



EXTENDING BEYOND

Sharing God's message

By Marisa Smucker, executive director



In 2013, Mennonite Mission Network printed a special edition of *Missio Dei, Walking together in mission*. This publication highlights who we are, our Anabaptist convictions and how we engage in mission. When I began my work with Mission Network in 2015, this became a central guide for me when visiting pastors, congregations and conference leaders — sharing first that the mission and glory belong to God, with the church being the primary model and messenger of God's love, and secondly that reconciliation and transformation are possible (pp 12-14).

Walking together in mission and other *Missio Dei* resources, have documented what has been foundational for our work in mission. Over the past several years, we have added the theme "Here with Purpose" — our continued commitment to responding to the call of joining God's work in the world and working alongside partners around the globe. We are engaged, at all levels, with the denomination, educational institutions and

agencies, conferences, congregations, and individuals. We cherish the long-term relationships we have been built over the decades, as well as newer connections that have budded in recent years.

While the world has grown more technological, and we have had to adjust to changing times, people remain our central focus, because relationships matter. Through faith formation, we learn about God and our humanity, as we grow in our understanding of our relationship with God. Through mission, we have the opportunity to see God at work and participate fully, as individuals and as the body of Christ. Today, our staff, service workers and participants, as well as collaborations with partners, reflect the ways in which God continues to invite the church into this reconciling activity. We, and all of creation, were carefully and wonderfully made by God, and this is our opportunity to share the message of God's love through word and deed. ■

Marisa Smucker
Executive Director

Gabe Ramirez, from Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Rosebert Ipuz Quintero, from Cali, Colombia, and Mission Network worker David Shenk walk together to breakfast during a church building project in Arajuno, Ecuador in 2012. Photo by Craig Welscott.

"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things ... by making peace through the blood of his cross."

— Colossians 1:19-20 (NRSV)

Ministries that seek justice, build peace, nurture education and inspire service

By Zachary Headings

Mennonite Mission Network partners with Anabaptists around the world to proclaim the grace and truth that is found in Christ Jesus. Working alongside partners in more than 50 countries, Mission Network strives to embody two-way mission rooted in Anabaptist values: empowering local leaders, fostering service through short- and long-term programs, nurturing education, and advancing anti-racism and

reconciliation efforts.

This issue of *Extending Beyond* celebrates key activities, achievements and faithful impacts across the street and around the world from January 2025 to January 2026.

Mission Network helps individuals and congregations recognize, develop and fulfill the ministry calling God has given them. ■



Photo by Seth Rudeen

The segundo basico students pause for a photo in the avocado grove on the Q'eqchi' Bezaleel Mennonite Educational Center campus.

Teaching in Guatemala

Seth and Stephany Rudeen serve in Guatemala. There they serve with the Q'eqchi' Bezaleel Mennonite Educational Center, assisting students learning English, as well as participating in other tutoring, tailoring their support to the students' academic needs. In addition to academics, the Rudeens engage students in hands-on activities, like gardening and school maintenance.



Photo by Nick Sharp

Youth present their ideas during a youth retreat in Colombia that the Sharps helped lead.

Teaching and youth work in Colombia

Laura and Nick Sharp, and their two children, serve in multiple roles with the Colegio Americano Menno in Colombia, a Christian school operated by the Colombian Mennonite Church. They serve in various capacities at the church and school, including in English enrichment, academic support and other roles that fit their gifts and experiences. They also join with the local Mennonite church's ministries in music, children's education and outreach programs.



Photo by Linda Shelly

Peter Wigginton and Silvia Guamán lead a session at a workshop on peacebuilding in Tena, Ecuador.

Teaching peace in Ecuador

In Ecuador, Delicia Bravo Aguilar and Peter Wigginton serve as coordinators for the Ecuador Partnership, bringing the Colombian Mennonite Church, Mission Network and Central Plains Mennonite Conference together to share and support ministry needs. This is a vital role amid rising violence and the need for theological education and peace building throughout Ecuador. Bravo Aguilar also brings a deep commitment to children's ministries and advocates for church structures that truly include children across the street and around the world.



Photo by Arloa Bontrager

Participants in a Just Peace Pilgrimage traveled by ferry from Calais, France, across the English Channel to England. There, they met with people working for peace, like Rev. Jonathan Arnold, executive director of the Social Justice Network in the Diocese of Canterbury (England), and heard stories from former refugees. Back row: Canon Emma Pennington, Rachel Givens, Lane Miller, Matthew Yoder, Joseph Givens, Shelby Rudy, Marlinda Beachy, Weldon Martins, Rev. Jonathan Arnold. Front row: Elijah and Micaiah Givens, Arloa Bontrager, Barbara Thurma and Clara Caboche.

Refugee work in France

In Calais, France, Mission Network workers Joseph and Rachel Givens welcomed Just Peace Pilgrimage (JPP) and SOOP (Service Opportunities with Our Partners) participants to join in their work with the Maria Skobtsova House, which provides temporary shelter to people seeking refuge en route to England. Their work involves building relationships with refugees, as well as connecting them to legal, medical and psychological support, through partnerships with other support organizations. The Givens guided the JPP and SOOP participants in engaging with the refugee community, preparing memorials for those lost crossing the English Channel and advocating for humane migration pathways.



Photo by Glória Maria dos Santos

In 2025, Sister Care Brazil joined with women from throughout South America, the Caribbean, and Central America and North America, with the theme "Women Disciples of Jesus Leaving Footprints."

Supporting women in Latin America

In Brazil, the Mennonite Women USA, Sister Care program, marked a decade of healing and hope, through trainings and retreats across Brazil. Sister Care equips women with tools to support one another in healing trauma and embracing their identities as beloved daughters of God. Seminars include presentations, interactive activities, prayer, worship and time for sharing personal stories. The program is supported by Mission Network.



Photo provided

Youth Venture participants look out from the Täuferhöhle cave in Switzerland after a long trek. Anabaptists hid here while worshiping in secret.

Exploring Anabaptist roots in Switzerland

A group with Mission Network's Youth Venture program traveled to Switzerland to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism. There, they worshiped alongside Anabaptists from around the world and followed a guided tour of historic sites, including Grossmünster Cathedral and the Täuferhöhle (Anabaptist Cave), where early Anabaptists worshiped together in secret.



Scan the QR code to view a video highlighting these ministries.

Please note!

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