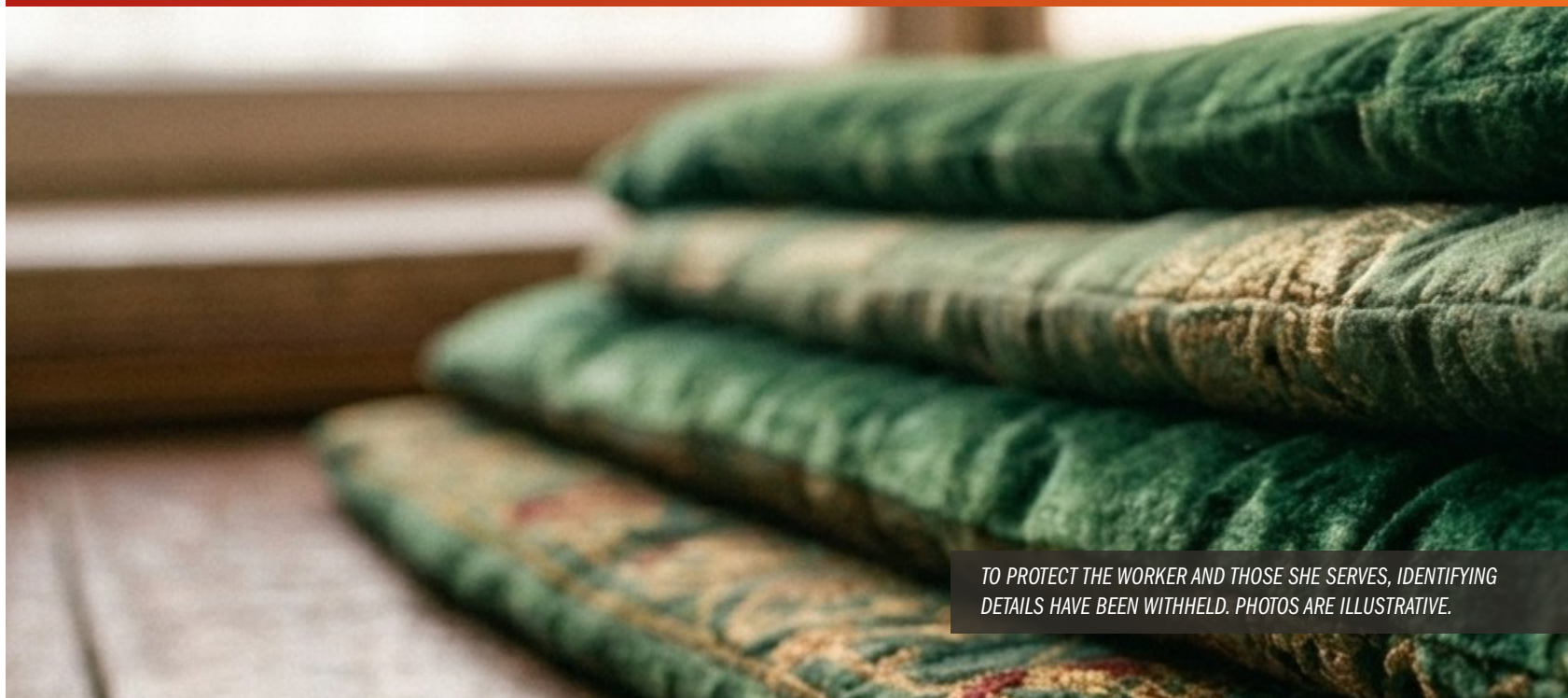


MESSENGER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER & PRAYER GUIDE



TO PROTECT THE WORKER AND THOSE SHE SERVES, IDENTIFYING DETAILS HAVE BEEN WITHHELD. PHOTOS ARE ILLUSTRATIVE.

A NAME FROM A FATHER by Elizabeth S.

The nomads of Central Asia live like Abraham in many ways: pitching tents, herding animals, keeping track of extended family clans and memorizing genealogies. Another similarity between their culture and that of the Bible is their belief that words have power: a blessing or a curse, a congratulatory wish, or the meaning of a child's name are all expected to change the real world.

This belief leads to some strange baby names as a form of birth control! A boy's name meaning, "Make it stop," is given to a child the family hopes will be the last one. A girl's name meaning, "May it be a boy next time," is given to the third or fourth daughters of families hoping for a male heir. That name makes me

shiver, wondering, "Will that woman hear 'We wanted somebody else, not you' every time she hears her name?"

So I was glad that "Riza," the local name I was given, has a positive meaning for believers: "grateful, content, or satisfied." In fact, it frequently shows up in worship songs, like "Jesus my heart is riza in You!" or in the traditional ending of prayers: "we pray with riza-ness in the name of Jesus, amen." Sometimes I would hear my name in a prayer and turn around, thinking they were praying about me!

I didn't realize my name could also be used in the birth-control way until I encountered a woman with a story about it. We met in a village

a two-hour bus ride from my house, over a lavish spread of deep-fried bread, horse sausage, and milk tea, where she had been invited by her friend in hopes that I would pray with her. When I told her my local name was Riza, she said, "Oh, I have a sister named Riza! My parents had five daughters. She was number four, and I was number five. My father wanted to tell God that he was 'riza'—grateful, content, and satisfied—to have four daughters and really didn't need any more!"

"Oh wow. He still had you, after that," I noticed.

"Yes, he did," she agreed.

When we left the tea table, I felt the Spirit's nudge: ask her more about her father. So I did. She picked up

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the story where she had left it off.

"He really didn't want a fifth daughter. When I was born, he was so upset that he refused to pick my mother and me up from the maternity hospital. He gave me to his parents, my grandparents, to raise, and then my parents never visited me, so until I was 8, I didn't even know I had parents and four older sisters. Then they came to get me, but I always felt like I was living with strangers, and I had no right to ask them for anything because I didn't belong to them."

I felt Jesus' anguish rising up in me at how His Father had been misrepresented to her. It welled up in my eyes as tears. She noticed, and began to feel awkward that I was blinking back tears at a story she had told without emotion.

"I was never angry about it," she tried to explain. "I always assumed that that was the way life was supposed to be—that I wasn't supposed to be loved—that my father was supposed to hold Riza on his lap but not me, or tell her that he loved her but not me."

I reached out for help to the One dwelling inside of me as one of His walking temples on the earth. Lord, what do I do with this? I felt the inner response: Get her to pray for forgiveness for her father. I whispered back, Okay, help me get there!

I said out loud, slowly, "You say that you don't feel any anger at your father for the way he treated you, but he did sin against you, and when people sin against us, we have the authority to forgive them in Jesus' name. And when we do that, it releases something powerful in the spiritual realm. So would you be willing to repeat after me a prayer to forgive your father?"

She agreed, so I took a deep breath and began, "In Jesus' name."

She repeated, "In Jesus' name."

"I choose to forgive my father..." I continued. She repeated it.

"...For sinning against You, God, by not agreeing with You that I am a good gift and that I needed to exist," I finished my sentence. She tried to repeat it. The mask broke.

Her face crumpled, and she started sobbing like a baby in my arms, letting all the suppressed feelings up and out. I held her tightly, and when she could finally speak again, we finished the prayer, forgiving her father for every hurt she could think to add.

Then I asked, "Jesus, what do you want to give her in exchange?"

He brought to mind for her the lies that her father's example had taught her about God. When she renounced the lies one by one and forgave her father for teaching them to her, Jesus helped her replace each one with the truth about His Father and His love for her.

It was a beautiful process that I have had the privilege of witnessing Him do many times now. She left able to see herself holding Jesus' hand and walking together into a new sunrise.

But it wasn't until I got home, sat on the pile of quilted green mats in the corner of my one-room apartment that I call my "prayer room," and talked it all over with Jesus that I realized the poetry of what He had done.

"Do you realize what I just did?"

Her earthly father named his daughter Riza to tell her that he didn't want her. So I sent you, My daughter named Riza, to tell her that I do want her."

I was speechless. When I could put my awe into words, I was sputtering, "It was a non-believer who gave me that name, seven years ago! Nobody could ever have planned that except You!"

It reminded me of Ephesians 2:10,

which says we are God's "handiwork" or "masterpiece"—in Greek, poema—and that He prepares both us and the good works He has for us.

So is it any wonder that what He calls us and the opportunities He surprises us with rhyme?

This is true for all of us, not just those of us working overseas. What names does your heavenly Father call you?

What assignments does He have for you to do in that identity, as that poetic masterpiece?

The nomads are right that a name from a Father has the power to reshape the world.

Elizabeth S. is a long-term worker in Central Asia



**"For we are God's handiwork,
created in Christ Jesus
to do good works,
which God prepared
in advance for us to do."**

NOVEMBER DAILY PRAYER

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- 1| Pray for traveling mercies as Brody, Abby, Elijah, and Esmae leave for Thailand today. Ask for peace through goodbyes and a joyful three weeks of learning and building friendships with their host family in Isaan.
- 2| Ask God to supply the Loewen family's remaining support as they prepare to join Doorways in Isaan. Pray for health and encouragement as the team equips workers to reach remote communities.
- 3| As Thailand prepares for Loy Krathong this month, pray for conversations about forgiveness. Ask God to help Thai Christians explain the freedom they have found in Jesus.
- 4| Ask the Lord of the harvest to send short- and long-term workers to Southeast Asia.
- 5| Give thanks for the field workers selected as EMM's next Southeast Asia regional representatives. Pray for wisdom as they prepare to assume these responsibilities in early 2027.
- 6| As Hindu families light lamps for Diwali, pray that the Holy Spirit opens conversations about Jesus to make Him known as the true Light of the World.
- 7| Pray for wise leadership choices at the Vietnam Mennonite Church's General Assembly, younger leaders' spiritual growth, and safe travel for LMC and EMM representatives.

LANCASTER, PA

- 8| Pray that EMM's Kairos participants feel the weight and wonder of Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations. Give instructors words that move learning toward personal obedience.
- 9| Ask God to guard Advance participants' devotion to Christ as they set apart this season to serve Him.
- 10| Ask God to bring new volunteers to Neighbors Community Center and praise Him for those already serving. Pray that all who offer willing hearts and unique gifts to the body of Christ find blessing and encouragement as they serve.
- 11| Remember EMM's Lancaster office staff, from maintenance to leadership and every role in between. As God has arranged the members of the body, may each recognize His purpose in their role and the importance of their work.

12| At today's EMM Vision and Fundraising Banquet, pray that each guest sees their part in God's mission and responds joyfully and generously.

13| Anchor Christian Academy students visit Day@450 today. Pray that a story or conversation stays with them, giving them a concrete picture of how their own lives could serve God's mission locally and globally.

14| Remember recruitment events at Messiah and Eastern universities this month. Pray for honest conversations about the joys and demands of serving as 2027 Kingdom Team staff or 2027-2028 Advance participants.

15| May central administrative office staff's Sukkoth celebration bring honest prayer, restorative fellowship, and joy in the Lord.

WEST AFRICA

16| Ask God to send short- and long-term workers to West Africa, bringing teachable spirits and a readiness to encourage local ministry partners.

17| As 'Nyandengoh!', a ministry serving children with disabilities in Sierra Leone, grows, pray for God's provision and direction. May He be glorified as families find support and children are welcomed as bearers of His image.

18| Pray that West African church leaders facing difficult decisions follow the faithful who came before them, fixing their eyes on God when they cannot see the way forward.

19| Pray for those weighing the gospel's claims—that their questions find answers and fear does not keep them from following Jesus.

CENTRAL ASIA

20| Pray for households in Central Asia where following Jesus has strained family ties. Ask God to restore relationships and help relatives see the change Christ has made, drawing entire families to faith.

21| As parts of Central Asia highlight tolerance this month, ask God to turn public commitments into freedom to worship, teach Scripture, and share the gospel.

22| Pray for workers in Central Asia serving carefully under scrutiny. Ask God to fill their cups as they pour into others—with protection, fellowship, joy, comfort, and peace.

23| Ask God to send short- and long-term workers to Central Asia and prepare those

still growing up. Pray for parents and churches nurturing their faith, teachers recognizing their gifts, and experiences that will help them love the people they may one day serve.

CENTRAL EUROPE

24| Ask God to send short- and long-term workers to Central Europe who will share their lives alongside the gospel. Remember local partners preparing for and guiding visiting workers. Pray that their needs are heard and that each placement strengthens the work already underway.

25| Pray for Central European churches caring for Ukrainians displaced by war. Ask God to sustain their hospitality through another winter and bring healing through Christ.

26| On this U.S. Thanksgiving Day, remember workers who miss familiar gatherings back home. Thank God for those who have welcomed them, and pray for companionship around their tables today. May they have room to acknowledge homesickness while enjoying the friendships God has given them.

27| Amid Central Europe's Black Friday sales, pray that God breaks materialism's grip and exposes the emptiness of wealth without Him. Ask Him to awaken a hunger for Christ that possessions cannot satisfy.

OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

28| Pray for Steve and Beth Gibbs as they encourage pastoral couples in Peru through regular video calls. Ask for attentive listening, freedom for pastors to share difficult concerns, and questions that help each couple discern God's direction.

29| Praise God for a good school-year start and residency approvals for Peter and Christy*. Pray for progress in Lebanese Arabic and patience when words are hard to find. Ask God to guide Peter's seminary teaching, help the children thrive in school, and clear the way for the remaining paperwork.

30| Pray for the All-nations Association of Bible Schools in North Africa. Ask God to open access to biblical training and equip faithful students who will teach others.

*Some prayer requests adapted from joshuaproject.net.
Names changed or omitted for sensitivity reasons.



Eastern Mennonite Missions

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Behold

I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR

- Revelation 3:8

November 12th — Double Tree, Lancaster, Pa

December 3rd — Landis Homes, Lititz, Pa

February 17th — SCC, Sarasota, Fl

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

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AS OF OCTOBER 16, 2026

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