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A Spring Cleaning

What should we do when we run into contamination and clutter everywhere we turn? Where do we start when we can’t even find what we need in our closets, computers, and phones without a colossal search? How do we begin to make space for God when confusion and concern overflow?

Even the smallest nooks and crannies of our lives can feel overwhelmed. We want to be responsible, organized, and efficient. We consider ourselves judicious, but so many things—much of them of questionable value—clamor for our attention, for space in our homes, hearts, and minds.

This issue of REJOICE! is about our writers’ searches for cleansing and renewal in a society that normalizes lifestyles jam-packed with physical, emotional, and mental junk. How can we invite God into our entire being and welcome a good, thorough spring cleaning?

We cannot afford to be complacent when the home of our heart is overwhelmed. No matter our apprehension or shame, let us open the door to God—the only one who can free, cleanse, and renew a right spirit within us.

—Leslie Hawthorne Klingler
REJOICE! Editor
“We gathered around God’s table in an empty lot, and a church sprang up.”

This is the story of what happens when people garden, worship, and eat together—and invite anyone and everyone to join them. Together the wealthy and the poor, the aged and the young, the housed and unhoused become a community in this once-empty lot where all are welcome.

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I stacked the white china dessert bowls on the kitchen island. Remarkably, the delicate strawberry pattern and French script that laced the bottom of each bowl mostly survived scrubbings innumerable. “Peach cobbler never tasted better than in those bowls,” my daughter once said.

For comparison, I laid an apple beside the tiny white tower on the counter and snapped a photo. I felt a wisp of excitement as I texted the picture to a friend. “I love these bowls, but I don’t need them. Would you like them?”

The Lenten spiritual practice of years ago recently became my new hobby: giving away my things.

I read that pioneers littered western wagon trails with household items. A cast iron cooking stove, a wooden hope chest, a handmade cradle. Along the dangerous way, trekkers realized that heavy and cumbersome possessions, no matter how precious, endangered the journey. Too much cargo might weary the team. A slow wagon threatened survival.

Traveling light is not a matter of life and death for me, but it is time to lighten my load. My hobby of sharing my things is now a joyful game as I match random articles from my home to my friends. I feel as if I am giving away puppies, searching for the perfect home for each one.

A barely used electric can opener now resides in a dorm room at Mississippi State University. A never-worn pair of shoes went to a friend who prances about in them as if they might be Dorothy’s ruby slippers. I bought the clay pot with the sunflower design in Ecuador. It went to a friend who loves sunflowers. She loves that
Making Mud

He spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash.”
—John 9:6-7

READ: John 9:1-12

REFLECT: When we clean a grimy floor, we make mud in the process. Those who go to spas are sometimes bathed in mud. Both actions—scrubbing a dirty floor with water and taking a spa mud bath—use mud as a method of cleansing.

The imagery of this text goes farther. John 9 tells about Jesus healing a blind man through a process that includes making mud with his saliva. That’s an unusual method of healing even for Jesus. It contradicts notions of being clean or unclean within Jesus’ religious community.

The climax of this story doesn’t come when Jesus physically restores sight to the blind man. Rather, it comes when the restored individual sees who Jesus really is as a result of the encounter involving mud. In contrast, the religious leaders and even the man’s own family never understand the mud. The religious authorities complain that Jesus made mud on the Sabbath. In their narrow-minded reading of Scripture, they fail to understand the cleansing, healing power that brought this unclean outsider into the community.

The outsider can have a better vantage point than the insider. So often, we find Jesus on the margins, living in solidarity with those who don’t object to Jesus’ mud-making—those who see in it God’s healing and whose sight is often underrated.

—Barbara Krehbiel Gebring

RESPOND: Dear God, give us the courage to receive or even make a little mud now and then.
Hit “Refresh”

“Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you: I am God your God.”
—Psalm 50:7 NIV

READ: Psalm 50:1-15

REFLECT: I’m not very tech-savvy, but I get along with enough basic computer skills to do my job—which has me on email and the internet for a few hours every day. Once in a while, when something doesn’t go quite right, I see a message that says, “Hit the refresh button.” The action will supposedly take me back to where I can start over with the process that was somehow interrupted.

The idea that we’re exploring this season—a spiritual spring cleaning—is something like a refresh button for the soul. It’s that time when we back up just a little, do a quick restart from within, and renew our relationship with God.

In Psalm 50, we are invited to refresh our connection with God. We read, “He summons the heavens above, and the earth that he may judge his people: Gather to me my consecrated ones” (vv. 4-5 NIV). Even if it’s for the umpteenth time, we are called back to a renewed relationship with our Creator.

Is there a place where you would like to start anew in your walk with God? Know that God welcomes you into his presence. God is ready for you to hit the refresh button.

—Dennis Fast

RESPOND: O Lord, help me listen for your voice in this new season; refresh me by your Spirit.
Layers of Dust

“For I am a great king,” says the Lord Almighty, “and my name is to be feared among the nations.”
—Malachi 1:14 NIV

READ: Malachi 1:11-14

REFLECT: Last year, we joined our daughter and her family in moving to a rural property with a 44-year-old home and a large informal workshop. It has been a blessing to make this move along with five of our grandchildren.

The previous owners lived on this property from the time the home was built until when we purchased it. Every inch of the place has their fingerprints. In the shop, for example, rests the evidence of woodworking and auto repair. With the years, layers of dust and grime accumulated. It has been my task to clean up the space to make room for our stuff and dust.

Cleaning the shop has rewarded me with fascinating items that must have been dropped, lost, and forgotten over the years. My discoveries have reminded me of the value of letting God clean up our lives from time to time. Spiritual housecleaning will likely reveal habits, beliefs, and other things of value that we’ve dropped, lost, forgotten, and allowed to get buried in dust.

The prophet Malachi calls the people of God to do some spring cleaning in their worship practices. He reminds them that God looks for our best when we bring our offerings. Layers of dust have built up over the years as the people neglected the spirit of the Law and offered only what required little sacrifice.

Malachi’s call is timely for us. What has gotten lost or covered over in our walk with God? Will we commit to recovering the precious things that have gone missing?

—Dennis Fast

RESPOND: Lord, I remember when walking with you felt fresh and exciting. Cleanse my heart and renew me, O God.
Planting Life and Well-Being

My covenant with him was
a covenant of life and well-being.
—Malachi 2:5

READ: Malachi 2:4-10

REFLECT: As spring approached, my wife wanted to add numerous flowers to our yard before our granddaughter’s high school graduation to be celebrated there. She made the purchases and enlisted me to help her with the planting. When the work was accomplished, we stood back to enjoy the periwinkles, alyssum, marigolds, geraniums, and hydrangea. Everything looked as we had hoped it would: a spectrum of color gracing our yard.

The beauty barely lasted long enough for the party. Within a week or two, it was evident that some areas of our yard were more conducive to plant life than others, and only some of the plants we’d selected were suited to our environment. Many of the plants had to be pulled out and thrown away. Through that process, we learned what and where to plant in our yard.

In today’s passage, God calls the people to look deep to learn why their people are falling apart. Malachi points to the priests who, instead of planting “life and well-being” (v. 5), are causing many to stumble by their instruction (v. 8). The priests are intended to plant and nurture the fruit of righteousness. When they instead sow faithlessness, there may come the time when God has to uproot and fire the gardener.

God’s word in Malachi 2 is a reminder to all of us to pay attention to the work of our hands. May we plant wisely with the seeds of righteousness.

—Dennis Fast

RESPOND: Thank you, Lord, for giving me all I need to sow life and well-being. Help me be the gardener that you intend me to be.
The Test

*He will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them . . . until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness.*
—*Malachi 3:3*

**READ:** Malachi 2:17-3:4

**REFLECT:** In Malachi’s day, the people once again have been faithless to the ways of God. Through the prophet, God accuses them of calling evil good and good evil. Their worship has become a wicked attempt to cover up their cheating ways. It is time for a change.

Today’s Scripture uses the image of a refiner’s fire purifying silver and gold, but I think again about our garden and the way we unwisely planted flowers before our granddaughter’s graduation party (see March 25 devotional). While our work looked beautiful at first, many of the flowers soon wilted and died. When the nature of our work was exposed, only some of our planting passed the test.

In today’s reading, Malachi asks, “who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?” (v. 2). God exposes the true nature of what we plant in our lives, and only the good and right will stand.

As springtime arrives in the northern hemisphere, ask God to show the truth about what you have planted in the garden of your life. Even if it feels a bit painful at first, know that God is pleased we allow our Creator a full view of our lives. God wants an invitation to uproot that which doesn’t belong and affirm the right and good.

—Dennis Fast

**RESPOND:** With the psalmist I say, “O Lord, you have searched me and you know me.” I open my life to you. Examine my motives and my heart.
Let the River Flow

See if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.
—Malachi 3:10

READ: Malachi 3:6-12

REFLECT: The San Joaquin Valley depends on snowfall in the Sierra Nevada mountains for water. When the snow melts, it fills up our manmade reservoirs, rivers, and canals that irrigate our crops. When water flows, it is truly the “Fruit Basket of the World” with its bounteous fields, orchards, and vineyards.

After four consecutive years of drought, springtime last year brought great concern. Water was rationed, lawns were left to dry, and many wells had begun to pump sand. In some small communities, water was distributed for drinking and cooking. What would become of our land?

The floodgates of the heavens opened. Meteorologists reported that “atmospheric rivers” were passing through our region as rain fell on the valley and snow piled high in the mountains. Green shoots emerged, blossomed, and revealed tiny buds promising fruit.

The prophet Malachi extends God’s admonition to bring bountiful offerings to the temple in faith that God is a bountiful supplier. The invitation is for us, too. When we experience a season of spiritual drought, can we believe that God will pour out blessing again?

Spring is such a season of hope and anticipation. When our river overflowed its banks, and our irrigation canals were filled to the brim, we witnessed a picture of what God wants to do in our hearts, too. This season, may we lift our eyes to God and wait for those showers of blessing.

—Dennis Fast

RESPOND: O God, I am filled with hope. I open my heart to receive the blessings you have stored up for me.
Some Cleaning Required

You teach them the good way in which they should walk; and grant rain on your land.
—1 Kings 8:36

READ: 1 Kings 8:35-36

REFLECT: The elm tree in our front yard is nearly fifty years old. It has weathered many a storm and provided wonderful shade year after year from central California’s summer heat. Along with the blessing of this marvel of creation comes an unwelcome task each spring: cleaning the gutters where the giant elm drops its seeds and leaves.

For all of its beauty, the old elm is a rather dirty fellow. It seems to be dropping something in almost every season, and those overhanging branches fill the rain gutters quickly. Cleaning those gutters ensures that when the spring rains finally come, water won’t spill over into the entryway of our home. This gutter-cleaning is required if we want to continue enjoying the old shade tree.

Our old elm tree represents so much in life. As creatures whom God called to “till and keep” the land (Genesis 2:15), we need to keep busy tending to our land and preparing it for God’s blessing. Even those things that bring great joy can’t be left to themselves. They call for care, attention, and occasional deep cleaning.

As our Scripture today tells us, God has taught us “the good way” in which we should walk, and God will grant rain on our land (v. 36). Our attention to those life details helps to keep the blessings flowing.

—Dennis Fast

RESPOND: Lord, I love the shade of your love and your presence. I love your showers of blessing. Help me clean out anything that might hinder the enjoyment of all you provide.
Haikus

by Elfrieda Schroeder

Pussy Willow tree
Bending low over the lake
Why are you weeping?

It’s Friday and cold
I long for Easter Sunday
For warm sun rising.

Sap stirs within me
The breeze whispers a promise
Of new life to come.

Air fresh and so sharp
Trilling of birds in the trees
It is time for spring!

Dressed in its glory
This tree is ready for spring
Making my heart sing!

Clothed in great splendour
So fresh, so new, so lovely
What will summer bring?

Maturing of leaves
Strengthening of branch and trunk
A settling down time.

Blue Jay flashing wings
Among green leaves just sprouting
“Happy Spring” it shouts to my wounded wintry heart!

God of wonders, YOU Creator of everything
We entreat you now You see it all so clearly
Help us here below!
Abba is my Alpha and my Omega.
Absolute rest beside green pastures and aquamarine streams
acquiesce my soul to acquire the right paths
for my Abba’s sake.
I am not afraid even though I walk through dark alleys.
Abba, you are with me.
Your arms around me
give me absolute assurance.
Abundance at my table amazes my archenemies
You anoint my head with oil.
Abba, it is above and beyond what I need!
Astounding assurance of your absolute love
assists me always.
I will abide in Abba’s abode all of my days.

Elfrieda Schroeder belongs to Jubilee Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba, where she is a deacon and worship leader. She enjoys reading, writing, translating, and spending time with grandchildren.
PRAISE & PRAYER
FROM OUR CHURCH AGENCIES

I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. —Ephesians 1:16

MARCH 1–7

**Sunday, March 1.** Give thanks for the children in your congregation. Pray they receive a special blessing as they learn about Christian faith and what it means to follow Jesus.

**Monday, March 2.** Pray for those attending the joint conference of Deep Faith and Pastors and Leaders 2020 at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary today through Thursday. Participants are focusing on faith formation in a digitally saturated culture.

**Tuesday, March 3.** Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung Park develop Anabaptist resources in the Korean language. Translating, writing, and presentations need faithful efforts. Praise God for providing them with wisdom, inspiration, and persistence.

**Wednesday, March 4.** Pray for David and Sophia Lapp Jost in their first year of a Mennonite Mission Network assignment in Germany, working with the German Mennonite Peace Committee (David) and a Mennonite church (Sophia).

**Thursday, March 5.** Pray for young adults in your community that are being called to study theological education, and pray for the opportunity to encourage them to attend seminary. (Eastern Mennonite Seminary)

**Friday, March 6.** Pray that Virginia Mennonite Missions worker Jason Wagner will boldly represent Christ, embodying his love and life as he serves as a chaplain at the Rockingham/Harrisonburg Regional Jail in Virginia.

**Saturday, March 7.** Pray for planners and participants of Mennonite Central Committee’s centennial 2020 celebration events in places like Bolivia, Switzerland, Ukraine, Nicaragua, Canada, and the U.S. Praise God for MCC’s ministry in 53 countries.

MARCH 8–14

**Sunday, March 8.** Pray for God to provide quiet moments of solitude for reflection, repentance, and prayer during this season of Lent. (Mennonite Church USA)

**Monday, March 9.** Praise God with Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers Tom and Christine Poovong for a new church planting team in northeastern Thailand called Friends of Grace Church Association that has planted 30 congregations in less than a year.

**Tuesday, March 10.** This month, Mary Raber of Mennonite Mission
Network is providing historical background for Mennonite Central Committee’s 100th anniversary of relief work in Ukraine. Pray for energy as she adds this to her normal ministry load.

**Wednesday, March 11.** Pray for the ministry of CommonWord, Mennonite Church Canada’s Resource Centre, connecting congregations and individuals with Anabaptist and other materials through sales, loans, and downloads.

**Thursday, March 12.** Pray for Eastern Mennonite Missions workers Leon and Naomi Zimmerman as they prepare leadership training materials for upcoming trips. Ask for safety in travel as they resource churches around the world.

**Friday, March 13.** Christian Peacemaker Teams requests prayer for asylum seekers trying to enter the U.S. They bear anxieties for themselves and their families. Pray for empathy and understanding by customs officers at the border.

**Saturday, March 14.** This month, Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for DOOR as the program hosts high school and college groups during spring break to learn about faith, race, and justice.

**MARCH 15–21**

**Sunday, March 15.** Canadian Mennonite University alumni have faithfully planned and led monthly vesper services for 23 seasons. Thank God for the way this ministry of music and scripture reading has blessed participants.

**Monday, March 16.** Pray for the country of Burundi and that the work of Mennonite Central Committee staff and peacebuilding partners will bear fruit. May alternatives to violence prevail.

**Tuesday, March 17.** Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for Jason Boone as he coordinates the Peace and Justice Support Network that provides resources to congregations and individuals for nonviolent, active peacemaking.

**Wednesday, March 18.** Pray for the newly opened Anabaptist Studies Centre in Eastern China. Pray that the lay leaders studying there will respond to and be inspired by what they hear. (Mennonite Church Canada)

**Thursday, March 19.** As we welcome spring, pray “to be renewed in the spirit of [our] minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:23-24 ESV)

**Friday, March 20.** Pray for the Eastern Mennonite University’s Board of Trustees as they meet today and tomorrow.

**Saturday, March 21.** Pray that as more people are displaced than ever, Mennonite Central Committee will receive the resources to scale up their work with displaced families in Syria, DR Congo, Chad, Ecuador, and Canada.
MARCH 22–28

Sunday, March 22. Remember Virginia Mennonite Missions workers Rafael and Solange Tartari, as they relate to many different kinds of people and engage in multiple ministries while serving at the Mennonite church in Lezhë, Albania.

Monday, March 23. Give thanks for the many volunteers and donors who faithfully support the work of the church and its ministries. Pray they receive a special blessing for their contributions of time and money.

Tuesday, March 24. George and Tobia Veith work at building relationships in China. Pray that their teaching, training, and translation work will continue to be inspiring for them and useful to the church in China. (Mennonite Church Canada)

Wednesday, March 25. Pray for wisdom and perseverance for Eastern Mennonite Missions worker Lea (name withheld for security reasons) as she relates to those in East Asia who are interested in learning more about her relationship with God.

Thursday, March 26. Pray for wisdom, discernment and safe travel for our church and conference leaders attending the meeting of the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) of Mennonite Church USA in Kansas City, Missouri, today and tomorrow.

Friday, March 27. Give thanks for Joan Daggett, project director, and Chrissie Walls and Rachel Nussbaum Eby, editors, in their work with Shine: Living in God’s Light Sunday school curriculum.

Saturday, March 28. Pray for Mennonite World Conference meetings in Abbotsford, BC: RENEWAL 2027 (March 28), and Executive Board (March 30–April 2). Pray for leaders and churches of British Columbia as they gather to celebrate their unity in Christ.

MARCH 29–APRIL 4

Sunday, March 29. Four years ago church leaders across Canada gathered in Ottawa to express their denominations’ commitment to adopt and comply with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Pray that churches would embody the standards of the declaration in solidarity with the vulnerable and oppressed.

Monday, March 30. Pray for Diana Cruz and Felipe Preciado, sent by the Mennonite Church in Colombia and serving through Mennonite Mission Network, as they work at the La Casa Grande children’s village in Benin.

Tuesday, March 31. Coffee for Peace is a ministry of PeaceBuilders communities in Mindanao, Philippines. Pray for Joji Pantoja as she directs this ministry of inclusive development. (Mennonite Church Canada)

Wednesday, April 1. Pray for the heads of schools and administrators at our Mennonite schools, colleges, and universities. (Mennonite Education Agency)
Thursday, April 2. Recruiting for Mennonite Central Committee’s SALT program begins. Pray that committed young adults will step forward in faith to serve in life-changing relief, development, and peace initiatives around the world.

Friday, April 3. Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for the Francophone Theological Network steering committee meeting this month in Benin to lay foundations for online Anabaptist classes to serve the French-speaking world.

Saturday, April 4. Natural disasters cause damage and destruction in many places around North America. Pray for the safety of the many Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers working on various jobsites.

APRIL 5–11

Sunday, April 5. Give thanks for those involved in youth ministries in our Mennonite congregations across the US and Canada. Pray for creativity and commitment as they encourage our youth to join God’s mission.

Monday, April 6. Give thanks for those who faithfully serve our conferences, churches, schools, colleges, missions, and ministries. Ask God to bless them. (Mennonite Church USA)

Tuesday, April 7. Pray for young adults in Wales, UK, to join the Going Public internship, which provides opportunities for individuals to work with youth or children, community work, social action, and creative arts. (Eastern Mennonite Missions)

Wednesday, April 8. Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for Freddy and Margrit Kipfer Barrón, serving the Bolivia Mennonite Church through youth ministries, pastoral care, and training church leaders.

Thursday, April 9. Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Sook Kyoung Park runs an after-school program in Korea. Pray for her as she teaches the children how to love, to be honest, to respect each other, and to share God’s love.

Friday, April 10. Give thanks for Amy Gingerich, executive director of MennoMedia. Pray that she continues to find strength and energy in this role, providing leadership to staff and meeting with constituents.

Saturday, April 11. Give thanks for the pastors and leaders of your congregation. Pray they have wisdom and energy as they serve.

APRIL 12–18

Sunday, April 12. As we celebrate Easter, let us be thankful for the gift of salvation and pray that we may be emboldened to share the good news of healing and redemptive love with those around us. (Mennonite Church USA)

Monday, April 13. Thank God for Crystal and Charles Conklin, who are serving as Mennonite Central Committee representatives for Cambodia and Myanmar. Pray for them as they work with partner organizations in Phnom Penh.
Tuesday, April 14. Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for DOOR City Directors who are hiring local young adults as Discern summer staff to lead week-long Discover groups in exploring faith and vocational discernment.

Wednesday, April 15. Pray that work relationships will give a Virginia Mennonite Missions couple many opportunities for faith sharing and discipleship in Central Asia. Pray for maturity and unity among Central Asian Christian believers.

Thursday, April 16. Pray for wisdom and clarity of vision for the Anabaptist Biblical Seminary Board of Directors as they meet this week.

Friday, April 17. Pray for Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Tom Poovong as he ministers to Phuthai people of Mid-Mekong region. He praises God for the openness in this group, which is home to his mother.

Saturday, April 18. Pray for the country of Burundi as it prepares for elections in April 2020 and that peace prevails under the possibility of unrest. (Mennonite Central Committee)

APRIL 19–25

Sunday, April 19. Praise God for faithful Sunday school teachers. May God bless them as they teach, and may adults and children who are in their classes be open to learning.

Monday, April 20. Pray for six intern teachers who are teaching in Chinese universities with Mennonite Partners in China. Pray that their lives and service will be a blessing to the communities where they serve.

Tuesday, April 21. Mennonite World Conference fosters relationship and connections among 107 Anabaptist national churches globally. Pray for this witness of unity amid diversity in the body of Christ.

Wednesday, April 22. Dan and Kathryn Smith Derksen returned from four years with Mennonite Mission Network in South Africa. Pray for them and their two sons as they adjust to life in the United States.

Thursday, April 23. Pray for students at Columbia Bible College as they study for final exams and finish the academic year well. Pray for students completing their education to transition well into the next chapter of their lives.

Friday, April 24. The Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA is meeting in Philadelphia this weekend. Please pray for wisdom, discernment and safe travel.

Saturday, April 25. Thank God for the students at Canadian Mennonite University who have completed their degree programs and will celebrate their accomplishments at a convocation service this afternoon.

APRIL 26–MAY 2

Sunday, April 26. Give thanks for people who generously donate time, energy, finances, and talents for the work of Mennonite
Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. May they be richly blessed as they contribute.

Monday, April 27. Pray for Eastern Mennonite Missions worker Wendell Nofziger as he gives leadership at Academia Los Pinares, and for his wife, Melanie, as she disciples women in Honduras. Pray for good friends for their children.

Tuesday, April 28. Thank God that Dann and Joji Pantoja’s ministry in the Philippines is vibrant and growing with peacebuilding communities speaking a coherent, inspiring, and contagious message of shalom based on the transformative power of Jesus Christ.

Wednesday, April 29. Mennonite Mission Network praises God for the Evangelization Through Literacy program initiated by women leaders of the three Congolese Mennonite denominations. Pray for hundreds of adult literacy teachers sharing God’s love.

Thursday, April 30. Christian Peacemaker Teams requests prayer for the rural children of Colombia who often can’t go to school because of armed conflict in the area. Pray they not accept candy from soldiers who hope to get information.

Friday, May 1. Give thanks for students as they graduate from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Indiana). Ask God to guide them and bless them as leaders for God’s reconciling mission in the world.

Saturday, May 2. Pray for Eastern Mennonite Seminary students completing their seminary studies and looking for ministry opportunities following graduation on May 3.

MAY 3–9

Sunday, May 3. Today is Many Peoples Sunday, which celebrates the diversity of God’s multicultural church. Pray that we grow into God’s vision of being a people of God’s light and welcome gifts of all cultures and nations.

(Mennonite Church USA)

Monday, May 4. Pray for students of Conrad Grebel University College, graduating from University of Waterloo. Give thanks for their years of learning and pray that they find purposeful work that reveals God’s glory.

Tuesday, May 5. Lift up Eastern Mennonite Missions workers Ben and Lena (names changed for security reasons) as they continue their ministry of bringing fresh water to many people in Southeast Asia. Pray that they would know when to take a break from their work.

Wednesday, May 6. Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for Deb Byler as she works with Kekchi Mennonite Church women in Guatemala. Pray for her as she helps develop training materials.

Thursday, May 7. Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Bock Ki
Kim presents to various churches and denominations in Korea on Anabaptist history, community, peace theology and spirituality. Pray for wisdom and boldness to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with an Anabaptist perspective.

**Friday, May 8.** Pray for Kristen and Wawa Chege as the new Mennonite Central Committee area directors for East Africa and for Ken and Laura Litwiller as they complete their assignment in that role.

**Saturday, May 9.** Pray for seniors graduating from our Mennonite high schools as they discern their next steps and career paths. (Mennonite Education Agency)

**MAY 10–16**

**Sunday, May 10.** Pray for Mennonite Church Canada International worker families (Veith, Park/Kim, and Pantoja) who all have adult children living in North America. Pray that these parents will be able to support their young adult children despite the miles that separate them.

**Monday, May 11.** Pray for the families displaced by disasters and for the work of Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers who help them return to their homes.

**Tuesday, May 12.** Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for the Mennonite Voluntary Service units in Tucson, Arizona; San Francisco; Alamosa, Colorado; Chicago; Washington, D.C.; Manhattan, New York; and Aibonito, Puerto Rico.

**Wednesday, May 13.** Pray for Mennonite Central Committee’s partners in Syria, that they would have the strength, means, and support to continue rebuilding their communities and their lives after more than nine years of war.

**Thursday, May 14.** Pray for Tom and Christine Poovong and their team as they consider planting peace churches in southern Thailand. Pray that God will give wisdom and insight into the situation there. (Mennonite Church Canada)

**Friday, May 15.** Pray for Glen Guyton, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, as he travels across the country, meeting with church leaders and congregations.

**Saturday, May 16.** Pray for the Palestinian people who live in Al-Khalil. Pray for their safety, especially when Israeli settlers take away their homes. Pray that settlers may come to understand the wrongness of their actions. (Christian Peacemaker Teams)

**MAY 17–23**

**Sunday, May 17.** Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for the peace witness of Mennonites in Burkina Faso. The country has experienced coup attempts, bombings, and violence directed at Christians in recent years.

**Monday, May 18.** Pray for the volunteers and staff at Mennonite Central Committee’s thrift shops throughout the U.S and Canada, raising vital financial support for
MCC’s relief, development, and peace work around the world.

**Tuesday, May 19.** Mennonite Mission Network partners with many ministries in Botswana. Pray for sports clubs, primary school students and their teachers, refugees, and the churches that care for people in these concrete ways.

**Wednesday, May 20.** Praise God for the opportunities Andres Prins, Christian-Muslim Relations Team member, has had to witness to Christ’s power. Pray that the seeds sown will produce abundant fruit for God’s glory. (Eastern Mennonite Missions)

**Thursday, May 21.** Pray for the Mennonite Indigenous delegation that is traveling to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to participate in the North American Indigenous Institute for Theological Studies. Pray for joy as they continue to learn how to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right.

**Friday, May 22.** Preparations for the next Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Semarang, Indonesia (July 2021) are gaining momentum. Pray for the National Advisory Council as they work with MWC to plan this gathering of global Anabaptists.

**Saturday, May 23.** Mennonite Mission Network requests prayer for safety and fruitful ministry for community health evangelists, both expatriates and those who serve in their home communities in Africa and Asia.

**MAY 24-30**

**Sunday, May 24.** Virginia Mennonite Missions workers Lee and Peg Martin serve with SWAP (Sharing with Appalachian People) in West Virginia. Pray for them as they prepare for the busy summer season, including hosting teams.

**Monday, May 25.** Mennonite Church USA asks that we pray for “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,” that we may be instruments of God’s love and harmony in the world.

**Tuesday, May 26.** Mennonite Mission Network’s Service Adventure units are beginning to bring closure to their experience. Pray for faithful discernment and smooth transitions to what comes next in their lives.

**Wednesday, May 27.** Pray for Bethel University’s Board of Trustees as they meet today and tomorrow. Ask God for wisdom and guidance.

**Thursday, May 28.** Pray for Eastern Mennonite Seminary faculty as they teach summer courses including intensive hybrid, online, and on campus courses.

**Friday, May 29.** Give thanks for all those who serve in leadership and decisionmaking roles at Goshen College. Pray especially for the Goshen College board of directors as they meet this week.
Saturday, May 30. The admissions team at Columbia Bible College is busy visiting churches, participating in college fairs, and hosting prospective students on Columbia’s View Days. Pray for wisdom in their conversations with students who would benefit from attending Columbia.

MAY 31

Sunday, May 31. Today is Pentecost Sunday. May we be filled with the Holy Spirit to be instruments of peace in our local communities and around the world.

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Melodie Davis (March 1) is a writer and editor in Linville, Virginia. She recently retired after more than 43 years of employment with MennoMedia and its predecessors. Author of nine books, she has three adult daughters and five grandsons. She and her husband, Stuart, are active members of a small mission-focused congregation in Harrisonburg.

Elaine Maust (March 2–8) is a writer, pastor, and spiritual director who loves to give things away. She is copastor of Jubilee Mennonite Church in Meridian, Mississippi, with Duane Maust, her husband (who tries to keep moving, be useful, and look new), who will never be given away.

Bev Regier (March 9–15) lives on a Kansas farm with her husband, Chuck, and their dog, Fritz. She loves learning by listening to podcasts and audiobooks throughout most of her daily tasks. Mother of seven adults and grandmother of four, she attends First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kansas.

Barbara Krehbiel Gehring (March 16–22) moved to Lombard, Illinois, in May 2019. Lombard claims to be the lilac capital of the world—a lovely fit for Barbara, whose favorite flower has always been lilacs. Barbara and her husband, Richard, are copastors at Lombard Mennonite Church. They find much joy in their two young adult daughters and son-in-law.

Dennis Fast (March 23–29) is care pastor at Hope Kingsburg church in Reedley, California, after 35 years as a lead pastor with various congregations. He is interim district minister for the Mennonite Brethren’s Pacific District. Parents of three adult children and grandparents of 14, he and his wife, Connie, live on a small ranch with their daughter and her family.

Naomi Weaver (March 30–April 5) is a retired nurse educator living in a large retirement center with her six siblings and in-laws. They get together weekly for food and games. She enjoys ladies’ Bible study, writing, gardening, and playing Scrabble, Rook, and Hand-and-Foot with other residents. She has finished her project of crocheting afghans for more than 85 great-nieces and nephews. She attends church services at the retirement center where she lives.

Mary Raber (April 6–12) teaches church history and other subjects at Odessa Theological Seminary in Ukraine, sponsored by Mennonite Mission Network. She is a member of St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship in Missouri.

Kathryn Glanzer (April 13–19), of Hillsboro, Kansas, loves to write, paint, garden, and cook. She teaches as an adjunct professor at Tabor College and works with her husband, Chris, at Glanzer Pro Audio, a family business. She is
mother to Anna (20) and Paul (16), who keep her busy attending performances and sporting events. She attends Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church.

Paul Cumin (April 20–26) is senior pastor at Lendrum Mennonite Church in Edmonton, Alberta. A frequent fly-fisher in the eastern slopes and foothills of the Rocky Mountains, he and his wife have three teenage kids.

Gloria Y. Diener (April 27–May 3), of Harrisonburg, Virginia, is a spiritual director and freelance writer. A member of Park View Mennonite Church, she enjoys quilting, gardening, and spending time with her grandchildren.

Aimee Reid (May 4–10), of Hamilton, Ontario, is a children’s author and a mom of three. She calls Philippians 4:8 the focus of her work and enjoys the practice of seeking what is good. Aimee and her family attend Hamilton Mennonite Church.

Connie Nicholson (May 11–17) is a full-time children’s pastor at North Fresno Church in California. By day, Connie can be found writing curriculum, decorating wall space, preparing crafts, or organizing neighborhood events. By night, she studies for her master’s degree in New Testament theology while keeping up with her three active (nearly adult!) children through theater, music, board games, and movies.

David Warkentin (May 18–24) teaches theology and culture at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, British Columbia. He is also faculty director of Columbia One and General Studies at the college. The parents of two children, he and his wife are lay leaders in a multicultural church, The Life Centre, a Mennonite Brethren congregation.

Amy Rinner Waddell (May 25–31) of Abbotsford, British Columbia, is a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church. She finds great joy in music and writing. She has played violin with the Fraser Valley Symphony for 34 years, works as a provincial correspondent for Canadian Mennonite magazine, and is employed part-time at Abbotsford’s trade and convention center. Amy and her husband, Mark, are the parents of three young adult children.