



Peace & Justice Journal

A publication of Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
VOLUME LV, NO. 1

Twenty-four young adults gathered at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in March 2022 for a week of learning about peacebuilding. MCC photo/Christy Kauffman



Prophetic witness:

A look back at 2022 and ahead to 2023



You studied

1300+ people downloaded or ordered small group curricula
mcc.org/peaceful-practices



You wrote letters

4400+ emails to Congress or the White House
Sign up for updates at
npjm.mcc.org



You joined us

2700+ people joined seminars, webinars, experiential learning activities and other events
Check mcc.org/events or email npjm@mcc.org to invite us to speak



You visited

45 meetings with policymakers, 30 of them including constituents or MCC partners
Download *How to be an advocate* at npjm.mcc.org

Introducing the Peace and Justice Journal!

The Lord says, “All you who are thirsty, come and drink . . . Listen closely to me, and you will eat what is good; your soul will enjoy the rich food that satisfies.” (Isaiah 55:1–2 NCV)



Top row: Zachary Murray, Saulo Padilla, Tammy Alexander and Charles Kwelum. Bottom row: Anthony Khair, Galen Fitzkee, Charity Stowell, Jes Stoltzfus Buller, Daniela Lázaro-Manalo and Kirstin De Mello. MCC photo/Brenda Burkholder

The *Washington Memo* is now the *Peace & Justice Journal*! Our new title better describes our expanded focus in MCC U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries (NPJM) and distinguishes this print newsletter from our monthly e-newsletter, the “E-Memo.”

In NPJM we strive to quench your thirst for peace and justice; to equip you with stories, wisdom and tools as you respond to conflict, suffering and trauma, and as you work to transform the broken structures of a fractured society.

We invite you to step out of your comfort zone and be thirsty for the richness and complexity of this world. To be curious. To listen and be ready for those moments when God calls you to be a peacemaker or a changemaker. —*Tammy*

Toward racial equity

A heightened awareness of racism, colonialism and mass incarceration in recent years has led to a rise in the efforts of individuals and congregations to learn about and address oppression. However, the ongoing violence, discrimination and even overt dispossession of communities of color reveals a complex and entrenched system of institutional, societal and structural racism. This reality will require us to deepen our understanding and continue to educate ourselves as we seek to dismantle racism.

In 2022, we released “conversation guides” on the Black Lives Matter movement and Critical Race Theory. A follow-up resource to the Peaceful Practices curriculum, these guides are designed to help groups navigate challenging conversations around sensitive and polarizing topics. Staff co-organized the “Healing our Hauntings: L.A. Uprising 30th Commemoration” events which created space to heal historical traumas and consider ways to transform the violent systems that pit communities of color against one another.



You Got Booked, an experiential learning activity highlighting racial disparities in the criminal legal system, continues to be highly requested across the U.S. as congregations seek to deepen their understanding of the systemic racism evident in mass incarceration. Staff co-facilitated peace camps in Colorado and Puerto Rico where young adults delved into systems of privilege, oppression and colonization, reimagining alternative ways to address harm and build greater peace and justice.

In 2023, you can look forward to a webinar series focused on mass incarceration followed by regional learning tour opportunities, more young adult peace camps, and a new resource addressing racial trauma. —*Daniela*

Above: Peace camp participants and facilitators in Puerto Rico, November 2022. Photo courtesy of Pastor Juanita Alvarez Nieves

Toward dignity and rights for migrants

Education

According to the International Organization for Migration, more than 100 million people globally were forced to leave their homes and communities in 2022. As in biblical times, war, poverty, economic and social instability, and the desire for a safe and secure future are drivers of migration.

The year 2022 continued a trend of hostility toward newcomers in the U.S. and globally. The church is placed at a pivotal time in history, calling for a faithful response to God's biblical hospitality directives. MCC's immigration education efforts continue to focus on walking with the church by providing opportunities to learn about faithful ways to respond to God's call.

In February, MCC staff presented a workshop on migration and biblical hospitality to pastors and leaders in Puerto Rico. Migration and biblical hospitality were key topics for a young adult Peace Camp in Colorado in March. In April, a workshop on migration and trauma was presented to members of several south Florida churches.

In July, staff presented two workshops on biblical hospitality at the Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Indonesia. MCC hosted the 40-hour immigration law training in September and conducted the first migration trauma seminar in collaboration with Addressing the Impact and Trauma of Migration (AITM). In November, staff co-facilitated a young adult peace camp in Puerto Rico. MCC hosted a second migration trauma seminar in December.

Looking forward to 2023, staff will continue walking with the church to faithfully respond to God's call to welcome newcomers with educational resources, trainings and experiential learning activities. —*Saulo*



Newcomer Connections

Most of the 100 million people displaced globally were displaced internally within their country of origin, but some sought refuge in other countries, including the United States, as asylum seekers or refugees. To aid U.S. churches in the call to welcome migrants as Christ welcomed us, MCC's Newcomer Connections work focuses on educating and equipping Anabaptists to welcome newcomers into their communities.

Early in 2022, MCC launched a Newcomer Connections Survey to discover how MCC could best walk alongside congregations as they welcome newcomers. This survey led to one-on-one conversations with faithful welcomees who shared their experiences, challenges, questions and advice.

Following these conversations, MCC hosted a webinar series to highlight the work of MCC, partners and Anabaptist churches. Topics included:

- Welcoming refugees
- Addressing the impact and trauma of migration
- Welcoming asylum seekers
- Creative housing solutions for refugees and asylum seekers

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Above: MCC staff Saulo Padilla and Jean Carlos Arce Cabrera meet with Alexis Massol, director of Casa Pueblo, and staff member Ada Miranda in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico. MCC photo/Saulo Padilla

Left: Saulo Padilla, poses with participants of a workshop on biblical hospitality and the Church at the Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Semarang, Indonesia. Photo courtesy of Saulo Padilla



At an Addressing the Impact and Trauma of Migration seminar, participants from across the U.S. work together to describe the different phases of the migration journey. MCC photo/Saulo Padilla

MCC also piloted a Newcomer Hospitality Network to provide newcomers a monthly opportunity to connect with one another in a small group setting. Welcomers convened over Zoom to share experiences, encourage one another, and discuss topics relevant to welcoming refugees and asylum seekers into their communities.

The need for supportive communities continues to rise as the U.S. refugee resettlement program rebuilds and as opportunities for private sponsorship of asylum seekers and evacuees grow. Looking forward to 2023, MCC remains committed to partnering with churches and other groups as they welcome newcomers who bring compelling stories, rich culture, and enduring hope to their new communities. —*Charity*

Advocacy

While migrant encounters at the U.S.-Mexico border hit an all-time high in 2022, policymakers continued to double down on harmful and ineffective responses to migration including militarized deterrence and detention. MCC continues to advocate for an immigration system

that prioritizes welcome, safety and dignity for all, as our Anabaptist faith calls us to do.

With advocacy presentations for learning tour participants, action alerts on DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and asylum, and support for webinars on topics such as the Title 42 policy, MCC staff sought to prepare constituents to engage faithfully in the ever-changing landscape of U.S. immigration policy. We look forward to continuing to partner with you to in the march toward more peaceful and just immigration policies in 2023! —*Galen*



DACA rally in Washington, D.C. MCC photo/Kirstin De Mello

Toward living sustainably

The 117th Congress passed the most substantial climate legislation in recent U.S. history. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, passed in late 2021, committed U.S. funding for clean energy and sustainable infrastructure repair over the next 10 years. Then, in the fall of 2022, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) passed with \$369 billion for investments in climate change mitigation and energy.

In November, world leaders met for COP27, the annual United Nations climate summit. MCC signed a letter urging wealthier countries to prioritize compensation for climate-related loss and damage to more vulnerable nations. MCC staff—with your help!—encouraged members of Congress to invest in similar programs for global climate relief and adaptation.

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Toward health and wellbeing

As the world grapples with recovery from the aftershocks of COVID-19, we continue to see an unprecedented increase in violent conflicts and other global crises, including food price hikes, extreme poverty and acute hunger. The World Food Programme estimates that 828 million people go to bed hungry each night. The number of people experiencing severe hunger has risen from 135 million in 2019 to 345 million today. Meanwhile, global leaders prioritize militaristic responses to conflict over nonviolent peacebuilding strategies.

In April 2022, staff presented at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days conference, highlighting the importance of U.S. federal funding for psychosocial support programs and the shrinking of civic spaces in countries such as Nigeria. In collaboration with other faith-based organizations, MCC advocated for an increase in global economic assistance, including for additional special drawing rights (SDRs), funding to prevent future pandemics, and financial assistance for COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. In October, staff facilitated a local advocacy training for MCC partners in northeastern Nigeria.

Looking ahead to 2023, we will continue efforts to decolonize advocacy by increasing opportunities to bring MCC's global partners into policy discussions. Such participation allows local perspectives and stories to shape U.S. foreign policy. MCC staff will work with congressional offices to reintroduce the Mental Health in



Charles Kwuelum poses with staff from Emergency Preparedness Response Team in Yola, Adamawa State, during a local advocacy training in northeastern Nigeria. MCC Photo/Kitshiwe Williams

International Development and Humanitarian Settings (MINDS) Act and will push for the Food for Peace program (part of the Farm Bill) to include more foreign assistance funding for locally grown food and less reliance on food shipped from the U.S. —*Charles*



In the U.S., there is growing awareness that an increase in renewable energy means increased mining. Mining for “critical minerals”—essential components of solar panels, wind turbines and electric batteries—can cause polluted air and water, exploit workers, displace communities, and desecrate sacred sites.

Unfortunately, in order to pass the IRA with all its good climate provi-

Participants of the Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions Sustainability Summit visit Capitol Hill to advocate for responsible mining practices. Photo courtesy of CSCS/Jackson Steinmetz

sions, Congressional leaders made a deal with a moderate senator (with close ties to the coal industry) to relax mining regulations. Your letters to Congress were added to thousands of others across the country to urge members of Congress to stop this proposal from moving forward.

Issues around critical minerals mining will continue to be important in the U.S. and globally. We will depend on your help to encourage policymakers to ensure that mining is done responsibly and in consultation with affected communities. —*Tammy & Galen*

Toward a more peaceful world

Peace education

Throughout 2022, our domestic peace education work spanned a wide breadth of issues, including gun violence prevention, interrupting mass incarceration, peace theology, militarism and more. Two areas that had significant response across the U.S. were young adult peace camps and resources on healthy dialogue in conflict.

Staff led numerous trainings and workshops on healthy dialogue, and provided facilitation for group dialogue in many settings. Interactive trainings for congregations and other groups provide opportunities to put theory into practice with a facilitator present and to start to change unhealthy patterns of engaging conflict.

We invested in future generations by offering three peace camps throughout 2022 for young adults. These weeklong experiences are a wonderful way for young adults to reflect on peace theology, meet local MCC partners doing creative work on the ground, learn in collaboration with a diverse group of people craving connection and change, and find hope for a different future. Peace camps help participants see the world around them—and how they might engage it—in new ways. More young adult peace camps will be scheduled for 2023, so watch for these transformational opportunities!

In a context of polarization, the Peaceful Practices curriculum continues to be a helpful resource. During 2022, conversation guides were created as a secondary tool to help congregations do the practice of engaging across difference on difficult issues. Many more of these will be available online throughout 2023, spanning a broad range of hot-button topics for groups to engage with. —*Jes*



A North Korean agricultural delegation visits Manitoba, Canada, in July 2018, accompanied by MCC staff, as part of MCC's people-to-people engagement. MCC Photo/Colin Vandenberg

North Korea

Due to sanctions, COVID-19 border closures and rising tensions in Northeast Asia, MCC has decreased programs and limited people-to-people exchange in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea).

MCC advocates for just peace on the Korean Peninsula by supporting bills such as the Peace on the Korean Peninsula Act, the Enhancing North Korean Assistance Act, and the Korean War Divided Families Reunification Act. In June, staff helped to coordinate an annual grassroots lobby week with over 100 people from 24 states pushing Congress to enact policies that promote peace.

Looking ahead, 2023 marks the 70th anniversary of the Korea war ceasefire. MCC staff will continue to advocate for peacebuilding measures and against sanctions that limit humanitarian aid and people-to-people engagement. With our faith-based and Korean diaspora partners in the U.S., we will work to increase congressional support for a peace agreement to formally end the Korean War. —*Zachary*



“MCC invested in future generations by offering three peace camps throughout 2022 for young adults.”

Leaders and participants of the Multicultural Peace Collaboration reflect together at César E. Chávez National Monument. Photo courtesy of Kevin Dueck

Middle East

Syria: The U.S. government's usage of broad-based sanctions has had a significant impact on already vulnerable populations in Syria affected by war and poverty. A recent rise of cholera cases and a lack of clean water in some areas has added to these vulnerabilities, affecting not only Syria but also surrounding countries such as Lebanon. In 2022, MCC supporters helped us urge Congress to consider the negative effects of sanctions on vulnerable groups in Syria.

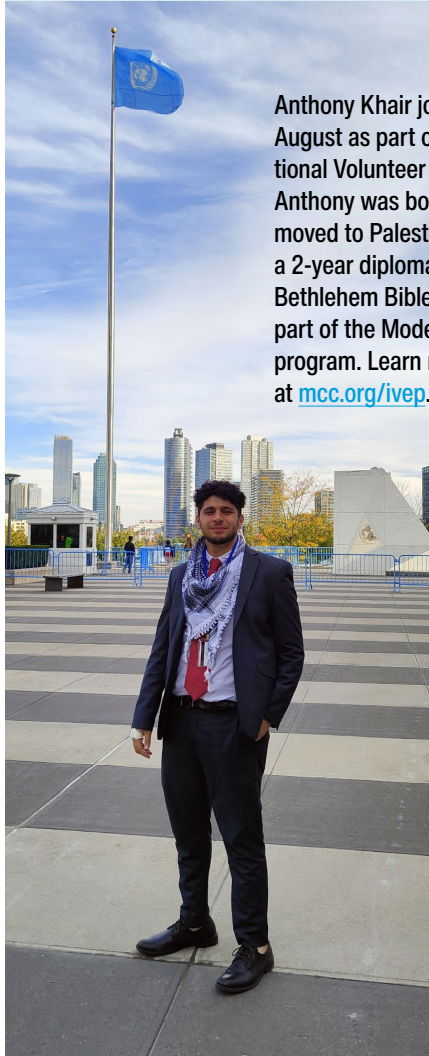
Looking forward to 2023, MCC will continue to oppose broad-based sanctions that restrict humanitarian assistance. —*Zachary*

Palestine and Israel: 2022 saw increased violent conflict and more shrinking of civic spaces in Palestine and Israel. Despite being a violation of international law, the Israeli government continues to expand settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Increasingly violent Israeli



A section of the Israeli separation barrier in Bethlehem, West Bank, Palestine. Photo courtesy of Anthony Khair

Meet Anthony Khair



Anthony Khair joined NPJM in August as part of the MCC International Volunteer Exchange Program. Anthony was born in Honduras and moved to Palestine at age 10. He has a 2-year diploma of theology from Bethlehem Bible College and was part of the Model United Nations program. Learn more about IVEP at mcc.org/ivep.

Anthony Khair outside the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. MCC photo/Daniel Pacheco

military operations in occupied Palestine have resulted in home demolitions, injuries, deaths and detentions.

In May, Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed by Israeli soldiers while reporting on a raid on the Jenin Refugee Camp in the West Bank. In September, former MCC Palestine and Israel Advisory Committee Chairperson Samia Khoury reported that her 16-year-old grandson, Shadi Khoury, was beaten and detained by Israeli military police, illustrating the ongoing problem of child detention.

In October, Anthony Khair attended a United Nations roundtable and encouraged new UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese to press the U.S. and Canada for a more consistent response to human rights abuses in Palestine and Israel. In November, Anthony spoke at an MCC peace camp in Puerto Rico about the historical and political context in Palestine and Israel and the experience of living in occupied Palestine. Anthony also spoke at various venues in Virginia in November and December. (To invite an NPJM speaker to your church or event, visit npjm.mcc.org or email npjm@mcc.org.)

MCC will continue to support legislation that improves humanitarian access, human rights protections and the prospects for peace for Palestinians and Israelis. —*Zachary & Anthony*

National Peace & Justice Ministries Resources for deepening your engagement



Peaceful Practices

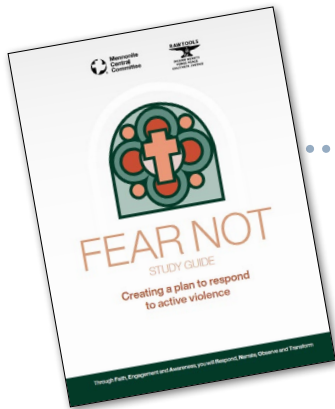
A guide to healthy communication in conflict

mcc.org/peaceful-practices

Embracing Beloved Community

An introduction to understanding our biases on race

mcc.org/embracing-beloved-community



FEAR NOT

Creating a plan to respond to active violence

mcc.org/fear-not

You Got Booked

A mass incarceration learning tool

Contact: npjim@mcc.org



Advocacy

Sign up for action alerts and monthly updates

npjim.mcc.org

Invite us to speak

with your congregation or group

NPJM staff can speak on immigration, peace, racial equity, climate change, Palestine and Israel, foreign assistance and more!

npjim@mcc.org



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

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