



**Mennonite Church USA equipped, empowered and gathered the church together in many ways in 2023.**



The annual [Hope for the Future](#) conference in Atlanta, Georgia, Feb. 3-5, 2023, brought together 70 Black, Indigenous and people of color from across the church to worship, network and honor legacy leaders.

More than 1,400 youth and adults attended [MennoCon23](#), MC USA's leading faith formation event, in Kansas City, Missouri, July 5-8, 2023, where they were invited to "Be Transformed" by the Holy Spirit.

The [Delegate Assembly](#), leading decision-making body, convened in July 2023, voting to clarify the MC USA bylaws and shift Everence and MHS Association from program agencies to ministry partners.

MC USA expanded its Peace & Justice work to include a deeper emphasis on climate justice. Three hundred youth and young adults attended MC USA's [Climate Summit](#) in Kansas City, July 7, 2023, where they put their faith to work, addressing the spiritual and human crisis caused by climate change.



In 2023, MC USA's [Justice Fund](#) provided resources to five congregations who are sharing the reconciling work of Christ by alleviating poverty, dismantling racism, addressing immigration reform or reimagining policing in their communities.

MC USA launched [Safe Church](#), a new abuse prevention ministry to equip and educate conferences and congregations to protect the most vulnerable among us.

MC USA reinforced the church's peace mission by honoring denominational peacemakers Jonathan Kuttab and Sydney Leah Bontrager with the 2023 [Bring the Peace](#) award.

The [Learn, Pray, Join: End Gun Violence](#) initiative called the denomination to understand this crisis through the lens of our Anabaptist faith and to inspire action to bring God's healing to our hurting communities.



MC USA collaborated with Mennonite Church Canada to host the annual Binational [Conference Minister/Regional Pastors Retreat](#) in Banff, Canada, in Nov. 2023, where leaders focused on worship and pastoral wellbeing.

## 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

## Church Vitality

MC USA's Church Vitality team empowers and equips the church every day through:

- Pastor salary guidelines
- Wellbeing in ministry resources
- The Corinthian Plan healthcare plan for church workers
- Ministerial Leadership Inquiry process

Learn more here.



PeaceMail   
Mennonite Church USA



Subscribe to MC USA's weekly email newsletter.

# 2024 report for Central Plains Mennonite Conference

MCC U.S. and MCC Central States  
Toll Free: (888) 563.4676 • CentralStates@mcc.org • mcc.org



In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, through MCC-supported Women Situation Room groups, people like Melanie Mafinga are trained to resolve conflicts, mediate and prevent violence. (MCC/Fairpicture photo/Justin Makangara)

## 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.
- Students at Freeman Academy competed in the MCC peace essay contest. Stefany Cortes won the national competition! And Sam Waegli from Lincoln, NE was runner up!
- A huge shout out to staff, board members, 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 at [mcc.org](http://mcc.org)!

### MCC's 2024 guiding scripture

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Colossians 3:15 (NIV)

MCC Works in 45 countries thanks to strong partnerships, not only with organizations on the ground but also with supporters like you. You're helping to provide food, bedding and hygiene items to families in Gaza. In Bolivia, your support helps farmers learn new agricultural techniques so they can stay on their land. And in South Texas, you are helping to provide basic school & hygiene supplies to newly arrived people. We are grateful for each of you and the role that you play. Whether you donate financially, pray for MCC, volunteer at an MCC thrift shop, pack kits, knit comforters, can meat or bid on items at a relief sale, we appreciate you. You are sharing God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ.

With thanksgiving,

Michelle Armster, MCC Central States executive director

Nathan Harder, MCC Central States Board representative for Central Plains Mennonite Conference

“ In MCC, building relationships is at the core of how we make peace. Tying knots on a comforters is a great place to start! ”

-Michelle Armster

Tying comforters for MCC is an activity that draws in people of all ages, whether at a comforter blitz, the MCC booth at the Mennonite Church USA gathering (pictured at right), your local church or just in your home with friends and family. Participants work together to combine handmade com-

forter tops, warm batting and backing fabric into warm and beautiful comforters. The hands-on project is one way that MCC supporters are putting their faith into action. Each handmade comforter is unique and provides not only warmth but also a tangible message to people that their needs are not forgotten.



# Be local. Be global. Be the Gospel.

## When the people of God take Jesus' call to live lives of peace seriously, there is hope.

In the midst of war and strife, God is still at work, and we are committed to joining in that work. Here are some ways you can join in, too:



**Partner** with workers across the street and around the world through financial support. Contact [KarenH@MennoniteMission.net](mailto:KarenH@MennoniteMission.net) to support workers financially.



**Support** Mission network ministries and workers by becoming a prayer partner. Visit our website to join: [MennoniteMission.net/Prayer](http://MennoniteMission.net/Prayer).



**Explore** what service options are the best fit for adults and youth in your congregation: [MennoniteMission.net/Serve](http://MennoniteMission.net/Serve).



**Learn** about social justice through a spiritual lens by participating in a Just Peace Pilgrimage: [MennoniteMission.net/JustPeace](http://MennoniteMission.net/JustPeace).



On behalf of all of us at Mennonite Mission Network, thank you, Central Plains Mennonite Conference, for your commitment and support! Your prayers, contributions and participation in our programs is a vital part of our partnerships with congregations, organizations and individuals around the world. Like 1 Peter 4:10-11 says, each of us uses our gifts for the good of one another, and we can trust that our service and love for others is guided and strengthened by God. Blessings to you!

*Marisa Smucker*

**Marisa Smucker**, Executive Director



Thank you for the generous ways in which you have supported Mennonite Mission Network. Blessings to each congregation as you seek to join in God's mission.

*Eric Frey Martin*

**Eric Frey Martin**,  
Interim Director of Constituent Engagement

## Central Plains Mennonite Conference partnership

*Note: Underlined words indicate active links.*

### Worker support around the world



#### Global Mission Partnership — Ecuador

Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Colombia Mennonite Church and Mennonite Mission Network partner in both Ecuador and Venezuela. The mission partnerships support the development of Mennonite churches and their theological education and ministries. In Ecuador, ministries include work with refugees, community children, peace education and indigenous churches. Venezuelan ministries involve cooperative games for peace, sharing food and community work.

**Robin Gingerich**, serving in Klaipėda, Lithuania  
» First Mennonite Church of Iowa City in Calais, France

**Joseph and Rachel Givens** serving in Calais, France  
» Cedar Falls Mennonite Church  
» First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake  
» Third Way Church

**Jane and Jerrell Ross Richer**, served in the Eastern Rain Forest Region in Ecuador  
» Salem Mennonite Church  
» Salem-Zion Mennonite Church  
» Sugar Creek Mennonite Church

**Kate Widmer**, serving in Montbéliard, France  
» Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake  
» First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake  
» House Church of Freeman  
» Pleasant View Mennonite Church  
» Sermon on the Mount Mennonite Church  
» Sugar Creek Mennonite Church

#### Worker support

**Delicia Bravo Aguilar and Peter Wigginton**, serving in Quito, Ecuador  
» CPMC Partnership support  
» East Union Mennonite Church  
» Washington Mennonite Church  
» West Union Mennonite Church  
» Zion Mennonite Church

### Prayer partners

40

### Service participants



#### Service sites

##### SOOP

- » [Crazyhead Springs Mennonite Camp](#)
- » [Crooked Creek Christian Camp](#)
- » [Swan Lake Christian Camp](#)

##### Mennonite Voluntary Service

**Rachel Miller**, serving in San Francisco, California

##### SOOP

**Mary Lou and Roger Farmer**, Glendale, Arizona  
**Calvin and Shirley Hochstedler**, Glendale, Arizona  
**Shirley and Don Kempf**, Glendale, Arizona  
**Byron and Ellen Miller**, Tucson, Arizona  
**Marge and Will Swartzendruber**, Tucson, Arizona

### Congregational giving to Mission Network



During Mission Networks' past fiscal year, August 1, 2022, through July 31, 2023, Central Plains Mennonite Conference congregations gave **\$239,444**.  
**Thank you!**

**Thank you for your continued partnership in God's mission!**

[www.MennoniteMission.net](http://www.MennoniteMission.net) Toll-free: 1-866-866-2872

Greetings from Mennonite Disaster Service! MDS is a Christian service organization in the Anabaptist tradition, and we strive to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those affected by disasters. We respond to disasters, rebuild homes, and restore hope by organizing and empowering volunteers in the U.S. and Canada.

This past year was a busy one for MDS! 7,290 volunteers from Canada and the U.S gave their time, skills, and compassion to homeowners around the country. Through the gifts of these volunteers, MDS was able to build 95 new homes, complete 402 repairs, finish 274 cleanups, and build 7 new bridges for households who experienced a disaster.

MDS-US is divided into four regions, and Region 3 includes Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico. This past year, three projects took place in Region 3. MDS built homes in Jacksboro, TX after a tornado. In Port Isabel, TX, MDS built/repaired homes for those who had been affected by a tornado/straight line wind event. And in Red Lake, MN, MDS is doing siding/windows for homeowners whose homes were damaged by a large wind/hail event. In addition to our disaster response efforts, MDS supports a volunteer run cabinet shop in Goessel, KS. The Kansas Cabinet Shop has completed its second year of existence, and this past year, it built over 80 sets of cabinets. These high-quality cabinets are given to homeowners at no cost and allow communities to further stretch their limited rebuilding dollars.

If you are interested in supporting the mission of MDS, there are several ways you can support us. First, pray for our staff and volunteers as they seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those affected by disasters. Second, you can donate to support the mission of MDS. And finally, you can volunteer with MDS!

There are several ways to volunteer with MDS. You can pull your RV to an RV project. During the day, you will make new friends while rebuilding homes. Youth groups can participate in one of our summer youth projects. Families with young kids can participate in a Family Project. And finally, you could volunteer at one of our traditional projects, and spend a week rebuilding homes with other Anabaptists.

Feel free to stop at the MDS booth, pick up some MDS swag, and learn more about MDS.

Respectfully submitted,  
Matt Troyer-Miller  
Regional Operations Coordinator (Region 3)

# Ready...Set... Grow!



**“MDS volunteers are my village—  
heaven sent.”**

That’s how Nicole Gillespie (pictured top left) described the loving hands that built a new home for her family in Crisfield, Maryland, a small town that experienced repeated flooding.

In 2023, MDS volunteers not only got people like Nicole home—they made them safer. With updated construction plans that meet a gold standard for severe weather endurance, MDS made great strides in disaster mitigation.

That means, as Nicole’s husband Eddie put it: “When we walked in that door, when they gave us the key to that house, I could finally rest.”

MDS also nurtured a vibrant group of youth volunteers, bringing an intergenerational wave of response across the US and Canada.

Joel Amstutz, a youth volunteer in Dawson Springs, Kentucky, reflected: “As MDS led us through each day, our faith was able to grow as we worked and talked with each other.”

Volunteering changed countless lives and moved countless hearts toward a deeper commitment to service.

For all those volunteers who taught or learned construction skills, for those who prayed and worked together, for those who gave hours, days, and weeks of their time—**THANK YOU!**



**7,290 volunteers**  
across Canada and the U.S.  
gave their time, skills  
and compassion to build  
**95 new homes,**  
complete  
**402 repairs,**  
finish  
**274 cleanups,**  
and build  
**7 new bridges**  
for households who  
experienced a disaster.

This volunteer labor is a value of  
**\$13.63 million USD/  
\$18.54 million CAD\***

All statistics from 8/1/2022 through 7/31/2023.  
\*Labor value based on a volunteer rate of \$31.80 USD/hour. (www.independentsector.org)

MDS volunteers served  
**53,583 days**  
helping  
**805 households**  
recover from disaster.



## Respond. Rebuild. Restore.



**Mennonite  
Disaster  
Service**

[www.mds.org](http://www.mds.org)

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

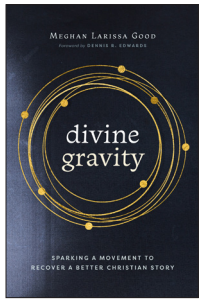
**MDS Canada Office**  
200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd.  
Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1 Canada  
tel: 204-261-1274  
fax: 204-261-1279  
toll-free: 866-261-1274  
mdscanada@mds.org

## Report to **Central Plains Mennonite Conference**

Spring 2024

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.

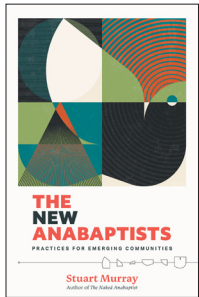
### NEW RESOURCES FOR THE ENTIRE CHURCH, FROM HERALD PRESS



#### **Divine Gravity**

Sparking a Movement to Recover a Better Christian Story

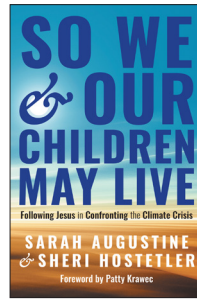
Meghan Larissa Good invites readers into a movement that is finding ways to tell a better Christian story. Readers will rediscover what an authentic, Jesus-centered Christianity looks like and how, through Christ, God is breathing new life among us, restoring creation, and reconciling all divided things. In this better story, isolation, intolerance, polarization, and death have no grip.



#### **The New Anabaptists**

Practices for Emerging Communities

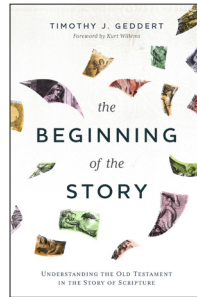
What does it look like to be an Anabaptist community in the modern world? In this companion to *The Naked Anabaptist*, author Stuart Murray identifies 12 common practices of churches and communities that are shaped by an Anabaptist vision. He explores how these practices might shape emerging Christian communities and inspire those seeking fresh expressions as cultural changes accelerate.



#### **So We and Our Children May Live**

Following Jesus in Confronting the Climate Crisis

Everywhere we look, we see signs that all is not right with our earth. Ecological justice requires challenging our assumptions about creation and our relationship to it. It requires decolonization. Authors Sarah Augustine and Sheri Hostetler offer hope for a better future alongside concrete actions for joining with Indigenous Peoples to protect life and negotiate with decision-makers for sustainable change in the way of Jesus.



#### **The Beginning of the Story**

Understanding the Old Testament in the Story of Scripture

Although the Bible contains 66 books, most Christians turn first—and perhaps only—to the New Testament. Author Tim Geddert says that to understand the Bible—the grand story of God’s dealings with humanity, of God’s relationship to the whole universe—we must learn to read the first three-quarters of Scripture as Jesus did, and as the New Testament teaches us to do.

### NEW FOR SUMMER: PATH TO PEACE CURRICULUM FROM SHINE

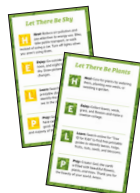
Shine’s new *Path to Peace* summer curriculum allows teachers and children to follow the peace paths in *The Peace Table* storybook Bible. The curriculum includes faith formation materials for PreK–Kindergarten and Elementary age levels.

For 2024, the unit is built around the “Peace with Creation” peace path from *The Peace Table* and includes three 5-session modules. Each session includes songs, prayers, instructions for telling the Bible story, wondering questions, activities, and media connections. Churches will need a copy of *The Peace Table* for each classroom.



#### **New for Families: “Follow the Peace Path” Cards**

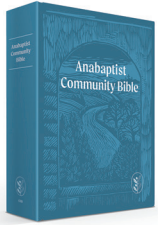
Extend learning and bring the Bible story home with a deck of “Peace with Creation” cards. Each of the 52 cards in the deck comes packed with ideas for families to do at home together. Whether a church has summer Sunday school or not, these cards are a great way to stay connected with families and provide parents and caregivers with an easy and fun faith formation resource. Purchase one deck of cards for each family.



**Learn more at [ShineCurriculum.com](https://ShineCurriculum.com).**

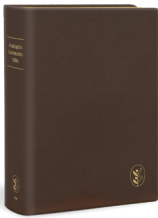
## ANABAPTISM AT 500: LOOKING BACK, LIVING FORWARD

The 500th 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.



### Coming January 2025: *The Anabaptist Community Bible*

Embark on a transformative journey with the *Anabaptist Community Bible*. Immerse yourself in the teachings of Scripture, seamlessly interwoven with the rich tapestry of the Anabaptist movement. Expertly designed using the Common English Bible translation, this edition connects you more deeply to the biblical story, the Anabaptist story, and your own story. Experience a renewed engagement with Scripture as you engage the text in conversation with a larger community of believers, expecting God's Word to transform your life. Accessible to Christians from all faith traditions who want to read Scripture through a Jesus-centered lens. The *Anabaptist Community Bible* will be available in hardcover, soft touch, and limited edition genuine leather for preorder in late spring 2024.



### Key features of all editions:

- The text of the Common English Bible (CEB)
- Single-column format for the biblical text, with over 7,200 marginal notes
- Biblical book introductions written by Anabaptist pastors, leaders, and scholars provide context and guidance
- Biblical Context notes from Anabaptist pastors, leaders, and scholars
- Community Reflection notes from nearly 600 Bible study groups
- Early Anabaptist Witness notes offer insights into how early Anabaptists engaged the Bible
- 40 original linocut illustrations of the biblical story
- Informative essays on Anabaptist hermeneutics, the Apocrypha, and other topics useful for group discussion
- A 365-day Bible reading plan and suggestions for group Bible study
- Durable Smyth-sewn lay-flat binding
- Presentation page for gift-giving
- 2-color interior
- Full-color Oxford maps
- 10-point font size



**Learn more about other products marking this anniversary at [AnabaptismAt500.com](https://AnabaptismAt500.com).**

## FINANCIALS, FISCAL YEAR 2023–24\*

\* MennoMedia's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. Amounts are listed in USD.

| INCOME                        | FY23–24 to date     |                     | FY23                |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                               | July–Dec. budget    | July–Dec. actuals   | July–Dec. Actuals   |
| <b>GROSS SALES</b>            |                     |                     |                     |
| Herald Press                  | \$ 525,000          | \$ 519,802          | \$ 478,353          |
| Curriculum/Church Products    | \$ 294,250          | \$ 248,938          | \$ 284,217          |
| Periodicals                   | \$ 130,000          | \$ 122,932          | \$ 128,484          |
| Shine Project Income          | \$ 150,000          | \$ 103,560          | \$ 80,670           |
| Distribution & Royalty        | \$ 32,900           | \$ 33,689           | \$ 33,451           |
| <b>Total Gross Sales</b>      | <b>\$ 1,132,150</b> | <b>\$ 1,028,921</b> | <b>\$ 1,005,175</b> |
| <b>COGS &amp; ROYALTIES</b>   | \$ 301,208          | \$ 374,253          | \$ 314,758          |
| <b>Gross margin</b>           | <b>\$ 830,942</b>   | <b>\$ 654,668</b>   | <b>\$ 690,417</b>   |
| <b>OTHER INCOME</b>           |                     |                     |                     |
| Misc. Income                  | \$ 44,094           | \$ 63,680           | \$ 41,341           |
| Donations                     | \$ 384,600          | \$ 266,651          | \$ 306,056          |
| Grants                        | \$ 17,502           | \$ 1,265,000        | \$ 30,000           |
| <b>Total Other Income</b>     | <b>\$ 446,196</b>   | <b>\$ 1,595,331</b> | <b>\$ 377,397</b>   |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME LESS COGS</b> |                     | <b>\$ 2,249,999</b> | <b>\$ 1,067,814</b> |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>               |                     |                     |                     |
| Wages & Benefits              | \$ 591,642          | \$ 653,485          | \$ 510,373          |
| Fixed Expenses                | \$ 49,216           | \$ 49,947           | \$ 50,256           |
| Variable Expenses             | \$ 584,535          | \$ 507,962          | \$ 625,240          |
| Other Expenses                | \$ 6,984            | \$ 14,241           | \$ 16,170           |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>         | <b>\$ 1,232,377</b> | <b>\$ 1,225,635</b> | <b>\$ 1,202,039</b> |
| <b>NET INCOME</b>             | <b>\$ 44,761</b>    | <b>\$ 1,024,364</b> | <b>\$ (134,225)</b> |

## Report to Central Plains Mennonite Conference - May 2024

Helping Mennonite Church USA fulfill its educational mission

### 2024-2025 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

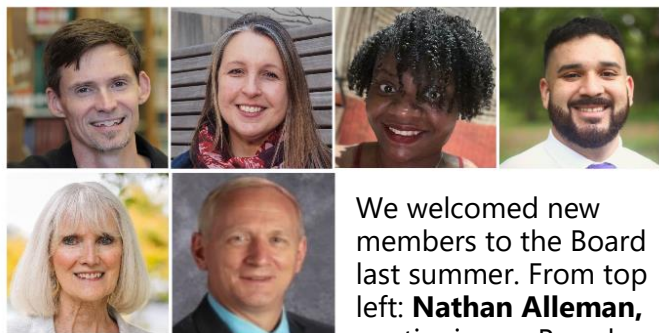
The selection sub-committee for the MEA Scholarship for BIPOC Students is granting 13 scholarships totaling \$28,000 to students from:

- **Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary;**
- **Bethel College;**
- **Bluffton University;**
- **Eastern Mennonite University;**
- **Goshen College.**

Names of the recipients and award information will be shared at a later date once all the scholarships have been affirmed. You can learn more about this scholarship at

<http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/schools/mea-scholarship-for-bipoc-students>. If you would like to donate to the scholarship fund, you can do so at <https://www.MennoniteEducation.org/> and click on the Donate tab.

### MEET THE MEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



We welcomed new members to the Board last summer. From top left: **Nathan Alleman**, continuing as Board

Chair; **Rose Bender Cook**, Secretary; **Jessica Clopton-Robinson**, Treasurer and Chair of the Audit Committee; **Erick Martinez**; (from bottom left) **Judy Mullet**, Vice-Chair; and **Conrad Swartzentruber**, ex officio as the Chair of the Mennonite Schools Council (preK – grade 12 schools). We are excited about new energy and fresh perspectives. We began a time of strategic planning at our Fall 2023 meeting and are continuing this work in 2024.

### HISPANIC MINISTRIES



MEA's Hispanic Ministries Director **Marco Güete** and Associate Director **Violeta Ajquejay Suastegui** are busy

with a new season of IBA and SeBAH. • **IBA** (Instituto Bíblico Anabautista – Anabaptist Bible Institute) provides biblical training for Hispanic church leaders in MC USA, through study centers in local Mennonite congregations, led by trained tutors. There are 13 study centers, with a **new center at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.**, in partnership with Prairie Street Mennonite Church. IBA is also expanding beyond physical centers with **one hybrid center** and **one online center**. There is even a group in Central America engaging IBA online! 2024 will bring more changes that will expand the reach of IBA. As Marco says, **“The Hispanic Mennonite church is growing. We want these congregations to have well-trained disciples of Jesus to lead them.”** • **SeBAH** (Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano – Hispanic Anabaptist Biblical Seminary): A new group of **15 students** has started the Spring 2024 SeBAH course “Spirituality and Christian Discipleship.” We’re projecting that 6 students will graduate with a SeBAH Certificate in Pastoral Ministry in August on the campus of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS)! • **Certificado de Posgrado en Estudios Teológicos** (Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies): In partnership with MEA Hispanic Ministries, AMBS now offers a **graduate certificate in theological studies taught completely in Spanish**. It is the first Anabaptist graduate certificate taught in Spanish in the United States! MEA's donors help make this program affordable and accessible. MEA Hispanic Ministries staff provide these MC USA student leaders with administrative, language, and tech support.

## FAITH FORMATION AT HOME

MEA published the Advent 2023 and Lent 2024 at Home worship guides for congregations, individuals, and families of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. The guides are



available for free download in English and Spanish from the MEA website. The At-Home series is designed to be an accompaniment through the days and weeks of Advent and Lent with scriptures,

prayers, worship rituals, activities, and contextual information. It is intended for all ages and life stages to deepen the experience of the seasons.

**Talashia Keim Yoder** from Goshen, Ind., is the writer, and **Erin Ramer** from Parnell, Iowa, is the artist and designer. **Ubaldo Rodriguez**, Philippines, is the translator, and MEA staff **Michael Danner** and **Jolene VonGunten**, are co-editors. **The At Home series is the most downloaded resource of all Mennonite Church USA materials! Whether at home or in the classroom, MEA is committed to equipping teachers and parents as they impact children and young people.**

## BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY MERGER

Bluffton University recently announced its intention to merge with the University of Findlay in Ohio. You can find more information about this merger at <https://www.findlayblufftonfuture.com/>. **MEA is committed to promoting Anabaptist values in education and strengthening the relationships between Mennonite schools and Mennonite Church USA.** If you have questions or concerns, please contact <https://www.findlayblufftonfuture.com/contact-us/> or email MEA at [info@MennoniteEducation.org](mailto:info@MennoniteEducation.org).

## MEA SUPPORTS PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

MEA Board member Jessica Clopton-Robinson will serve on the Hesston College Search Committee, and staff Michael Danner and Jolene VonGunten will provide support to the committee.



Please pray for the search committee as they discern future leadership for the college.

## SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATORS

The **Mennonite Public Educators** group was formed after two public school teachers visited the MEA booth at MennoCon23 last summer. These teachers named some of the unique challenges Mennonites face in public education: what to do about the Pledge of Allegiance, how to respond to wars and violence, and how to (whether to) be a peace witness. These conversations led to a series of virtual gatherings with other Mennonite public school educators for conversation, support, and learning. MEA is helping to promote the group and broaden its reach. We have heard strong affirmation and want to explore further how MEA can expand our support for the many Mennonites who work in public school settings. **The next virtual meeting is July 25 at 7pm Eastern.** Participation is free but registration is required. Contact [info@MennoniteEducation.org](mailto:info@MennoniteEducation.org) for more information.

## 2023-24 ENROLLMENT REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

MEA produces the Enrollment Report annually to create a snapshot of enrollment trends across all schools that partner with MEA: from early childhood programs through graduate schools and seminaries. The data include 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. Based on headcount in the fall of 2023, **Mennonite schools are impacting the lives of 8,971 students**, a decrease of 3.4% since the 2022-23 academic year. To view the 23-24 report and previous reports, visit [www.MennoniteEducation.org/about-us/enrollment-reports](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/about-us/enrollment-reports).

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

Grace & peace

**Michael Danner**  
Executive Director

**The Corinthian Plan (MC USA) Central Plains Report (2024) – Submitted by Duncan Smith, Director**

The Corinthian Plan (TCP) is now in its' 15<sup>th</sup> year since inception January of 2010. For a small plan this is not small feat. We do this in partnership with other MC USA pools who we join in a joint effort to pay large claims.

Over these 15 years we continue to serve MC USA congregations by working at changes that can serve you better. This past year we added a new, higher deductible level at \$4,000 for Single and \$8,000 for family. This can be more economical for those who are younger or may not anticipate medical costs. Our other deductible levels have remained steady, with the lowest being \$1,600 for a single/ \$3,200 family.

Whether you have health coverage through The Corinthian Plan or not it is good know the specifics of your coverage, so you are not surprised. It is not always possible to look ahead in an emergency. While The Corinthian Plan has comprehensive coverage it is best to check out coverage in the case of something more unusual than not and call one of us listed at the end of this note if there are questions, discrepancies, surprises. States also have authority to set some of their own regulations and coverages so

Thanks to Central Plains for your participation!

Here are your current participation stats. A total of twenty congregations/conference office are participating with The Corinthian Plan.

- 13 – Congregations/conference office staff participate with health coverage
- 4 – Congregations participate with no active (waived) health coverage
- 3 – Congregations participate with no eligible employees

The Corinthian Plan has a program to subsidize monthly premiums for congregations that might struggle to pay their full premium. There are currently no congregations receiving subsidy through the Fair Balance Fund.

Contact your MC USA Corinthian Plan team or our Third Part Administrator Everence with questions.

- Teresa Pickens ([tpickens.tcp@gmail.com](mailto:tpickens.tcp@gmail.com)) Central Plains Area Advocate (look for her at the annual meeting).
- Ingrid Friesen Moser ([Ingrid.wellness@gmail.com](mailto:Ingrid.wellness@gmail.com)), Wellness Coordinator
- Duncan Smith ([duncans@mennoniteusa.org](mailto:duncans@mennoniteusa.org)), Director
- Denise Henke ([denise.henke@everence.com](mailto:denise.henke@everence.com)) Third Party Administrator

# 2023-24 Report to Central Plains Conference

## MISSION

Goshen College transforms local and global communities through courageous, creative and compassionate leaders. Shaped by Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, we integrate academic excellence and real-world experience with active love for God and neighbor.

## VISION

Goshen College will cultivate joy, growth and purpose, preparing students to thrive in life, leadership and service. Rooted in the way of Jesus, we will seek inclusive community and transformative justice in all that we do.



**Rebecca J. Stoltzfus '83**  
*President*

president@goshen.edu

► Read the president's blog at:  
[goshen.edu/president-blog](https://goshen.edu/president-blog)



**Dan Koop Liechty '88**  
*Director of alumni engagement  
& international student adviser*

alumni@goshen.edu



**Jen Shenk '94**  
*Campus pastor*

jshenk@goshen.edu

► Watch past campus  
chapels and convocations:  
[goshen.edu/podcasts](https://goshen.edu/podcasts)

## CAMPUS NEWS

### Our 2023-24 Campus Ministries theme — *Walking Together: Praying, Serving and Loving*

At Goshen College, we have the gift of a diverse student population. Although our faith journeys are as unique as each individual, we all share the need for belonging, love, community and meaning. In a world that is polarized and divided, we commit to walking together, seeing one another as companions on the way, trusting that God is our guide on the journey.

### Westlawn Hall renovations

This renovation will allow Goshen College to grow its nursing and public health programs in state-of-the-art learning spaces, as well as provide enhanced dining services and indoor and outdoor gathering spaces that serve the entire campus. Renovations are expected to be completed by early 2025.

Project details, plans and updates can be found at [goshen.edu/westlawn](https://goshen.edu/westlawn).

### New GC history book published

A new Goshen College history, "A Mennonite College for Everyone(?): Goshen College and the Quest for Identity and Inclusion, 1960-2020," by John D. Roth, a noted Anabaptist-Mennonite scholar and professor emeritus of history at Goshen College, vividly describes the transformation of a faith-based, liberal arts college as it has wrestled with questions of identity and inclusion in a context of rapid social and culture change.

Learn more at [goshen.edu/historybook](https://goshen.edu/historybook)

## CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

4

Students enrolled from four Central Plains Mennonite Conference congregations this academic year.

\$10,500

Amount churches pledged in congregational student aid for the academic year.

The Goshen College Church Aid Matching Grant program provides a dollar-for-dollar match of the first \$1,000 per student and a 1:4 match after that, up to full tuition.

## GLOBAL EDUCATION

Students from the conference are involved on- and off-campus in many edifying ways, but we specifically recognize students who have studied and served through GC's Global Education program.

**Mia Graber** (First Mennonite Church of Iowa City) studied and served in Ecuador for a semester during the summer of 2023.

## FEATURED LINKS

Campus News  
[goshen.edu/news](https://goshen.edu/news)

Campus Events  
[goshen.edu/calendar](https://goshen.edu/calendar)

Music Center Events  
[gcmusiccenter.org/events](https://gcmusiccenter.org/events)

Athletics Events  
[goleafs.net/calendar](https://goleafs.net/calendar)

Study-Service Term Blogs  
[goshen.edu/sst](https://goshen.edu/sst)

# Informe 2023-24 para Central Plains Conference

## MISIÓN

Goshen College transforma las comunidades locales y globales a través de sus líderes valientes, creativos y compasivos. Moldeados por la tradición anabautistamenonita, integramos la excelencia académica y la experiencia del mundo real con el amor por Dios y el prójimo.

## VISIÓN

Goshen College cultivará la alegría, el crecimiento y el propósito, preparando a los estudiantes para prosperar en la vida, el liderazgo y el servicio. Arraigados en el camino de Jesús, buscaremos una comunidad inclusiva y una justicia transformadora en todo lo que hagamos.



**Rebecca J. Stoltzfus '83**  
Presidenta

president@goshen.edu

► Lea el blog de la presidenta en:  
[goshen.edu/presidentblog](https://goshen.edu/presidentblog)



**Dan Koop Liechty '88**  
Director de Participación de Alumnos Egresados y Asesor de Estudiantes Internacionales

alumni@goshen.edu



**Jen Shenk '94**  
Pastor del Campus

jshenk@goshen.edu

► Ver capillas anteriores y convocatorias del campus:  
[goshen.edu/podcasts](https://goshen.edu/podcasts)

## NOTICIAS DEL CAMPUS

### Nuestro tema de Ministerios Universitarios 2023-24 — *Caminando Juntos: Orando, Sirviendo y Amando*

En Goshen College, tenemos el don de contar con una población estudiantil diversa. Aunque nuestros caminos de fe son tan únicos como cada individuo, todos compartimos la necesidad de pertenencia, amor, comunidad y significado. En un mundo polarizado y dividido, nos comprometemos a caminar juntos, viéndonos unos a otros como compañeros de camino, confiando en que Dios es nuestra guía en el camino.

### Renovaciones de Westlawn Hall

Esta renovación permitirá a Goshen College hacer crecer sus programas de enfermería y salud pública en espacios de aprendizaje de última generación, así como proporcionar servicios de alimentos mejorados y espacios de reunión interiores y exteriores. Se espera que las renovaciones se completen a principios de 2025.

Para encontrar detalles del proyecto, planes y actualizaciones visite [goshen.edu/westlawn](https://goshen.edu/westlawn).

### Nuevo libro sobre la historia de GC

Una nueva historia de Goshen College, "A Mennonite College for Everyone(?): Goshen College and the Quest for Identity and Inclusion, 1960-2020" (Un Colegio Menonita y una Búsqueda de la Identidad e Inclusión, 1960-2020), escrita por John D. Roth, un erudito anabautista-mennonita y profesor emérito de historia en Goshen College, describe vívidamente la transformación de una universidad de artes liberales basada en la fe a medida que ha luchado con cuestiones de identidad e inclusión en un contexto de cambio rápido social y cultural.

Obtenga más información en [goshen.edu/historybook](https://goshen.edu/historybook)

## ENLACES DESTACADOS

Noticias del Campus  
[goshen.edu/news](https://goshen.edu/news)

Eventos en el Campus  
[goshen.edu/calendar](https://goshen.edu/calendar)

Eventos del Centro de Música  
[gcmusiccenter.org/events](https://gcmusiccenter.org/events)

Eventos Deportivos  
[goleafs.net/calendar](https://goleafs.net/calendar)

Blogs del Servicio Estudiantil  
[goshen.edu/sst](https://goshen.edu/sst)

## CONEXIONES DE CONFERENCIAS

4

**Estudiantes inscritos** de 4 congregaciones de la Central Plains Mennonite Conference este año académico

**\$10,500**

**La cantidad prometida** por parte de congregaciones hacia el apoyo estudiantil para el año académico.

**El programa Subvención de contrapartida de ayuda de la iglesia de Goshen College proporciona una igualación dólar por dólar** de los primeros \$1,000 por estudiante y una igualación 1:4. Después de eso, hasta la matrícula completa.

## EDUCACIÓN GLOBAL

Los estudiantes de la conferencia participan dentro y fuera del campus de muchas maneras edificantes, pero reconocemos específicamente a los estudiantes que han estudiado y servido a través del programa de Educación Global de GC. **Mia Graber** (First Mennonite Church of Iowa City) estudió y sirvió en Ecuador por un semestre durante el verano de 2023.

## 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\*
- Doctor of Ministry in Leadership\*
- Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction\*
- Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies\* (fully customizable)
- Mennonite Education Agency Hispanic Ministries – AMBS Graduate Certificate in Theology\* (in Spanish)
- Journey Missional Leadership Development Program\* (undergraduate-level, nondegree)

[ambs.edu/degrees-and-programs](https://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](https://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

- Practical Leadership Training modules\*
- Online Short Courses\*: six weeks, discussion-based, noncredit (no grades, no papers!)
- Invite AMBS\*: request a speaker (in person or online)
- Pastors & Leaders conference\*: Feb. 17–20, 2025

#### 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](https://ambs.edu/leadership-and-enrichment)



### Conference connections

- **Master of Divinity students:** Randall Koehler (Hutterthal), Megan Wiebersch (2024 graduate) (Washington)
- **Doctor of Ministry student:** Jonah Yang (Emmanuel)
- **Journey participant/mentor:** Shella Franz (Bethel)/Lois Janzen Preheim (Salem)

### AMBS statistics

- In April 2024, 13 women and nine men from four countries graduated from AMBS (*see above*).
- In 2023–24, 149 graduate students were enrolled at AMBS: 65 from the U.S., 11 from Canada and 73 international students. The Journey program has 40 participants in Canada, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, Uganda and the U.S.

### Want to try out seminary?

- Sign up for an Online Short Course:
  - 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
  - Resisting Christian Nationalism with the Gospel of Peace

[ambs.edu/online-short-courses](https://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](https://ambs.edu/upcoming-courses)
- Schedule a virtual or in-person visit and learn what AMBS has to offer! [ambs.edu/visit](https://ambs.edu/visit)
- Stay connected: [facebook.com/followAMBS](https://facebook.com/followAMBS) • [instagram.com/ambs\\_seminary](https://instagram.com/ambs_seminary) • [youtube.com/ambsedu](https://youtube.com/ambsedu) • [ambs.edu/subscribe](https://ambs.edu/subscribe)

*"People plan their path, but the Lord secures their steps."*

– Proverbs 16:9 (CEB)

# Your Mission. Your Finances.

## Everence 2024 report

Central Plains Mennonite Conference  
Annual Meeting  
June 20-23, 2024

### Everence revamps advocate program

Exciting changes are happening with the Everence® church stewardship program in 2024!

After working with churches, advocates and stewardship consultants, the redesigned Everence Stewardship Partners program will include major enhancements – including expanded participation opportunities for pastors and other stewardship leaders, and the possibility for participating churches to be eligible for up to \$3,000 a year in Sharing Funds.

Everence has been building strong relationships with churches for over 30 years through its church stewardship program, and today more than 1,100 churches participate. Go to [everence.com/partners](https://everence.com/partners) to learn more about the changes.

### Sharing Fund helps churches impact their community



When the going gets tough, we have community to lift each other up. Churches can make an impact in their community by helping their members through a Sharing Fund grant.

The Everence Sharing Fund program helps thousands of families and individuals every year. In fact, over the last five years alone, the Sharing Fund has distributed nearly 9,000 grants for a total of \$4.7 million – all of which was matched by an additional \$7.1 million from churches.

You can support the Everence Sharing Fund with a fully tax-deductible donation, and 100% of your gift will go to meet financial needs. Visit [everence.com/sharing-fund](https://everence.com/sharing-fund) to donate or learn more.

### MyNeighbor card a tool for giving to charitable causes



With the Everence Federal Credit Union MyNeighbor credit card program, individuals, businesses and churches generate reward dollars for their favorite nonprofits every time they make a purchase.

Whenever a cardholder uses their MyNeighbor card to buy groceries, pay bills or make other purchases, Everence donates 1.50% of the purchase total to the charity of his or her choice. Then in January, Everence writes and sends checks to the selected 501(c)(3) public charitable organizations.

In January 2023, Everence distributed over \$500,000 in donations to support nonprofits, including individual churches.

Want to know more? Visit [everence.com/myneighbor](https://everence.com/myneighbor).

### Find a stewardship advocate for your church



Want to learn how a healthy stewardship ministry can contribute to your church's ministry? An Everence stewardship advocate can help encourage and inspire your faith community toward greater understanding and practice of biblical stewardship.

Everence stewardship advocates are volunteers who work with your church's pastor and other leaders to support and strengthen your church's mission and ministry by sharing resources designed to help church attenders live out faith values in their financial decisions.

Want to learn more about how a stewardship advocate can contribute to your congregation? Talk to your Everence stewardship consultant and/or visit [everence.com/advocates](https://everence.com/advocates).





Iowa Peace Network  
[iowapeacenetw@k@gmail.com](mailto:iowapeacenetw@k@gmail.com)

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April 19,2024

Friends,

The Joint Oversight Committee and staff would like to thank you for your continued support this year – 2023-2024. 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 Church for renting space to us for our Des Moines office.

The coordinator maintains IPN's website, [www.iowapeacenetw.org](http://www.iowapeacenetw.org). The coordinator posts two articles every month on the site, as well as 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 2023 the coordinator worked with other peace leaders in the Des Moines area to plan a Nagasaki/Hiroshima commemoration on August 8. The coordinator had a speaking part in the program, reading excerpts from the Hiroshima Mayor's Annual Proclamation of Peace on this anniversary of the bombing.

IPN cosponsored the Palm Sunday Procession and Prayer Service for Peace in March, 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.

Also, we held our Annual Holiday Open House & Alternative Gift Fair December 2 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm this year at the Des Moines Mennonite Church. We had several vendors at our Gift Fair, including Equal Exchange items, items from Guatemala, items from Palestine, and our IPN items- New Harmony pottery and other items. At 2:30 pm we heard from Julie and Doug Olson, of Heartland Presbyterian Church in Waukee about their trip to the Holy Land in 2002. The present situation was also addressed by them and Kathleen McQuillen, of Catholic Peace Ministry and MEPEC (Middle East Peace Education Coalition.)

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 also attended the Central Plains Mennonite Conference and the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church, both in June.

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), Keith Sheller- Treasurer, & Christine Sheller- Coordinator