

MESSENGER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER & PRAYER GUIDE



A street-view of London, U.K. during Anabaptist Mennonite Network Trustee meetings in September 2025.

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

ANCIENT RHYTHMS: FRESH INSPIRATION by Carol Wert

Five hundred years ago, a handful of believers dared to reimagine discipleship — not as a cultural inheritance, but as an embodied response to Jesus. Their practices proved life-changing. Their Scripture reading awakened hearts, their communities redefined belonging and their baptisms defied empires. As I trace the contours of my own faith journey, I find myself asking: *Do their life-giving practices still shape my spirituality?* And beyond personal reflection, I wonder: *Could these ancient rhythms offer fresh inspiration for global mission today?*

Most people have heard of the

early Anabaptist practices of believers baptism, simplicity, truth-telling, multi-voiced church, and peace witness. Few have attempted to delve into the inner practices that nourish and sustain such visible actions. Yet, outward practices can easily become legalistic if they are not shaped by inner transformation.

In *The New Anabaptists*, Stuart Murray helpfully reminds us that early Anabaptist communities were incredibly diverse and limited surviving resources make it nearly impossible to extrapolate all their practices. When I recently studied the movement's roots, two life-giv-

ing practices stood out with striking clarity — a sacred reading of scripture (sometimes called *lectio divina*) and spiritual accountability. These seemed to provide both spiritual nourishment and missional inspiration.

Sacred reading is a way of reading scripture slowly and prayerfully, often practiced in community. It leads to insight and understanding that a quick perusal of Scripture or a verse of the day slurped down with coffee cannot achieve. In 1525 in Zurich, communal Scripture reading resulted in George Blaurock, Felix Manz, and Conrad Grebel discerning that

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infant baptism was not biblical. It led them to engage in civil and religious disobedience by baptising each other. For Balthasar Hubmaier, a deep reading of scripture with a prayerful spirit transformed his preaching and missionary work. He even wrote a hymn for communal worship based on his reading, albeit eighteen verses long! The influence of Spirit-filled, contemplative scripture reading was also evidenced in the lives of people with no background in church leadership. House fellowships under the engineer Pilgrim Marpeck's leadership spent countless hours in communal Scripture reading, which strengthened their personal faith and relationships. The testimonies of Anabaptist laypeople — many illiterate — in *Martyrs Mirror* show that a deep saturation in Scripture, both reading and listening, provided a solid foundation for exercising their faith in a turbulent world milieu.

A recent U.K. study revealed an encouraging rise in Bible reading among churchgoers. In our church's small group we've gone a step further, introducing the early Anabaptist practice of *lectio divina*. When it came time for our small group of people mostly new to faith or the church to multiply, we reflected collaboratively on the past eighteen months together. The highlight expressed by far was the learning experience and practice of reading and praying Scripture together. One young mother described how

the practice had also inspired her to start reading Scripture at home and that it was transforming her attitude and actions. Prayerful engagement in Scripture, as practiced by early Anabaptist communities, renews hearts, reshapes communities, and ignites courageous witness to Jesus Christ.

Spiritual accountability was a key discipleship emphasis in the emerging Anabaptist movement. In fact, some contemporaries called them "new monastics." In the Christendom era, going to church was a spectator sport for most. Pay the tithe, sing the songs, listen to the sermon. Box ticked for another week. Anabaptists believed that true church was a community of Spirit-filled believers in mutual accountability. Through baptism, they committed themselves to spiritual accountability as both a discipleship tool and an opportunity for correction and growth. Such accountability produced radical disciples willing to follow Jesus at any cost and (for the most part) forged unified communities of hospitality and deep friendship.

Such a practice flies in the face of individualism and personal freedom valued by western cultures today. It can be open to legalistic uniformity and even spiritual abuse. But the Anabaptist leaning to practice accountability within community, when done graciously, can help avoid such misuses. In the U.K.

this year, the Anabaptist Mennonite Network has initiated Anabaptist group spiritual direction. Two Makarios (meaning Blessed) groups, each consisting of five people, currently meet monthly over the year. Facilitators describe these groups as spaces for deep, vulnerable sharing — where participants are invited to move beyond doing to the importance of being in and with God. Over the past two years, journeying with a spiritual companion has opened space to explore parts of my inner life I rarely voice in our church small group setting. How might taking a vulnerable step into Anabaptist-inspired group accountability benefit not only my spirituality but the people I encounter daily?

When followers of Jesus immerse themselves in the communal rhythms of Anabaptist faith — Spirit-led engagement with Scripture and mutual accountability — missional energy becomes both dynamic and reciprocal expressions of God's love. These practices anchor me amid a fractured landscape, where Christians often speak with hostility, public figures eclipse the presence of Christ, and national symbols vie for prominence beside the cross. Yet the historic Anabaptist way offers a steady compass for navigating today's complexities.



Carol Wert and her husband, Alan, serve as marketplace workers in Cardiff, Wales, U.K. Carol is a trustee for the Anabaptist Mennonite Network.

CELEBRATING LEGACIES



Paul W. Holderman, 60, of Chambersburg, Pa., went to be with the Lord on September 23. Paul served with EMM in Cambodia from 2003 to 2006.



J. Mark Brubaker, 85, of Harrisonburg, Va., went to be with the Lord on September 28. Mark served with EMM in Tanzania from 1961 to 1964.

PRAYING FOR

KINGDOM COME



VISION & FUNDRAISING BANQUET

NOV. 13

DOUBLETREE RESORT BY
HILTON HOTEL LANCASTER
6 P.M.

DEC. 4

WESTVIEW COMMUNITY ROOM
AT LANDIS HOMES
10 A.M.

RSVP BY NOV. 2
FOR LANCASTER
EMM.ORG/BANQUET



NOVEMBER DAILY PRAYER

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- 1 | Pray for the Western Cham people living in Cambodia. They speak a Malayo-Polynesian language that uses an old Devanagari script, the alphabet of many Indian languages. Pray that they would have opportunities to hear winsome presentations of the gospel.
- 2 | Join Steve Horst and Bethany Tobin in prayer for financial support, which will allow them to sustain their ministry commitments in Thailand. Pray for the Isaan Doorways participants to learn language and engage in new friendships.
- 3 | Pray for workers to be called to Thailand, to work with displaced people from Myanmar.
- 4 | Pray for God to call pioneer church planters into the harvest field of Thailand to join the team there.
- 5 | Pray for God to continue to prompt young men and women to explore a call to missions through a mission internship with EMM in Southeast Asia.

CENTRAL EUROPE

- 6 | Pray for Tunisian Arabs living in Germany. Tunisia experienced an economic downturn in the early 2020s, causing many to want to migrate elsewhere for work, including to Germany. Pray for work opportunities for Tunisians in Germany, and for them to be able to thrive in their new context.
- 7 | Pray for God to continue to prompt young men and women to explore a call to missions through a mission internship with EMM in Central Europe.
- 8 | Pray for Arabic-speaking Algerians living in the Czech Republic. Virtually all Algerians are Sunni Muslims, with most belonging to the Malikite branch. Pray that the love of Christ would be presented to them in a way that deeply resonates with them.
- 9 | Pray for the Adyghe people living in Germany, who are majority Muslim. There are Adyghe living in Russia, Türkiye, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. Because there are fewer in Germany, they are often overlooked. Pray that they would have meaningful encounters with Jesus.
- 10 | Pray for Karen Hess as pieces begin to fit together for the next year. Pray for wisdom and discernment, doors, as she navigates the next steps as she serves in the Czech Republic.

LANCASTER, PA.

- 11 | Pray for Sudanese Arabs living in Lancaster. Sudanese Arabs are majority Sunni Muslims. Pray for clear presentations of the gospel to be presented to them.
- 12 | Pray for the upcoming mental health training to be held at Neighbors Community Center, at Hub450. Pray that this will be an impactful opportunity for community members to be resourced.
- 13 | The power of prayer is the theme for EMM's banquets this year. Pray for supporters to come, learn about various ways their prayers are and can bring about God's kingdom on earth, and pray with boldness and tenacity for Jesus' disciples to be multiplied.
- 14 | Pray for followers of Hinduism living in Lancaster, Pa. Pray that the light of Christ will be shown to them in ways that are compelling to them.
- 15 | Pray for God to call volunteers for the programs at Neighbors Community Center, at Hub450, our building in Lancaster, PA.

CENTRAL ASIA

- 16 | Pray for Uzbeki Arabs in Kyrgyzstan. Uzbek Arabs are majority Sunni Muslims, incorporating ancient spiritual practices. Pray that they will be presented with the way of Jesus in a way that resonates with them.
- 17 | Pray for God to continue to prompt young men and women to explore a call to missions through a mission internship with EMM in Central Asia.
- 18 | Pray for the Azeris in Kyrgyzstan. Some remain rural farmers, while others have become city dwellers, often employed as technicians and engineers. Pray that God would raise up believers to connect with them and share Jesus with them in impactful ways.
- 19 | Pray for the Balkars in Uzbekistan. They are traditionally mountain-dwellers, but the scarcity of usable land has forced many to move to cities for education and job opportunities.
- 20 | Pray for the Dargin people in Uzbekistan. This people group is officially Sunni Muslim and incorporates aspects of syncretism. Pray that they may encounter the light of Christ.

WEST AFRICA

- 21 | Pray for the Bambara people in The Gambia, many of whom are farmers, relying on millet, sorghum, and groundnuts. Pray for God's provision for them through their crops, and for their spiritual lives through his word.
- 22 | Pray for individuals and families to be called to join the work of leadership development and church planting in West Africa.
- 23 | Pray for God to continue to prompt young men and women to explore a call to missions through a mission internship with EMM in West Africa.
- 24 | Pray for the Fuuta Torro people in The Gambia. They raise livestock, farm, and fish. Pray for God to raise up people to plant seeds about the good news among them.
- 25 | Pray for the Khassonke people in The Gambia, who adhere to an animistic interpretation of Islam. Pray that they would be reached with the good news of Jesus.

OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

- 26 | Pray for donations to the Impact Fund to sustain God's mission through EMM in Lancaster, Pa., and around the world.
- 27 | Join Mike and Nancy Hostetter in prayer for safety for their son, his wife, and their young children as they come to visit them for three months. They will help with the development of the Christian camp property on Tenglo Island. Pray for the continued development of the property. Pray also for continued opportunities to share about Christian discipleship with friends of the mountain communities near Puerto Montt, Llanada Grande, and Valle Frio.
- 28 | Join Andrés and Angélica* in praying that Messiah's love and compassion can be recognized in the aid and development projects being carried out in mountain villages after the devastating earthquake of September 2023 in Morocco.
- 29 | Pray for Peter and Christy* and their family as they are finding their way in Montbéliard, France, this year, even as they continue to hope and pray for open doors in Chad.
- 30 | Pray for clear direction and open doors for Jennifer Weaver to start well in Marseille, France, in 2026.

Some prayer requests adapted from joshuaproject.net.

**Names changed for sensitivity reasons.*



Eastern Mennonite Missions

PO Box 8617

Lancaster, PA 17604-8617 US

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DURING THE EXTRAGIVE YOU CAN SUPPORT EMM AND NEIGHBORS COMMUNITY CENTER



NOVEMBER 21 [EMM.ORG/EXTRAGIVE](https://emm.org/extragive)



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

\$1,038,475 RECEIVED
AS OF OCTOBER 14

\$1,862,923
2025 IMPACT FUND GOAL



[EMM.ORG/GIVE](https://emm.org/give)

Communications director: Micah Brickner
Digital communications coordinator: Julia Tsai

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