

Report to Central Plains Mennonite Conference

AMBS serves the church as a learning community with an Anabaptist vision, educating followers of Jesus Christ to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world.

Our programs integrate academics, spiritual formation and practice. Join us — in person or at a distance, full time or part time — and deepen your understanding of Scripture, faith and Anabaptist theology!

Degrees and programs (* = distance-friendly program)

- Master of Divinity*
- Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies
- Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism*
- Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction*
- Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies* (fully customizable)
- Doctor of Ministry in Leadership*
- Journey Missional Leadership Development Program* (undergraduate-level, nondegree)

ambs.edu/degrees-and-programs

We offer generous need-based financial aid, scholarships and matching grants for both full- and part-time graduate students. You *can* afford seminary!

ambs.edu/affordability

Leadership and enrichment

Grow your ministry skills and gain Anabaptist approaches to today's leadership challenges through our nondegree offerings. (* = distance-friendly program)

Short-term options

- Online Short Courses*: six weeks, discussion-based, noncredit
- Invite AMBS*: request a speaker (in person or virtual) on a topic of your choice
- Pastors & Leaders conference*: Feb. 19–22, 2024
- !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth (summer)

Yearlong offerings

- Spiritual Direction Seminars*
- Transition to Leadership: program for new pastors
- Integrity Circles*: reflect theologically on leadership within a group

ambs.edu/leadership-and-enrichment



(Credit: Jason Bryant)

Conference connections

- **Master of Divinity Connect students:** Randall Koehler (Hutterthal), Megan Wiebersch (Washington), Maya Kehr Yoder (First – Iowa City)
- **Journey participant/mentor:** Shella Franz (Bethel)/Lois Janzen Preheim (Salem)

AMBS statistics

- In April 2023, eight women and 12 men from five countries graduated from AMBS (*see above*).
- In 2022–23, 141 graduate students were enrolled at AMBS: 61 from the U.S., six from Canada and 74 international students. The Journey program had 21 participants from the U.S., Canada, Malawi and Uganda, as of May 2023.

Want to try out seminary?

- Sign up for an Online Short Course (no grades, no papers!):
 - Exploring Peace and Justice in the Bible
 - Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology
 - Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: What's Different and Why?
 - Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication

ambs.edu/online-short-courses

- Take a graduate-level course — online or on campus. Nonadmitted students get 50% off tuition for their first three credit hours! ambs.edu/upcoming-courses
- Schedule a virtual or in-person visit. Talk with students, faculty and staff and learn what AMBS has to offer! ambs.edu/visit
- Stay connected: facebook.com/followAMBS • twitter.com/ambs_seminary • ambs.edu/subscribe

EMS Welcomes New Seminary Dean, Dan Ott

EMS honored 2022 retirees Dr. Sue Cockley (dean) and Dr. Nancy Heisey (professor of biblical studies and church history). Rev. Dr. Daniel Ott is the new seminary dean, formerly associate dean for academic initiatives and professor of religious studies at Monmouth College, IL. An ordained Presbyterian minister and peace theologian, Ott says his new role at EMS “brings together my deepest passions and my life’s work.”

New Graduate Certificate in Faith-Based Peacebuilding

In fall 2022, EMS launched a certificate to help faith leaders respond effectively to conflict. Students in the 18-credit program take half of their coursework in the seminary and half in the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding. Flexibility is built into the degree so students can choose relevant courses – in person or online – in theology, biblical studies, racial justice, conflict analysis and peacebuilding.

EMS Receives \$1 Million for Conflict Transformation Training

Lilly Endowment Inc. awarded EMS \$998,606 to develop interdisciplinary leadership workshops and trainings that integrate personal spiritual formation, biblical and theological frameworks, and conflict transformation skills. Director Dr. Jacob Cook works with leaders at EMS and EMU’s Center for Justice and Peacebuilding to equip pastors and lay leaders in conflict transformation and trauma resilience through digital content, online courses, regional on-site trainings and on-campus workshops.



L to R: Daniel Ott, EMS Dean; Sarah Bixler, EMS Associate Dean; Jacob Cook, Pathways Program Director; Jacqueline Font-Guzmán, Center for Justice and Peacebuilding Strategic Visioning Director

Spring 2022 Graduation

EMS awarded five Master of Arts in Christian Leadership, four Master of Divinity degrees, and one Theological Certificate to the graduating class of 2022. Students presented senior capstone projects on teaching the Bible, faith and human bodies, healing racial trauma, disability, and recovery ministries. 2022-23 seminary enrollment is strong, with a 14% increase over the previous year.

NEW: Study at EMS from Wherever You Live!

EMS is more accessible than ever! All courses are now available to take from a distance. Students can join the EMS learning community from their own location through Zoom technology and our online learning management system. Plus, thanks to forward-thinking donors, Mennonite students receive generous aid toward degree programs at EMS. Half- to full-tuition scholarships are available. Apply now or recommend our programs to someone you know! Visit <https://emu.edu/seminary/courses/> for information about upcoming classes.

Statement of Purpose

Eastern Mennonite Seminary prepares servants of Christ to minister together locally and globally. In response to God’s gracious call, we invite students to embody and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of God’s Spirit as wise interpreters, mature practitioners, discerning communicators, and transformational leaders.

- ▶ **Susan Schultz Huxman**, president
- ▶ **Daniel Ott**, seminary dean
- ▶ **Sarah Ann Bixler**, associate dean

**emu.edu/seminary
540-432-4260**

Conflict Transformation and Trauma Resilience Workshops

Equipping pastors and lay leaders on campus and online beginning
May 2023

[emu.edu/seminary/
workshops](http://emu.edu/seminary/workshops)



*Prepared to serve and
lead in a global context*

SUMMER 2023

CENTRAL PLAINS CONFERENCE

EMU ANNUAL REPORT

Mission Matters

Greetings from President Huxman

In this beautiful season in the Shenandoah Valley, I bring greetings from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) to the families, churches and conferences that make up MCUSA. A special greeting to the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Join me as I feature a few highlights from the previous year.

CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS. I enjoyed accompanying the super talented **EMU Chamber Singers** under the direction of Dr. Benjamin Bergey on its Ohio and Indiana Spring break tour. We are raising money for the choir to embark on a European tour this summer. The group visited 11 churches and schools. It was a lovely time to engage with so many alumni, friends and prospective students of EMU.

In addition to 50 undergraduate programs, EMU is home to 11 graduate programs and a seminary. One such graduate program is in the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP). A new student in CJP is **Anna Dovbyck from Ukraine**. She joins students from USA, South Korea, Japan, North Sudan, South Sudan, Rwanda, Congo, Liberia, Mozambique, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and India. Her family has been upended by the war and a best friend is on the front lines in Donbas. She says: “Amidst the turmoil, I began to ask myself: what can I do? Getting a professional education in conflict transformation and work with trauma became my way of responding to the challenges of the war. And so now I find myself studying in the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University. It is probably the first time in recent adult years that I feel so much in my place, and so motivated.”

UPGRADING FACILITIES. We’ve just completed a major renovation in University Commons, creating a new student union and new admissions space. Now we are turning our attention to a new Track and Field Complex, looking for “pace setting” gifts to completely build a new complex. We’ve already raised over half of the total. We are also replacing our aging Turf Field for soccer, lacrosse and field hockey. The third imminent capital project this year is the architectural design and specs for a new facility to house a fabrication lab for our growing Engineering program. We were so pleased to receive ABET accreditation for our engineering program this summer. Precious few private liberal arts colleges in the country receive this coveted validation.

Thank you for your partnership in prayer, encouraging prospective students, and offering generous financial support. Mennonite students still comprise well over one-quarter of our traditional undergraduate student body.

In gratitude,
Susan Schultz Huxman, Ph.D., President, EMU

Harrisonburg, Virginia

www.emu.edu

churchrelations@emu.edu

How can EMU serve you?

Contact the church relations office to schedule the president or a faculty guest speaker:
540-432-4597 or
ChurchRelations@emu.edu

Central Plains Conference Connections to EMU

Undergraduate Students

Four undergraduate students from Central Plains Mennonite Conference were enrolled in the spring 2023 semester.

Giving

Central Plains Mennonite Conference churches gave \$23,000 in matching church grants during the year ending June 2022.

- ▶ **Susan Schultz Huxman**,
President
- ▶ **Kirk Shisler**, *Vice President for Advancement*
- ▶ **Braydon Hoover**, *Associate Vice President of Advancement*
- ▶ **Luke Litwiller**, *Director of Undergrad Admissions*

Our Vision

We will open new pathways of access and achievement for all students who aspire to grow as unifying leaders equipped with intercultural competence, oriented toward peace and justice, and rooted in an active faith modeled on the life and teachings of Jesus.

*"... by speaking the truth
with love, let's grow in every
way into Christ."*

– Ephesians 4:15b (CEB)

Seek Growth

Everence 2023 report

Central Plains Mennonite Conference
Annual Meeting
June 15-18, 2023

Churches call upon Everence as helpful stewardship partner

Churches can count on Everence Financial® as a reliable stewardship partner.

Working closely with congregations and their members has been at the core of what we do since our founding as a mutual aid organization in 1945.

We help our members find effective ways to be more generous, as part of our focus on stewardship as a spiritual discipline – stemming from the historical biblical belief of Anabaptist Christians that all we are and all we have is from God (Psalm 24).

Pastors and church leaders also rely on Everence for helpful stewardship education resources. Learn more at everence.com/churches.

Sharing Fund helps churches reach more people in need



The Everence Sharing Fund helps thousands of families and individuals every year with basic, everyday needs.

Everence has awarded about \$4.7 million in Sharing Fund grants in the last five years, and our partner congregations distributed about \$7 million more.

The Sharing Fund is, in most cases, a matching grant program. Churches with an Everence stewardship advocate can request matching Sharing Fund dollars to help meet the needs of people in their church and community.

From financial struggles to emergency crises, Sharing Fund grants help people keep a roof over their heads, buy food for their families and pay medical expenses.

To see how your church can access Sharing Fund grants – or to donate to the program, visit everence.com/sharing-fund.

MyNeighbor card is working to boost charitable causes



The MyNeighbor credit card from Everence Federal Credit Union is doing what credit union leaders intended – supporting the communities in which their members live and work.

Since its launch in 2017, the MyNeighbor card has generated more than \$1.7 million for charitable organizations, including individual churches.

Members use the card the same way they'd use an ordinary credit card, but instead of generating

points or airline miles, 1.5% of each transaction total is donated by Everence to the cardholder's chosen charity.

The "neighbor" you choose just needs to be a 501(c)(3) public charitable organization. You can change which organization receives your donations via an online dashboard.

Want to know more? Visit everence.com/myneighbor.

A variety of resources to help churches thrive

Churches have unique financial and stewardship needs – something Everence understands better than many financial services providers, thanks to our 78-year history of working with churches, their staff and their members.

From telling your church's story, fulfilling your ministry, and looking to your church's future, our knowledgeable stewardship consultants can share ideas with pastors, church leaders, Sunday school classes, and small groups about cultivating generosity and sustaining giving over the long term.

And Everence partners with denominations and networks to offer benefits such as retirement plans for pastors and staff.

Check out everence.com/churches to learn more about how we can work together.





Iowa Peace Network
iowapeacenet@gmail.com

April 26, 2023

Friends,

The Joint Oversight Committee and staff would like to thank you for your continued support this year – 2022-2023. Thank you for your church's participation in the Joint Oversight Committee and for support from congregations, individuals, and your state conferences. Thanks to DM Mennonite for renting space.

The coordinator maintains IPN's website, www.iowapeacenet.org. The website work for our official website includes adding two posts to our website monthly and updating the events page weekly.

We continue to do a weekly email update of peace events in Iowa and elsewhere to a list of about 300, in addition to opportunities to sign petitions and to write Congress and other officials. We also publish three paper newsletters during the year to about 700 individuals and churches.

In 2022 the coordinator worked with other peace leaders in the Des Moines area over Zoom to plan a Nagasaki/ Hiroshima commemoration on August 9, and an Iranian women's freedom leafletting event in October. IPN cosponsored a teach-in on Iranian Women's freedom movement planned by a Middle East Peace group at Drake University in November.

We cosponsored the Palm Sunday Procession and Prayer Service for Peace in April, International Day of Peace in September and the Feast of the Holy Innocents in December, all of these planned by the Des Moines Faith Committee for Peace.

IPN signed a letter from over 1000 faith leaders, calling for a Christmas Truce in Ukraine. Also, we held our Annual Holiday Open House & Alternative Gift Fair December 3 this year at the Des Moines Mennonite Church. We had several vendors at our Gift Fair, including Equal Exchange items, items from Guatemala, and our IPN items- New Harmony pottery and other items. We also had non-tangible items available for donating in someone's name: Heifer Project, Church World Service, and others. To close out the afternoon Dr. Maria Corona, Executive Director of Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Abuse spoke.

The coordinator attended display tables at both of Iowa's Quaker yearly meetings Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and Iowa Yearly Meeting (FUM/Friends United Meeting), and the Northern Plains Church of the Brethren District Conference, for at least a day at each in late July and early August. The coordinator attended the Iowa United Methodist Church peace and justice rally during their conference. We hope to attend next summer's Central Plains Mennonite Conference.

Thanks again, for joining with us in our work for peace.

Sincerely, The IPN staff & Joint Oversight Committee ~ Mark Leichty (Mennonite Church)-convener, Jess Hoffert (Church of the Brethren)- secretary, Myrna Frantz (Church of the Brethren), Joel Beane (Friends United Meeting), Peter Clay (Friends Conservative), Sue McCullough (Friends United Meeting), Keith Sheller- Treasurer, & Christine Sheller- Coordinator



Here are some of the ways MC USA Executive Board and staff served conferences, congregations and communities in 2022:



MC USA launched [“Diversity: God’s Design,”](#) a new, multimedia study that calls young adults to celebrate their unique gifts and the intentional diversity of God’s creation.

The [Justice Fund](#) provided resources to MC USA congregations working to combat poverty, dismantle racism, address immigration reform or reimagine policing. MC USA awarded 16 Justice Fund grants to 14 congregations in 2022.

MC USA responded to the actions and work of the Special Session of the Delegate Assembly by engaging constituents in two “Learn, Pray, Join” educational initiatives. [“Welcoming EveryBODY”](#) celebrated the gifts of people with disabilities, and [“Mass Incarceration”](#) examined the injustices in our criminal legal system.

MC USA Executive Board and staff nurtured global connections by participating in Mennonite World Conference and attending the most recent assembly in Indonesia. MC USA Moderator Linda Dibble [was affirmed](#) as a North American representative on MWC’s Executive Committee and Denominational Minister of Racial/Ethnic Engagement Sue Park-Har was appointed to the Deacon’s Commission.



The MC USA Resolutions Committee [responded to delegate feedback](#) and drafted new “Guidelines for Developing Organizational Resolutions and Church Statements in Mennonite Church USA.” The guidelines are designed to put less emphasis on the outcome of a specific resolution and more emphasis on how we are living out our values together.

MC USA partnered with Mennonite Central Committee to launch the [Peaceful Option for Careers and Training \(POTC\)](#), formerly AMEN, an initiative to connect young people with volunteer advisors who can help them find non-military career, service and training opportunities.



A new [denominational survey](#), commissioned by the Executive Board, revealed that MC USA members have deep commitments to their faith, a passion for peacebuilding, a heart for service and close congregational ties.

“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” Isaiah 43:19

Our Mission

The mission of the MC USA Executive Board is to equip and empower leaders to share with others the gift of God’s peace and transformative love.

Our Vision

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.

Our Renewed Commitments

- Follow Jesus
- Witness to God’s peace
- Experience transformation



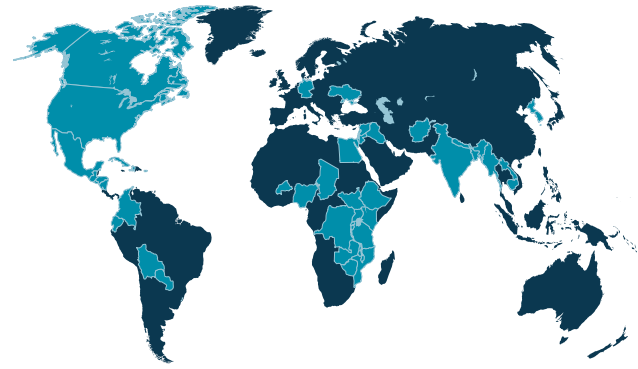
[Subscribe to PeaceMail](#), MC USA’s weekly digital news magazine, for all of the denomination’s news, blogs, events and resources.



Join us for MennCon23, Kansas City, July 3-6, 2023. (Delegate Assembly July 7-8) convention.mennoniteusa.org

2023 report for Central Plains Mennonite Conference

MCC U.S. and MCC Central States
(316) 283.2720 • CentralStates@mcc.org • mcc.org



45
countries

381
partners

496
projects



Adolfo Conde's water harvesting system in Norte de Potosí, Bolivia, allows him to irrigate his crops to produce and market a greater variety of vegetables. An MCC partner works with Indigenous rural farmers to reduce the adverse effects of climate change through adaptation and mitigation measures aimed at guaranteeing food security. (PRODII photo/Catalina Ospina)

MCC and Central Plains Mennonite Conference connections

- CPMC congregations play important roles in MCC relief sales, Thrift shops, My Coins Count fundraisers, material resources drives and meat canning.
- First Mennonite Church Lincoln hosted Vincent Lukadi as an MCC Summer Service Worker in 2022.
- Students at Freeman Academy competed in the MCC peace essay contest.
- A huge shout out to staff, volunteers & donors at the MCC

Thrift shops in Seward, NE, Mountain Lake, MN, Iowa City, IA and Freeman, SD. Thank you for working hard to support MCC through these local shops!

- Sign up to receive our monthly digital newsletter called In Touch, find out how to make kits, Sunday School curriculum and more by following the QR code.



MCC's 2023 guiding scripture

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters...

Isaiah 55:1 (NIV)

Thanks to your generosity, MCC is able to continue responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice around the world. All that we do at MCC, we do in the name of Christ.

From walking alongside farmers to adapt to climate change to short and long-term relief for displaced people in Ukraine and Syria. From dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery to teaching Peaceful Practices, MCC strives to share God's love and compassion for all.

We are so grateful for the creativity and dedication of our supporters, volunteers and partners this past year. Whether you support MCC by donating resources, praying, advocating or serving you are part of the MCC story and we thank you.

With gratitude,

Michelle Armster, MCC Central States executive director

Will Swartzendruber, MCC Central States Board representative for Central Plains Mennonite Conference

“ Serving others in your home community, church or around the world is a wonderful opportunity to experience God at work around you.”

-Michelle Armster

Young adults in MCC are an incredible source of inspiration, challenge and hope. Young adults, ages 18-30, can attend a Peace Camp, be a Summer Service Worker in their local community, serve with SALT in an international setting for one year. MCC offers service opportunities for all ages in many locations. “Serving with MCC, not only

challenges young adults, it allows them to see themselves in a fresh light, allowing space for growth,” Michelle Armster. In 2022, young adults from MCC Central States served with MCC in the following ways:
5 Service And Learning Together (SALT)
7 Summer Service Worker
7 participated in Peace Camps
Find out more at mcc.org/serve.





A year of restoring hope with love

"Do everything in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14



ANNUAL REPORT 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

MDS volunteers served
38,652 days helping
718 households
recover from disasters.



MDS brought hope...

- Building new homes.*
- Constructing driveway bridges.*
- Mucking out.*
- Restoring forests.*
- Cleaning up debris.*
- Repairing homes.*

On local or national levels, with a few volunteers or hundreds of them, MDS brought a priceless element of hope into the lives of disaster survivors across Canada and the United States.

Thanks to donors and volunteers, MDS, from August 1, 2021 through July 31, 2022...

MDS also built trust with disaster survivors and partner organization. As Terri Rubiolo said when she received a new MDS-built home in Concow, California: "We put it in God's hands." Now she and her husband, John, operate a community food assistance program that provides 1,000 meals a week. The hope is spreading!

As Mark Cox, Hope Crisis Response Network logistics coordinator said when he combined efforts with MDS volunteers: "This collaboration is getting people home—that's what it's all about."

We pause to look at a year's worth of statistics—and we give thanks. But we are also still moving, growing and striving for even more creativity, collaboration and community in our responses. Years from now, may disaster survivors be able to count on the values of hope, love, and compassion that define MDS.

6,495 volunteers

from across Canada and the U.S. gave their time, skills and compassion

to build

57 new homes,

complete

302 repairs,

finish

281 cleanups,

and build

3 new bridges

for households who experienced a disaster.

This volunteer labor is a value* of

**\$9.39 million USD/
\$12.96 million CDN**

**Statistics from Aug. 1, 2021
through July 31, 2022**
(our 2021 fiscal year)

** Based on a volunteer rate of
\$29.95 USD/hour
— www.independentsector.org*

Respond. Rebuild. Restore.



**Mennonite
Disaster
Service**

www.mds.org

MDS Binational Office
583 Airport Lititz
PA 17543 USA
tel: 717-735-3536
fax: 717-735-0809
toll-free: 800-241-8111
mdsus@mds.org

MDS Canada Office
200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1 Canada
tel: 204-261-1274
fax: 204-261-1279
toll-free: 866-261-1274
mdscanada@mds.org

Strengthening the church through education

HISTORIC GRADUATION CEREMONY

MEA's flagship Hispanic Ministry programs continue to train Hispanic pastors and leaders for discipleship in the church. Students are drawn to the Hispanic Anabaptist Bible Institute and Seminary, known as IBA (*Instituto Bíblico Anabautista*) and SeBAH (*Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano*) respectively, for their strong theological and biblical teaching, in Spanish and from an Anabaptist perspective that is uniquely Hispanic. Led by



passionate staff, professors, and tutors, the programs are accessible and affordable: SeBAH is 100% online while local congregations host study centers for IBA groups. IBA's inaugural virtual center launched this year – an initiative we expect to expand.

GOING DIGITAL

MEA's Hispanic Ministries has offered programs of study and continuing education courses for many years. Now



they've moved into digital faith formation. The ezine, "*MenoTicias*," (Mennonite News) and the podcast, "*Un Momento de Anabautismo*" (An Anabaptist Moment) aim to inspire and teach about Mennonites and Anabaptists, the vision of the 21st century Anabaptist-Mennonite Church, and what it means to walk with Jesus. You can subscribe to these resources at

www.MennoniteEducation.org/hispanic-ministries/menoticias.

HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP

A new partnership emerged in the past year with Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., to create the first Spanish language graduate certificate in theological studies. The course of study for the **SeBAH-AMBS Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies** will be taught in Spanish and is designed to provide professionals, congregational leaders, and bivocational pastors with a foundation in theological and biblical study. The certificate requires 21 credit hours and can be completed in two years. Graduates will then be eligible to enroll in AMBS master's programs. The program is set to begin in the fall of 2023.

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

The visionary behind MEA's Hispanic Ministries is Director Marco Güete, who was part of the group of Hispanic



pastors in 1988 who imagined a way to train leaders in every Hispanic Mennonite church. They founded IBA and built partnerships with local congregations across the country, established study centers within those churches, and recruited students and teachers. Hundreds of students have enrolled in the

program since then. Many have graduated with certificates or diplomas and have gone on to serve as pastors and leaders in the church. SeBAH emerged in 2010. **"The Hispanic Mennonite church is growing, and we want these congregations to have well-trained disciples of Jesus to lead them," he said.** As the director, Marco has invested more than most in these ministries, and he continues to dedicate himself to strengthening the Hispanic Mennonite Church. This summer he is completing the third leg of a multi-year pilgrimage along *el Camino de Santiago* (the Way of Saint James) in Spain – a total of 483 miles! – to raise awareness and support for IBA. Keeping the program affordable is a priority, and fundraising is critical. Güete hopes his walks raise awareness and inspire generosity within the church.

MENNONITE LEARNING NETWORK

MEA operates the Mennonite Learning Network, a Moodle platform for online learning. Current partners include SeBAH, [Semilla](#), [Mennonite Mission Network – Sent training](#), the [Collaborative MBA program](#), and the [Doctorate in Nursing Practice consortium](#).



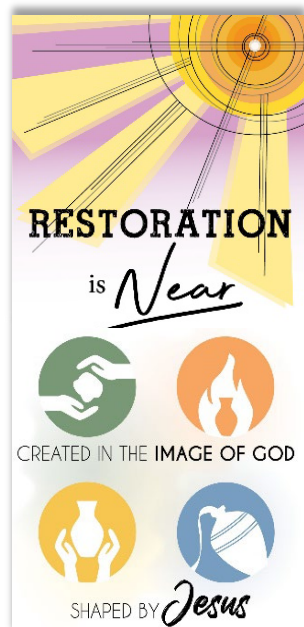
MEA is shaping plans to make this platform available more broadly to MC USA area conferences as an online

learning platform they can access at reduced costs compared to getting the services on their own.

AMBS PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW

In accordance with its bylaws, the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) Board of Directors launched a regular presidential review of Dr. David Boshart in October 2022. Michael Danner was a member of the Review Committee, and MEA staff Jolene VonGunten provided administrative support. The Committee completed its role in April. We are pleased to be part of this important work.

“AT HOME” RESOURCES



Inherited from our friends at Mennonite Church Canada, the At Home worship guide series leads individuals and families through the days and weeks of Lent and Advent with the goal of deepening their experience of the seasons. Daily and weekly Scriptures are woven with worship rituals, prayers, activities, and background information.

Whether at home or in the classroom, MEA is committed to helping teachers and parents as they impact children and young people.

At Home resources can be downloaded at no cost from

MEA’s website: www.MennoniteEducation.org/resources.

2022-23 ENROLLMENT REPORT

Mennonite schools are touching the lives of 9,290 students, an increase of 189 (2.1%) since 2021-22. The headcount for higher education institutions decreased by 71 students, while preschool, elementary, and secondary education levels showed an increase of 260. The number of students connected with MC USA congregations decreased in higher education by 69 and increased among PreK-12 schools by 181, for a total net increase of 112. MEA collects these statistics on an annual basis from all member educational institutions and programs, from early childhood through continuing education. We compile the data to develop a picture of enrollment trends across the institutions: the total number of students enrolled in the institutions, the number of Mennonite and non-Mennonite students enrolled, racial/ethnic diversity, breakdown by grade and degree level, and other demographics. The 2022-23 report and previous years’ reports are available at this link: [MEA Enrollment Reports](#).

NEW SCHOLARSHIP FOR BIPOC STUDENTS

MEA is finalizing a new scholarship to encourage BIPOC students (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), who are members of MC USA congregations, to attend higher education institutions affiliated with MC USA. The scholarship will be launched for the 2023 – 24 academic year.

MENNONITE EDUCATORS CONFERENCE

MEA’s Jo Helmuth provided event planning and logistical support for the [Mennonite Educators Conference](#) in Leesburg, Va, February 2 – 4. Following a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the theme “**Better Together**”



resonated deeply with the 330 attendees, who represented fourteen Early Childhood – grade 12 schools from across the U.S., plus an international affiliate from Albania. Eastern Mennonite

University Professor Emerita Dr. Judy Mullet was one of the keynote speakers, and Harrisonburg-based [The Walking Roots Band](#) gave a concert and led a worship session. The event was co-sponsored by Everence Financial, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Disaster Service, and Mennonite Mission Network.

JOB BOARD

MEA publishes a weekly [Job Board](#) and distributes it to congregations, schools, constituents, and donors across the denomination and beyond. Schools partnered with MEA can list their job openings at no charge. There are a significant number of vacancies at all levels across Mennonite education.

PRAYER SUPPORT

The MEA prayer newsletter is a monthly prayer resource that continues to be a blessing to the schools and local congregations. These prayer requests come directly from schools and educational programs across all levels of Mennonite education to help congregations and individuals know how best to pray for the schools and the work being done toward faith formation. The prayer requests can be shared in bulletins each week and/or printed or emailed to congregants each month for home use. To view or subscribe, visit www.mennoniteeducation.org/monthly-prayer.

MEA INVESTMENT FUND

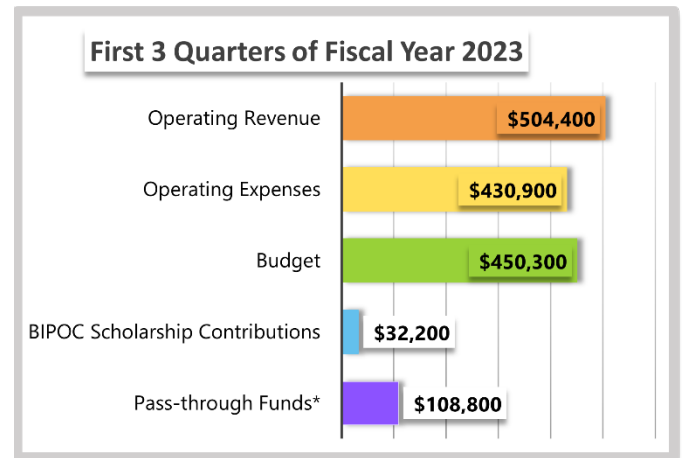
Since 1995, [The MEA Investment Fund](#) has served MC USA-affiliated schools, congregations, area conferences, and other programs with Mennonite education-related assets that are integrated into an investment pool. Pooling funds offer many benefits to the participants. Today, over twenty entities participate in the pool. As of January 31, 2023, it was valued at \$197.2 million.

NEW WEBSITE

MEA launched a new website in April. Designed by Shé Langley of [Rank Lift](#), the new site has improved navigation and search capabilities as well as a sharp, new look. We are excited to utilize the site as a communication hub for schools and congregations. Check it out at www.MennoniteEducation.org.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The following chart shows the financial activity for the first half of fiscal year 22-23. (Investment-related gains and losses are not included.) MEA is in a good financial position currently. COVID's silver lining was reduced travel costs, which had been a huge line item, and there were staffing changes. We do have a safety net now. However, looking forward, there is concern about changes in significant funding sources and whether contributions will continue a downward trajectory.



*Pass-through Funds are donated for schools, colleges, and seminaries sent through MEA.

On behalf of the staff and board of directors, thank you for supporting Anabaptist-Mennonite education.

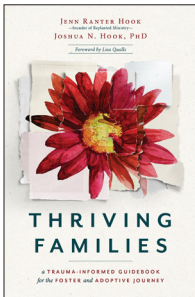
Submitted by Michael Danner
Executive Director

Report to Central Plains Mennonite Conference

Spring 2023

At MennoMedia we publish curricula and books that call readers to follow Jesus in word and deed. We publish resources about Christian discipleship, spirituality, reconciliation, justice, and theology from an Anabaptist perspective. Our curricula, periodicals, and hymnals reach a broad spectrum of evangelical, mainline, and Anabaptist readers and congregations, cultivating passion for faith formation and an active life of discipleship.

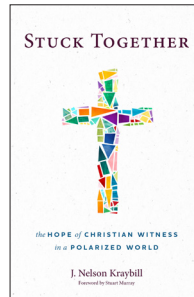
NEW RESOURCES FOR THE ENTIRE CHURCH, FROM HERALD PRESS



Thriving Families

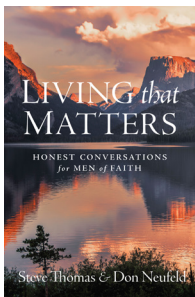
A Trauma-Informed Guidebook for the Foster and Adoptive Journey

Drawing on the latest science and research on trauma, attachment, sensory processing difficulties, cultural competence, and grief and loss, authors Jenn Ranter Hook and Joshua N. Hook provide a trauma-informed approach for adoptive and foster families to help their children heal, grow, and thrive.



Stuck Together

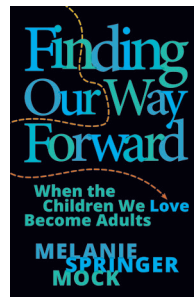
The Hope of Christian Witness in a Polarized World
It can feel as if the world has never been more polarized. But when we feel worn down by the chasms dividing us, we can take hope from the early Christian vision of God uniting all things in Christ. *Stuck Together* explores Bible stories and narratives that inspire us to open hearts and minds to persons with whom we disagree as we gain confidence in our own convictions.



Living That Matters

Honest Conversations for Men of Faith

Do you wonder what it means to be a man? With over 60 years of combined experience in pastoral ministry and social work geared toward men, authors Steve Thomas and Don Neufeld offer many short reflections to help individuals and groups deepen relationships with one another, with ourselves, with our families and communities, and with God as we seek to live into God's shalom.



Finding Our Way Forward

When the Children We Love Become Adults

Melanie Springer Mock draws on her decades as a college professor and mom to explore how finding our way means developing a more expansive understanding of calling for ourselves and for the young adults we love, one that moves beyond vocation and capitalistic enterprises to what God really calls us to: Seeking justice. Loving mercy. Walking with humility. Loving others. Loving God.

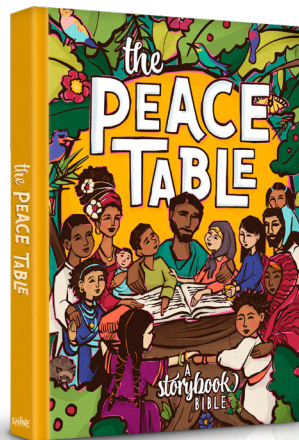
CELEBRATE 500 YEARS



The five hundredth anniversary of Anabaptism in 2025 gives the church a unique opportunity to celebrate the Spirit's calling together of diverse people across all boundaries of culture and geography. MennoMedia's vision is to lead the way in helping North American Anabaptist Christians experience spiritual renewal by creating fresh, forward-looking resources for Anabaptism's quincentenary celebration.

Learn more at
AnabaptismAt500.com

A NEW STORY BIBLE FROM SHINE



From beginning to end, the Bible reminds us that we are made in God's image and that God's table has room for us all. *The Peace Table* is a comprehensive family storybook Bible that makes God's presence and peace real to children of all ages.

- Faithful retellings of 140 Bible stories and stunning artwork from 30 illustrators
- Prayer prompts, peace themes, and ideas for reflection and conversation
- A resource section includes ideas for how to experience peace with God, self, others, and creation, as well as maps, Bible background information, interactive ways to pray, and prayers for many occasions

Learn more at ShineCurriculum.com



2022 has been full of exciting work and meaningful connections as the work of Mennonite Men continues to benefit our communities and congregations. Our three programs—JoinTrees, JoinMen, and JoinHands—continue to thrive as we invite men to grow, give and serve as followers of Jesus.

To learn more about our work, download resources, or contribute to our programs, visit mennonitemen.org.

Steve Thomas, Mennonite Men U.S. Coordinator
stevet@mennonitemen.org | (574) 202-0048



Mennonite Men

Engaging men to grow, give and serve.

JoinTrees

Planting Trees to restore the earth

JoinTrees is our campaign to plant one million trees by 2030. This campaign targets climate change—an existential threat to life on our planet. By increasing tree and forest cover with this JoinTrees campaign, our goals are to help: (1) mitigate global warming, (2) serve climate justice, and (3) support vulnerable communities.

Our vision is a healthy, thriving planet where God's abundant life of shalom is enjoyed by all from generation to generation.

We recently reached the milestone of our first 100,000 trees planted! We are grateful for the

strong support of this creation care and climate action campaign. Of the 100,287 trees planted, 75,385 were in Central America, 20,902 in North America, and 4,000 in Africa. Our largest project this year was in Baja Verapaz, Guatemala where local communities and families planted 35,385 trees in agroforestry projects.

Our board recently approved seven JoinTrees grant proposals for planting 52,819 more trees. Projects include 20,367 trees in Guatemala, 20,000 in Mexico, 1,400 at Camp Friedenswald in Michigan, 2,852 at East Goshen Mennonite Church, and 8,200 on Mennonite properties in Goshen, Indiana.

Learn more and contribute to this program at mennonitemen.org/jointrees



JoinHands

Sharing resources for new church buildings

JoinHands is our program for giving and grantmaking. Through our JoinHands Mennonite Church Building Program, we provide grants to help new congregations acquire their first church building. Mennonite Men has given over 2.3 million dollars to new congregations for this purpose.

We invite individuals and congregations to give to JoinHands. We especially ask churches pursuing building projects to give as a way of sharing resources and serving “fair balance” with congregations in need.

Our next JoinHands grant will assist Ripple Church, a Mennonite congregation of Mosaic Mennonite Conference, to purchase an existing building for their meeting place and community center in Allentown, Pennsylvania. This congregation is active in offering neighborhood ministries for children, youth, meal service, and providing a place of belonging. Church leaders state, “Purchasing this building will allow the church to continue into the future and provide a safe location downtown for many people who are not welcomed in other areas of the city.”

For more details about this program, visit mennonitemen.org/joinhands.



JoinMen

Gathering men and promoting their growth

JoinMen provides retreats and resources from an Anabaptist perspective to promote healthy masculinity, Christian formation and community. We desire that all men find a place of belonging among men who are strong, loving and wise as we follow Jesus in building God's shalom.

Retreats provide opportunities for men to gather together and engage issues in community. More than an event, these experiences are also meant to encourage participants to be part of an ongoing men's group and growth process. A full list of

retreat themes we offer can be found at mennonitemen.org/joinmen.

Fewer retreats in the last year has given us the opportunity to complete a new book with Herald Press titled *Living that Matters: Honest Conversations for Men of Faith*. This practical handbook is a guide to help individuals and groups engage in honest conversations on what matters most for men—with a focus on following Jesus, forming community, and building peace. These short reflections help individuals and groups deepen relationships with one another and with God as we seek to live into God's shalom. Look for the book's release by Herald Press in early 2023.



Engaging men to grow, give and serve as followers of Jesus

Dear Central Plains,

The Corinthian Plan is Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) sponsored health coverage for congregational and conference staff. The Corinthian Plan can provide health coverage for MC USA congregations because of Central Plains congregational participation amongst the rest of MC USA. The Central Plains Conference staff also carry health coverage through The Corinthian Plan.

There are twelve Central Plains congregations participating by carrying health coverage for their staff. Another three congregations participate with waived coverage and four participate without an eligible employee. Participation through waiving health coverage allows the staff to benefit from Life and Disability coverages and are eligible for the optional Dental and Vision Plans. Thanks to those eighteen (18) Central Plains congregations and Conference office for participating in The Corinthian Plan.

All participating congregations contribute toward the Fair Balance Fund. The Fair Balance Fund provides monthly subsidies for congregations that otherwise would struggle to pay their full premium. This is a mutual aid component of The Corinthian Plan. There is currently one congregation from Central Plains receiving a subsidy through the Fair Balance Fund. This number changes as in the past there have been more from your conference.

Our Wellness Incentive continues to provide opportunities for health and well-being with a \$300 potential for each participant, annually. Spouses not participating are also eligible.

We acknowledge that premium increases are difficult and ours have been higher in the last two years than we like, but still lower than industry trend. On average, over the 13 years of the Plan our increases have been about 5% below the industry trend. We continue to look for ways to keep these increases as low as possible and other ways to better serve you. Our commitment in projecting cost and figuring premium increases is for a 0% gain/loss.

The Corinthian Plan provides an opportunity to share with other MC USA congregations. Besides the Fair Balance Fund participating in the same health pool means you are sharing the large claims of the Plan equally across the pool. When claims reach over the deductible amount and are paid in full no one congregation bears a higher burden.

We think that one of our strong features is our customer service through your Mennonite Church USA staff (Duncan Smith, Director and Teresa Pickens, Area Advocate) and Everence staff (Denise Henke and Deana Roth). We are available to answer your questions or help to troubleshoot for you. We also partner and work closely with Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield for the provider network and claims.

The Corinthian Plan began with II Corinthian chapters 8 & 9, with the idea of the sharing amongst ourselves as I mention above. For your MC USA staff and the Church Benefits Board that oversees us our highest priority is to provide comprehensive benefits that will serve you well.

Shalom,

Duncan Smith, Director of The Corinthian Plan