



Sharing gifts.
Building relationships.

International Witness Sunday

October 18, 2020

Mennonite Church Canada International Witness invites congregations across our nationwide community of faith to celebrate International Witness Sunday.

Come prepared to give, learn, and get involved with International Witness ministries.

mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness



Mennonite Church Canada

This worship resource is prepared for International Witness Sunday, October 18, 2020, or any Sunday your congregation wishes to focus on international ministries and relationships. All of the resources in this document are available at mennonitechurch.ca/IW-Sunday.

Mission historian Andrew Walls writes, "Only in Christ does completion, fullness, dwell. And Christ's completion as we have seen, comes from all humanity, from the translation of the life of Jesus into the lifeways of all the world's cultures and subcultures through history. None of us can reach Christ's completeness on our own. We need each other's vision to correct, enlarge, and focus our own; only together are we complete in Christ."

This year, on International Witness Sunday, we invite you to celebrate ministry centred around sharing gifts and building relationships; ministry across borders, languages and cultures.

We invite you to participate in intentional ways through learning, giving and connecting directly with our Witness workers and partner ministries across the world.

May you be richly blessed as you give and learn.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Hanson
Director, International Witness
Mennonite Church Canada
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INTERNATIONAL WITNESS

Mennonite Church Canada International Witness is committed to the creation, resourcing and strengthening of Anabaptist/Mennonite faith communities and to witnessing God's work in the world through relationship-building ministries.

Through the work of International Witness you can:

- Support the emergence of ***new*** faith communities
- Foster the vitality of ***existing*** faith communities
- Equip ***leadership*** in these communities
- Enrich ***disciple-making*** ministries
- Support ***communication*** between congregations and our wider church

mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness



ON SUNDAYS LEADING UP TO INTERNATIONAL WITNESS SUNDAY...

Play informational videos produced by Mennonite Church Canada

- Ministry in Thailand: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XYZH4SRPoE>
- Ministry in South Korea: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHYB6DLUaXk>
- General-info on International Witness: available soon at mennonitechurch.ca/IW-Sunday

Print posters and profile sheets

Mennonite Church Canada has produced posters and Witness worker infosheets for congregations to distribute. Graphics for social media posts are also available. Go to mennonitechurch.ca/IW-Sunday to download. The infosheets are included on pages 10-13 of this document.

Publish bulletin announcements

Consider printing a bulletin insert the Sunday before, with the poster on one side and the following announcement on the other:

On [October 18], our church will join congregations across Mennonite Church Canada to celebrate the relationships we have through Mennonite Church Canada International Witness. We are invited to share our gifts and build relationships across borders, languages and cultures. On that Sunday we will take a special offering for [ministry] and the work of [Witness workers]. Please prepare to give prayerfully and joyfully to this ministry that is part of what we do together as Mennonite Church Canada.

Plan a fundraiser or informational event for an International Witness ministry

More on this on page 7.

PRAYERS & WORSHIP RESOURCES

GATHERING

Suggested scripture readings

- Romans 10:11-17
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
- Ephesians 2:17-22

Gathering hymn

HWB 7 Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather

Prayer

God of creation, we gather today to celebrate your world and your family. We are scattered and diverse, across many nations and cultures. May we, through your Spirit, come together to bring praise and honour to you. May we learn how to share gifts with our international family of faith so that we may grow in faith and be transformed. Guide us and be with us as we worship you today. Amen.

Prayer

God of peace
Coming into this place of worship
from a world that is sometimes confusing and threatening,
we pray for your presence here and now among us.
We thank you for this community of faith,
where we listen to the words inspired by your message of love,
where we share our lives with brothers and sisters,
where we learn about compassion,
where we live in hope,
where we can be together in peace.
God, all around us
we see growing division between people
because of politics, gender, religion, race, economics;
in so many countries,
we see growing nationalism and populism.
Aggression and violence are becoming part of our daily lives on social media and in the streets.
We pray for this world, God.
That leaders may grow in wisdom,
that people treat each other with respect.
May we understand that the way to your kingdom.
is paved with peace, justice and love for the earth and the

people.

Be with us, grant us your grace. Amen.

From Peace Sunday Worship Resources, 2017. ©2017 Mennonite World Conference.

Children's Story

The Banyan tree story is told by Jeanette Hanson, Director of International Witness (Ephesians 2:17-22):

- [Video link](#)
- [Script link](#)

SHARING

Message

Consider sharing videos from our Witness workers in your message: ([Links to come on our webpage](#))

- Thailand/Poovong video (Romans 10:11-17)
- South Korea/Park-Kim video (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)
- China/Veith video
- Philippines/Pantoja video
- [Banyan Tree sermon](#) by Jeanette Hanson (Ephesians 2:17-22)

RESPONSE

Hymns

STJ 56 Make me a channel of your peace

STJ 61 How can we be silent

STJ 64 We are the body of Christ

Sign a Witness Support Network Covenant (see page 9):

- Presentation of the covenant
- Prayer
- Signing

Offering

For a list of IW ministries, go to mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness, or designate gifts to Mennonite Church Canada International Witness General Fund for use where most needed.

Litany of Response in Giving

Leader: God, we come before you knowing that we have many things to give.

All: We give you what we have: our time, our talents, our finances, our relationships. All we have is yours.

Leader: God, we come before you knowing that we have

many needs.

All: We need the gift of wisdom to see the gifts you give us through others. We need the gift of humility to accept gifts offered to us.

Leader: God, you have given us everything we need to share your love, hope and healing with our neighbours here and across the world. Help us to give and receive your good gifts so all may know the abundance of your provision.

Closing Hymn

HWB 226 You are salt for the earth

SENDING

(based on Isaiah 1:17)

Go into the world. Seek justice. Help the oppressed.

Defend the orphan. Plead for the widow.

Share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Go, with the Spirit of God, to witness to a world in need of healing and hope.

GIVE

Go to mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness to donate to our relationship-building ministries in:

- Burkina Faso
- China
- Colombia
- DR Congo
- Philippines
- South Korea
- Thailand



PARTICIPATE

LEARN

- Find a story from International Witness worker newsletters or news releases and share on your church website or e-mail group.
- Use the video and worship resources for International Witness Sunday.
- Post newsletters, *Canadian Mennonite* articles, or Mennonite Church Canada website stories about international ministries.
- Use your congregation's announcement or sharing time to give news and ask for prayer for international partners and Witness workers.

- Is your congregation studying the tenets of Anabaptist faith? Connect with groups in China, who are supported by resources developed together with George and Tobia Veith.
- What are the barriers to full participation for certain people in your congregation? Follow the example of Congolese Mennonite women who organized literacy training to boost female leadership in the church in DR Congo.
- Do you see the need for worshipping communities of peace where you live, like those whom Tom and Christine Poovong nurture in Thailand?

ORGANIZE AN EVENT

(Please keep in mind local guidelines and protocols for safety around COVID-19 as you plan.)

CONNECT

- Ask a Witness worker to have a Zoom meeting with your mission/service committee members, or your Bible study group.
- Ask an international partner to meet online. Find a translator or ask a Witness worker to help you connect.
- Join a Witness Support Network (see page 8).

DISCUSS & INVEST

- Giving to an international ministry as an investment in the Kingdom of God. We invest in many things: our children's education, our retirement, our homes. How do we invest in the church? Where do we see God's spirit moving and how do we get on board with what God is doing in the world?

TRANSFORM

- Has international ministry changed how you think about your faith and life here in Canada? What can we learn from our international partners?
- Does your community need Peace and Reconciliation (PaR) teams like those formed and trained by Dann and Joji Pantoja in the Philippines?
- Could your community benefit from conflict transformation circles used by Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyong Park in South Korea?

- Make a take-home kit for every family in your congregation that includes an information sheet on an international ministry or Witness workers, a snack from that region of the world as well as a craft or game.
- Use the resources in this document for International Witness Sunday. Take a special offering in your congregation for Mennonite Church Canada International Witness.
- Hold a serve-a-thon. Ask for sponsorship from your friends and family to do service tasks in your community. Pick up garbage, rake leaves, volunteer for a community service agency, deliver Meals-on-Wheels, etc. Post pictures and hours logged on your church Facebook page. Challenge others to join you. Serve locally and contribute to church work globally!
- Hold a fundraiser that is popular in your community. Give the proceeds to an International Witness program.
- Use your congregation's Facebook page to hold a trivia contest about the international ministry you support. Have the prize be a Zoom-call meal with International Witness workers and a meal delivered from a restaurant that serves food from that region. Look at the Mennonite Church Canada website, Witness worker newsletters and ask Witness workers to help with the trivia questions.



JOIN A WITNESS SUPPORT NETWORK

Across Mennonite Church Canada, congregations are connecting in life-giving ways through International Witness Support Networks. Your congregation is invited to participate!

How does it work?

Each network is a partnership between:

- your congregation and other congregations who wish to support the same ministry,
- your regional church
- Mennonite Church Canada,
- and our Witness workers.

Together, each network reaches out to international partners with the goal of nurturing mutually transformative relationships.

How can I be involved?

Congregations desire to be involved in various ways. The Witness Support Network Covenant (see page 9) suggests ways each member can contribute to their network. Discern together with your missions/service committee how you would like to participate. Each congregation's gifts are unique so every Network Covenant of support is unique.

Tasks for congregations change depending on the Witness

workers and area of ministry, but may include:

- distributing e-mails/printed newsletters written by Witness workers
- organizing annual fundraisers
- sending e-mails and encouragement to Witness workers
- contacting other congregations to encourage giving toward international ministries
- connecting with international partners online or in person through visits/learning tours
- sharing prayer requests with the larger church family and praying regularly.

Many of these are things congregations have already done for years. For this we are grateful!

Why is this important?

We meet our priorities

Congregations supporting international ministry help meet the five priorities of Mennonite Church Canada international-ministry initiatives:

1. Generate financial support
2. Form and nurture relationships between Witness workers and supporters
3. Provide personal support and care for Witness workers
4. Create opportunities of congregational engagement
5. Nurture relationships with international partners.

We nurture sustainable support

Witness Support Networks allow congregations to



engage in international ministries in ways that are sustainable and meaningful for church members. Through the Networks, the congregation informs, inspires and connects with Witness workers to form relationships across political and ethnic borders through ministry together.

We connect our congregations

Congregations choose a representative to meet online with other representatives of other supporting congregations for encouragement and ideas. This forms important connections between congregations. Regional church staff and Mennonite Church Canada staff support you as you get to know each other. Witness workers may also attend meetings to get to know their supporting Canadian congregations.

Interested? Contact your regional church

Please contact your regional church for more information, or Jeanette Hanson, Director of International Witness for Mennonite Church Canada, at jhanson@mennonitechurch.ca.

Join growing networks of support for Mennonite Church Canada International Witness ministries.

The Witness Support Network Covenant

1. Join a Witness Support Network. Go to mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness to learn about our ministries.
2. Discern what your congregation brings to this network of relationships.
3. Form a Covenant of support to encourage commitment to this ministry and relationship.

Mennonite Church Canada has provided congregations with a **Covenant template**, with suggestions for what to include. Because the gifts available to every congregation are unique, each Covenant made by congregations with International Witness ministries, the regional church and Mennonite Church Canada will be unique.

[Download the template here.](#)



China

George and Tobia Veith

George Veith develops teaching materials in Anabaptist theology, conflict transformation and discipleship for churches, seminaries and for the newly founded Anabaptist Resource Centre and the study groups that support it. He is presently working together with an advisory group helping to found a peace centre based in a Hong Kong seminary.

Working as an English instructor at a Chinese university, Tobia Veith seeks to build pathways of peace and understanding through her teaching and interaction with Chinese colleagues and students. She also supports a local congregation in lay-leadership development.





Thailand **Tom and Christine Poovong**

Focused on building self-sufficient congregations, Tom and Christine Poovong provide pastoral leadership to emerging Christian communities in northeastern Thailand. They have developed income-generating ministries, including MennoShoes and a mushroom farm, businesses where Christian disciples make a steady income and are able to give back to their local congregations. The goal is to establish self-sustainable, locally run peace churches. These churches have become part of a church-planting organization called Friends of Grace Church Association, which invites newly formed congregations to work together to support each other as they bless the communities where they live.



South Korea

Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung Park

While a tiny minority within the larger Korean Christian community, Mennonite churches in Korea relate to each other through the formation of Mennonite Church South Korea. Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung Park have been instrumental in the formation of this church body, while also church planting in Seoul.

Known as a peace-church pastor in a time where many Christians in Korea are eager to know more about biblical pacifism and conflict transformation, Bock Ki is called upon as a resource to the wider church on these topics. He participates in presentations and lectures as well as writing and translation. He has translated more than 30 books on Anabaptism and peace theology and helped found the Korean Anabaptist Journal. Sook Kyoung Park runs an after-school program, teaching English and peaceful education skills to children and youth.





Philippines

Dann and Joji Pantoja

The island of Mindanao is known as a conflict zone in the Philippines. It is also the home of PeaceBuilders Community Inc. (PBCI), founded by Dann and Joji Pantoja. PBCI provides peace-and-justice training for Christian church leaders, Indigenous leaders and civil society organizations. Their vision is that by the year 2025 each of the 81 provinces will have an established Peace and Reconciliation team.

As part of PBCI's sustainable development initiative, Joji works as CEO of Coffee for Peace, a social enterprise that works directly with local coffee farmers to ensure a fair return for their product and responsible environmental practices.