been in the family for generations, were bulldozed by the Israeli military. This was meant to force him from his farm so his land could be developed into an Israeli settlement. But he refused to leave. He resisted by living in an old bus and replanting his land. And, as he did, he demonstrated remarkable resilience. Thirty-nine years later, this is still happening. As I reported last month in *Confronting the occupation of Palestine*, our Mennonite Men and MennoPIN (Mennonite Palestine-Israel Network) delegation learned what Palestinians continue to experience under the brutal Israeli occupation of their land. And still Palestinians persist. (See articles at end of this report on the Israeli occupation.) Of the many stories we heard, I want to share more about the Nassar family and their farm, Tent of Nations, where we planted trees. **Read the rest of Steve Thomas’s blog post for Mennonite Men [here](#).**

## Reimagining MC USA for 2040: A hopeful step toward the future

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A single guiding question shaped two days of deep listening, discernment and imagination as 23 committee members from across MC USA gathered to reflect on the future: What will the world that MC USA exist in look like in 2040? From the beginning, the tone was grounded in faith. In his opening devotion, Eric Massanari invited the group to hold both the challenges of today and the promise of what could come next. “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” – John 12:24 That image of letting go so something new can grow stayed with the group throughout their time together in Chicago, April 15–16, at the first in-person meeting of Mennonite Church USA’s [Structure Review Committee](#). This work is just beginning. In the coming months, the committee will continue refining these ideas and exploring what they mean for the future of MC USA. The next gathering will take place May 13 in Indianapolis, where participants will begin shaping recommendations for the Executive Board. A final report is expected in June. “It’s really important to support this collective effort ... to find ways to really empower congregations to thrive by bringing together the things we’re learning across the whole network,” said Benjamin Sywulka, a member of the Structure Review Committee. As the process continues, the foundation remains the same: faith, humility, and hope. “My prayer for MC USA is that we walk humbly together and that we seek God’s reconciling love and grace amongst ourselves and in our local communities – and work to bring that healing and hope to the world,” said Landis. **Read the rest of Mennonite Church USA’s news release [here](#).**

## This True Story Offers a Tool for Community Healing

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One woman’s vision is improving planetary health and the health of Indigenous communities around the world. Her true story offers a tool for listening effectively with purpose and intention to heal any community. In a blog post for Mennonite Women USA, Peggy reviews Pat’s book on Radical Listening and Dr. Kinari Webb’s pathbreaking work. **Read the review [here](#).**

## Stop and pick up the garbage

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Every spring when the snow melts, revealing the soggy brown grass lying dormant below, I grab a few trash bags and some gloves and I head outside. The melting snowbanks expose not just muddy ground and a few brave shoots, but also scattered garbage, conveniently hidden by snowfall for months. Cigarette butts, broken bottles, coffee cups and dog bags lay scattered along the edges of pathways, near bus stops and under park benches. With my pockets full of trash bags and an enthusiastic partner at my side, I head out and spend a few hours picking up garbage along the paths and sidewalks near my apartment. This spring in particular, the errand felt especially important to me. The world is a scary place, with wars ongoing, bombs being dropped and bigger threats being made every day. Picking up candy wrappers from the mud might seem like a futile act in the face of atomic weapons and catastrophic climate crises. But to me it is also an act of hope. By removing a few extra pieces of plastic from my local ecosystem, I am claiming that it is worth investing in the future of the soil, water and plants that surround me. By getting my hands and shoes muddy, I am doing the only thing that any of us can do — I am doing my part. We are all just one person, with control over only our own choices. This can be both a limiting and a freeing perspective. Our single choices to pick up garbage, eat less meat, fly less and speak kindly to friends and strangers do not have a global impact. We cannot save the world by ourselves. But our choices do have an impact on those around us, even if that's just one more person. By picking up garbage along the riverbank, I brought smiles and thanks from dozens of people, some even promising to come out later with their own bags. But I only started my garbage walks after seeing someone else doing it, years ago and thousands of kilometers away from where I now gather litter. **Read the rest of Leah Reimer's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

## Multi-pronged efforts

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*How can MCC and our partners help families and communities navigate multiple challenges, all at once?*

Every day, every year, families and communities around the world are growing closer as they work together to diversify and boost their income. From Kenya to Cambodia, people are seeing the benefits of holistic projects that speak to a wide range of challenges, from unpredictable growing seasons to family life. These projects help families and communities dream big, handle complex challenges and work toward stable, sustainable futures. Annie Loewen, a program manager from MCC's Planning, Learning and Disaster Response team, shares with Sienna Malik, managing editor of MCC's A Common Place magazine, why it's crucial for MCC to take a holistic approach to its relief, development and peace work. **Read Sienna Malik's interview with Annie Loewen for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

## Pennsylvania to Cuba, a prayer of blessing

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*Material resources packed in Pennsylvania, unpacked at churches across Cuba.*

MCC has sent meat and relief kits to Cuba since 2021, and now also shares school kits, dignity kits and infant care kits. These urgently needed supplies are packed in Ephrata, Pennsylvania at the MCC Material Resources Center and reach families and communities through networks of churches in Cuba, including many of the 130 Brethren in Christ congregations across the country. **Watch the video from Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

## Quest continues to identify students at Indian schools run by Mennonites

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*Gaps of information cloud effort to tell the full story of 19th-century boarding schools.*

It is of utmost importance that Indigenous children who died at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania and other Indian schools are repatriated to their tribal nations. I appreciate the report by Camille Dager of Mennonite Church USA on the powerful ceremony that brought Cheyenne children home to Oklahoma last October ("[Reburial of Native Children Is an Invitation in Remember and Repent,](#)" *AW*, January). While I honor the wisdom and long campaign that made the children's journey possible, as a historian of Mennonite missions to Cheyenne and Arapaho people, I had to wonder about the article's claim of Mennonite "deep connections" to Carlisle, that "Mennonite teachers and administrators staffed Carlisle and other boarding schools" and that children from Carlisle were placed on Mennonite farms as part of Carlisle's Outing Program. Federal and church-run schools for Indian children have rightly been criticized for stripping Indian children of their native language, culture and identity. Students experienced high rates of illness and mortality. Given this history, what can we know about the Indian schools Mennonites operated and how involved they were in the U.S. Indigenous boarding school effort, including Carlisle? There were connections to Carlisle, but calling them "deep" may be an overstatement. The evidence is mixed. Mennonites were no exception to international missionary and boarding school movements targeting Indigenous people. Mennonites cooperated with the U.S. government to found and operate three boarding schools among Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples: Darlington School in Oklahoma Territory, 1881-1898; Cantonment School in Oklahoma Territory, 1883-1901; and Halstead Indian Industrial School in Kansas, 1885-1896. **Read the rest of Kimberly D. Schmidt's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

## Restoring the land, one tree at a time

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*How a community in Makueni County, Kenya is restoring degraded land, protecting their soil, and building stronger livelihoods through a community tree nursery.*

In Matikoni Village, Utooni Development Organisation (UDO) is working with local communities to restore damaged land by growing trees. UDO trained community members to set up and manage a tree nursery growing neem, senna, and acacia seedlings. A tree management committee was formed from 12 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), and members volunteer their time to plant and care for the seedlings. UDO provides weekly trainings, along with seeds and basic tools such as watering cans, rakes, and shovels. Through these trainings, community members learn how to grow healthy trees, protect them from pests and wildlife, and manage the nursery together. In 2024, the community grew and distributed 8,000 seedlings to the 12 VSLAs, who shared them among households based on their ability to care for the trees. Most of the trees are growing well, encouraging the community to continue the nursery. By 2025, the nursery had grown more than 10,000 seedlings. These trees are being shared with households, schools, and churches, and some are sold at a small cost to help support the nursery. Community members have learned how trees protect soil from erosion, improve soil fertility, lower temperatures, and reduce the impact of heavy rain. They are also learning not to cut down existing trees for firewood, but instead to prune branches. Looking ahead, the community plans to restore a nearby forested hillside and support each VSLA member to start a small nursery at home. **Watch a video and read the rest of Jessica Banninga's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

## Ranching the bison way

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*In the harmony of beasts and prairie, it's best for humans to step aside.*

Dick Gehring isn't afraid to put his boots on the ground when he's working with the bison on his ranch in central Kansas. That's not because the 1,000- to 2,000-pound animals can't hurt him but because he's learned that if he respects them, the bison will respect him back. "There are so many people that are scared of these animals," Gehring said, and for good reason. The American bison is North America's largest land mammal, and, unlike the cattle raised by most ranchers in his area, these ungulates have never been domesticated. If you make them feel threatened, Gehring said, "it can be a bad day." Luckily, the Mennonite farmer has learned the opposite is also true: If he makes sure the bison have a good day, it can be a good day for him, too. His relationship with the animals over the last 40 years has shown him there is an order to the natural world, and it's best if he follows it. "God had this figured out a long time ago," Gehring said of the synchronicity between the bison and the prairie. "We insist on being smarter and trying to improve on it, and we end up shooting ourselves in the foot." Based in Moundridge, Gehring is the founder of Black Kettle Buffalo, which he operates with his eldest son, Reese. Each year, they sell over 1,500 animals for meat as well as breeding stock. Bison don't require much in the way of human assistance to be content. What they do need is plenty of biodiverse grassland for grazing. Over the years, Gehring has been a mentor to many new bison producers, some of whom now sell him their calves. He's served in many capacities with both the National Bison Association and the Kansas Buffalo Association, where he is currently the sale chair for the annual stockyard sale in Salina. When working with people, he applies lessons he's learned from the bison. One is to "treat people with respect, giving them the time to come around to your way of thinking instead of forcing your opinion." "My way or the highway doesn't work with these animals, and it doesn't work with people," Gehring said. "Allowing for buy-in and participation in the outcome always lets things run much more smoothly." **Read the rest of Sierra Ross Richer's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

## A lesson in hospitality... through ice cream!

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While visiting [Korea Anabaptist Center](#) (KAC), Andi Santoso, Mennonite Mission Network Regional Director for Asia and the Middle East, experienced a simple yet profound lesson in hospitality he won't soon forget. **Watch Mennonite Mission Network's video [here](#).**

## Ten years of the EU-Turkey deal: a decade of systemic harm

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*To understand Palestine, you must understand Hebron.*

Ten years after the EU-Turkey statement of 18 March 2016, we mark a decade defined by the sustained degradation and dehumanisation of people on the move. Presented as a mechanism to manage migration, the agreement between the European Union and Turkey established a framework centred on containment, deterrence, and return. **Read CPT Aegean Migrant Solidarity's blog post for Community Peacemaker Teams [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

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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>

## Past Midweeks

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### 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 Meeting Minutes

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Commission, Team, & Committee Members

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Item Check-Out Request Form

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Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

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Facility Use Agreement

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Commissions and Teams Contact List

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Structure Documents

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