



Sharing gifts.  
Building relationships.

# International Witness Sunday

October 24, 2021

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/IW-Sunday](http://mennonitechurch.ca/IW-Sunday)



# Mennonite Church Canada

This worship resource is prepared for International Witness Sunday, October 24, 2021, 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](https://mennonitechurch.ca/IW-Sunday).

The “Vision: Healing and Hope” statement has been part of our lives in Mennonite Church Canada since the 1990s. How does it relate to us now, well into the 21st century? This year, on International Witness Sunday, we invite you to reflect on this statement by glimpsing the ways God is at work in the world around us. Listen as Witness workers and international partners give testimony to God’s healing and hope flowing to the world. How does God’s call sound in 2021?

We invite you to use these resources as a congregation to grow and learn how to listen for God’s call.

May God’s healing and hope flow through you to the world.

Grace and peace,

Jeanette Hanson  
Director, International Witness  
Mennonite Church Canada  
[jhanson@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:jhanson@mennonitechurch.ca)



# 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](http://mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness)



## ***ON SUNDAYS LEADING UP TO INTERNATIONAL WITNESS SUNDAY...***

### **Play informational videos produced by Mennonite Church Canada**

A general introduction to International Witness, as well videos about specific ministries will be available at [mennonite-church.ca/IW-Sunday](http://mennonite-church.ca/IW-Sunday).

### **Print posters and profile sheets**

Mennonite Church Canada has produced posters and Witness worker infosheets for congregations to distribute. Go to [mennonitechurch.ca/IW-Sunday](http://mennonitechurch.ca/IW-Sunday) to download. The infosheets are included on pages 10-14 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 24], 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 6.



# PRAYERS & WORSHIP RESOURCES

## GATHERING

Suggested scripture reading - Luke 4: 16-21

### Gathering hymn

VT 30 Jesus Calls Us

### Prayer

VT 851

Leader: Jesus calls us  
to praise and prayer,  
to song and silence;

**People: Jesus calls us to worship.**

Leader: Jesus calls us  
to hearing and healing,  
to service and solidarity;

**People: Jesus calls us to love.**

Leader: Jesus calls us  
to advocacy and action,  
to protest and provision;

**People: Jesus calls us to justice.**

Leader: We hear the call of Christ.

**All: We worship together with joy.**

### Prayer

VT 922 Confessing Faith

We are not alone;  
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:  
who has created and is creating,  
who has come in Jesus,  
the Word made flesh,  
to reconcile and make new,  
who works in us and others  
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church;  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

God is with us.  
We are not alone.  
Thanks be to God.

## Children's Story

"The Smell Test" by Jeanette Hanson, Director of International Witness (Luke 4: 16-21). Video links and a script available at [mennonitechurch.ca/IW-Sunday](http://mennonitechurch.ca/IW-Sunday).

## SHARING

### Message

Consider sharing [videos](#) from our Witness workers or summary videos about our ministries and ministry partners. New videos this year, include:

- "God Calls Us" sermon by Jeanette Hanson (Luke 4:16-21)
- "Inspiring a Gospel of Peace in Myanmar"
- Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission 2021 update
- An update from Witness workers Dann and Joji Pantoja in the Philippines

## RESPONSE

### Hymns

VT 394 God Calls Us

VT 705 For the Healing of the Nations

VT 732 Open My Eyes

VT 540 Will You Come and Follow Me

### Offering

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

### Closing Hymn

VT 849 We, Your People, Sing Your Praises

## SENDING

### Vision, Healing and Hope

In faith we have stretched out our hands.  
In love, Jesus has spoken words of healing and life.  
We go now as people of vision, healing, and hope.

Doug Klassen, Canada, 2015.

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# 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.
- 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 Kyoung Park in South Korea?
- 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.

## 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?

## ORGANIZE AN EVENT

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

- 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.

# GIVE

Go to [mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness](https://mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness) to donate to our relationship-building ministries in:

- Benin
- Bolivia
- Burkina Faso
- China
- Colombia
- DR Congo
- Ethiopia
- Laos
- Myanmar
- Palestine-Israel
- Philippines
- South Korea
- Thailand
- Vietnam





# 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](mailto:jhanson@mennonitechurch.ca).

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

For more information, please visit:  
**[mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness](http://mennonitechurch.ca/international-witness)**





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.

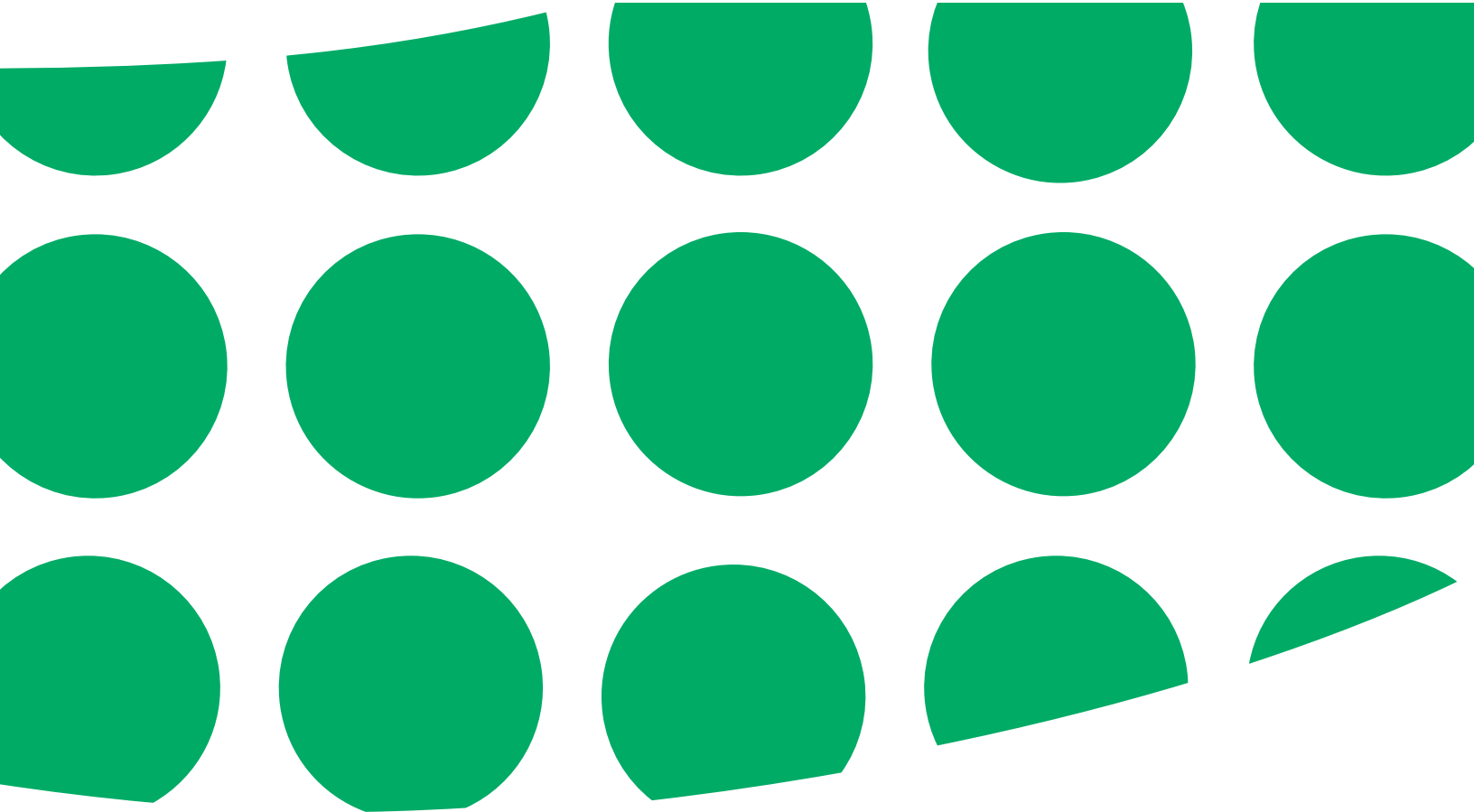
After 30 years of working and living in greater China, George and Tobia Veith will be ending their service in January 2022.



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[mennonitechurch.ca/china](http://mennonitechurch.ca/china)



Ethiopia

## Joanne and Werner De Jong

As one of the largest and fastest-growing denominations in Mennonite World Conference, Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia is increasing its capacity for leadership training by developing a seminary to meet the higher education needs of students from its regional colleges.

At the request of MKC, Werner and Joanne De Jong will teach and provide support at the newly formed Meserte Kristos Seminary. Werner will teach courses, including spiritual formation, Anabaptist studies, pastoral care and Biblical studies. Joanne will provide support for the media and public relations department. She will also mentor and help students with English. Their term begins in the fall of 2021.





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 2030 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.





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.



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.



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[mennonitechurch.ca/thailand](http://mennonitechurch.ca/thailand)