

MESSENGER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER & PRAYER GUIDE



Peter's son Moses (center) joins the weekly cleanup in front of the hospital.
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR

MEETING ISSA by Peter Sensenig

After two years in Chad, I was confronted by an angry stranger who told me to leave his country. He'd assumed we were French, but did not back off when he learned we weren't.

I was left shaken. What do you do when the peace you hope is possible seems suddenly so far away? When Christians and Muslims, on top of the religious separation we experience, are caught up in global political and cultural struggles? Is despair inevitable?

I decided to turn to an unlikely person: my local imam.

THE CHAIN OF CONTACT

I'd crossed paths with many of the men who live and work in front of the hospital at one point or another. But I had yet to meet the imam of the largest mosque in the neighborhood. I decided that this would be an important relationship to establish, so on a Friday morning I breathed a prayer and stepped out to try to make contact.

The first people I saw were some shopkeepers whom I greet regularly. I said to them, "I'd like to meet the imam. How can I do this?"

The shopkeepers pointed me

down the street to a man doing laundry. His name was Toom ("Twin"). Toom referred me to a nearby group of men on motorbikes.

The moto-taxi drivers called over to a boy named Abdullahi. "Take him to see Sheikh Mussa," they told him.

I followed Abdullahi through the neighborhood to a small prayer room beside the large mosque. There, a young man named Mussa looked up from his copy of the Qur'an. When I heard his name, I told him I was also Abu Mussa (Mussa's father).

... CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT

“Are you the imam here?” I asked. “Yes,” he replied, “but not the big imam.”

Mussa called out to an older gentleman who was passing by. His name was Osman, and he told me to wait under a tree. Osman stepped into a house nearby and soon emerged with a bearded man who introduced himself as Sheikh Issa.

“Salaam aleikum” (peace be upon you), I said to Imam Issa. “I am your neighbor, and also a man of faith. I thought that we should meet.”

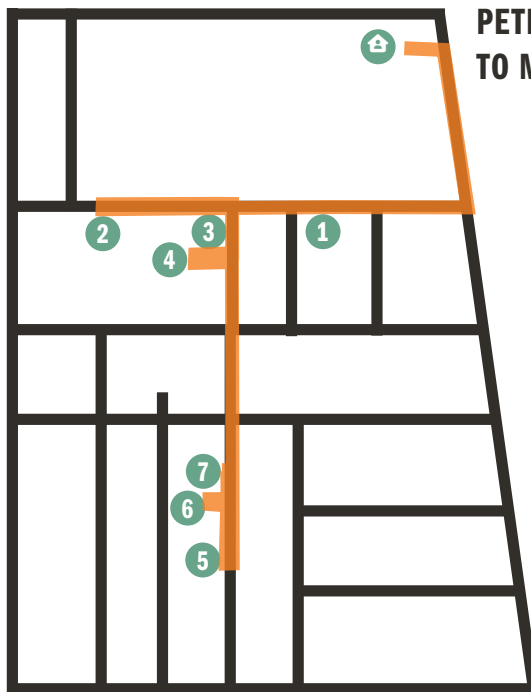
A SURPRISING AGENDA

Issa invited me inside, where we sat on a carpet beside a small stack of Qur’ans. I said, “We both worship God, and I think God wants us to know each other.”

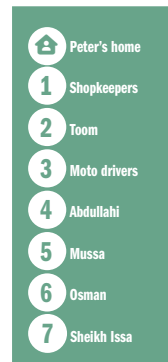
Issa heartily agreed and immediately began describing what the Qur’an says about Jesus (Issa). For ten minutes, he talked about how Jesus had no earthly biological father, and how he declared himself blessed on the day of his birth, the day of his death, and the day of his resurrection (Surah Maryam 19:33). We were briefly interrupted by his wife bringing us biscuits and water.



Imam Issa (left) and Peter (right).



PETER'S JOURNEY TO MEET SHEIKH ISSA



100 METERS (~328 FEET)



Imam Issa described his activities of teaching children, leading prayers, and other responsibilities in the neighborhood. He invited me back anytime. I returned for visits, first with my oldest son Mussa, then with my youngest son Felix.

The only information Issa had on me was that I was a Christian who lived at the nearby hospital, who liked and respected Muslims. This was enough for him to focus positively on the person of Jesus and to open up his home to me.

THREE TAKEAWAYS

As I reflected on the experience, three takeaways came to mind.

The first is that asking for help, even with something as simple as finding someone's home, opens doors that are otherwise shut.

The second is that relationships rarely form through direct contact, but happen in chains and networks. It's not what you know, but who you know — and who you know can be surprisingly dynamic if we reach out.

The third takeaway is that the chain of people who led me to Imam Issa was as impactful as my new friendship with him. Several days later, I again encountered Osman on the street, who greeted me with an enthusiastic, “It's been a while! Where have you been?” Groups of shopkeepers and motorcyclists knew that I was seeking out Imam Issa. Now, when I walk in the neighborhood, sometimes people will ask, “So, are you going to visit Imam Issa?”

“Inshaallah” (God willing), I reply.

Peter Sensenig and his family serve jointly with EMM and Mennonite Mission Network in Chad.

AUGUST DAILY PRAYER

LANCASTER, PA

- 1 | Pray for Michael and Ruthy* as they minister with Immerse International. Pray for them to experience meaningful moments with their family this summer.
- 2 | Pray for God to call volunteers for the programs at Neighbors Community Center, at Hub450, our building in Lancaster, Pa.
- 3 | Pray for Sudanese refugees in Lancaster, many of whom have endured prolonged conflict and time in refugee camps. Ask for healing from past trauma and for strength as they build new lives, finding stability and hope in their community.
- 4 | Pray for Iraqi refugees in Lancaster, who have often fled violence and instability in their homeland. Ask for peace and safety for their families, and for opportunities to contribute their skills and culture to the vibrant life of Lancaster.

CENTRAL ASIA

- 5 | Pray for Alexander and Maria* to have opportunities to share Christ as they work in the fields of education and business in Central Asia.
- 6 | Pray for God to send workers to the field to work in business for transformation and teaching English in Central Asia.
- 7 | Pray for the Akto Turkmen, a small, very-untouched people group in Kyrgyzstan with no known Christian adherents and entirely untouched. Ask for the Holy Spirit to prepare their hearts and for the very first followers of Jesus to emerge from them.
- 8 | Pray for the Karakalpak people in Turkmenistan, an almost entirely Muslim group with no known evangelical presence. Ask God to bring spiritual and physical healing.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- 9 | Ask God to encourage John and Debbie Coats as they minister through public health education, discipleship, and children's ministry.
- 10 | Pray for Will and Nina* and their family as they are in a season of transition. As their oldest child prepares to leave home for university, pray for God's peace and guidance over them and for their hearts as parents to trust the Lord with their future. Pray also for their younger children as they adjust to these changes in family dynamics, especially the youngest, who may not fully understand yet.

- 11 | Pray for God to call pioneer church planters into the harvest field of Thailand to join the team there.
- 12 | Pray for the Halang people of Vietnam, an unreached group with very few known believers. Ask God to raise up new evangelists to share the Good News with them.
- 13 | Pray for the Kuy, an indigenous people group in Cambodia. They are traditionally animistic, face marginalization, and live in remote areas. Ask the Lord to raise up witnesses to share his love.

CENTRAL EUROPE

- 14 | Pray for Karen's ability to grasp and understand the Czech language, as well as adjust to the differences in culture. Also, pray for continuing relationship building with the teens who attended the English camps in July.
- 15 | Pray for individuals to be called to join an international church planting team in a village on the outskirts of Prague, Czech Republic.
- 16 | Pray for the Polish people in Central Europe, many of whom are culturally Roman Catholic but are increasingly focused on materialism. Ask that the Holy Spirit would draw them to a vibrant, personal relationship with Jesus, transforming their hearts and priorities.
- 17 | Pray for the Roma people in Central Europe. Ask for God to break through historical barriers and for Spirit-filled workers to bring the transforming power of the Gospel to their communities.

WEST AFRICA

- 18 | Pray for Jon and Heleen Yoder as they plan their next trip to Sierra Leone this fall and invite others to join them on the trip. They ask for discernment regarding Jon's future involvement with the hospital.
- 19 | Pray for individuals and families to be called to join the work of leadership development and church planting in West Africa.
- 20 | Pray that the light of the Gospel will break through in Sierra Leone and that the stronghold of animism and secret societies will be broken, and Christians will be fully committed to following Jesus.
- 21 | Pray for the Soninke people of The Gambia, who are primarily Malikite Muslims and also engage in animistic practices. Ask that God would reveal Himself powerfully to them, leading many to embrace the truth of Jesus Christ and find freedom from spiritual bondage.

- 22 | Pray for the Fuuta Torro in The Gambia, who are a primarily Muslim group. They have strong traditional beliefs in spiritism and magic. Pray that they would be introduced to Jesus as the way, the truth, and the light.

OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

- 23 | Pray for EMM's donors to multiply their impact through giving to the Impact Fund that allows staff to support workers on the field and their programs.
- 24 | Pray for God to guide the Board of Directors. Ask for wisdom as they continue to provide leadership to EMM's governance.
- 25 | Join Jonathan Bornman in asking God to provide new financial supporters who make his ministry with EMM possible.
- 26 | Join Michael and Nancy Hostetter in praying that the Lord would continue to encourage our brothers and sisters in their efforts to share the gospel message of hope with their friends and family members. Pray for spiritual protection for those who have recently made confessions of faith as they begin their walk with Christ.
- 27 | Pray for Angie Earl as she builds relationships with Muslims and people of varying faith backgrounds in her community. Pray that she would have ample opportunity to share her faith.
- 28 | Pray for A* and A* as they return to Morocco this month. Ask God to continue to renew and refresh them.
- 29 | Pray for Michael Clancy as he serves with his family in Lebanon City, Pa. Pray that he would be encouraged and strengthened.
- 30 | Join Sonya Harnish in praying for open hearts for the Albanian children and youth attending Summer Camps at Kampi Udhekryq (Crossroads) whether hearing the Gospel for the first time or growing in their relationship with Jesus. Ask for unity and strength for the summer staff as they serve the groups coming to camps! Pray for refreshment and good connections as she takes a month of home leave in the U.S. in August.
- 31 | Join J.C. Ebersole in praying that God would raise up African teams that will support their national AABS leaders with prayer and financial support.

Some prayer requests adapted from joshuaproject.net.

**Names changed for sensitivity reasons.*



Eastern Mennonite Missions

PO Box 8617

Lancaster, PA 17604-8617 US

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NOV.
13

**DOUBLETREE RESORT BY HILTON
LANCASTER**

2400 Willow Street Pike
Lancaster, PA 17602
6 P.M.

DEC.
4

**WESTVIEW COMMUNITY ROOM
AT LANDIS HOMES**

1001 East Oregon Road
Lititz, PA 17543
10 A.M.

FEB.
18
2026

**SARASOTA COMMUNITY
CHURCH**

4041 Bahia Vista Street
Sarasota, FL 34232
12 P.M.

VISION & FUNDRAISING BANQUET

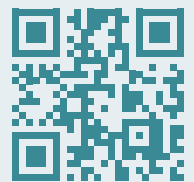
REGISTRATION OPENS
SEPTEMBER 1
EMM.ORG/BANQUET



**When you support EMM's Impact Fund, you enable us to
recruit, equip, and send EMM workers around world.**

**\$624,840 RECEIVED
AS OF JULY 3**

**\$1,862,923
2025 IMPACT FUND GOAL**



EMM.ORG/GIVE

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