

## Strengthening the church through education

### HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP

MEA and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) have partnered to develop **the first Spanish language graduate certificate in theology at an MC USA seminary.** The fully online MEA Hispanic Ministries – AMBS Graduate Certificate in Theology will be taught entirely in Spanish and is designed to provide professionals, congregational leaders, and bivocational pastors with a foundation in theological and biblical study. The 21-credit-hour certificate consists of seven courses to be completed in two and half years. Graduates will then be eligible to enroll in AMBS’s English-language master’s-level programs. The program launched this fall with a cohort of 12 students **“We are pioneering graduate-level theological education in Spanish,”** said Marco Güete, Director of Hispanic Ministries for MEA. **“This is a historic partnership that opens a range of quality theological study opportunities for Hispanic leaders in the United States and Spanish-speaking countries. The Hispanic Mennonite church is growing. We want these congregations to have well-trained disciples of Jesus to lead them.”**

### NEW SCHOLARSHIP FOR BIPOC STUDENTS

MEA has launched a new scholarship for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) students within MC USA. The scholarship was created to support students who identify as BIPOC, who are attending a Mennonite college, university, or seminary, and who are active participants in an MC USA congregation. This **\$4,000 scholarship** will be awarded annually to further the education of future church leaders. Each MEA-approved Mennonite higher education institution may receive one scholarship in an academic year. As funds increase, so will the number of scholarships available. For the 2023-24 academic year, applications are due October 1, 2023. For the 2024-25 academic year, applications are due April 1, 2024. Details about the scholarship and the application can be found online at [www.MennoniteEducation.org/schools/mea-scholarship-for-bipoc-students/](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/schools/mea-scholarship-for-bipoc-students/).

### VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

The visionary behind MEA’s Hispanic Ministries is Director Marco Güete, who was part of the group of Hispanic pastors in 1988 who imagined a way to train leaders in every Hispanic Mennonite church. They founded IBA and built partnerships with local congregations across the country, established study centers within those churches,



and recruited students and teachers. Hundreds of students have enrolled in the program since then. Many have graduated with certificates or diplomas and have gone on to serve as pastors and leaders in the church. SeBAH emerged in 2010. As the director, Marco has invested more than most in these ministries, and he continues to dedicate himself to strengthening the Hispanic Mennonite Church. This summer, he and his wife Sandra completed the third leg of a multi-year pilgrimage along *el Camino de Santiago* (the Way of Saint James) in Spain – around 165 miles each year for a total of 483 miles! – to raise awareness and support for IBA. Beyond the beauties of the path and the surrounding landscapes, Marco marveled at the connection with other walkers. **“For a few days, we are all the same, regardless of race, profession, culture, or language. We become friends of the way, and we greet each other with the phrase, “Buen Camino,” (“Good Way”) a traditional way to greet fellow pilgrims. It was a time when we became more human, more spiritual. We could see God’s creation in ourselves without prejudice.”** Keeping the program affordable is a priority, and fundraising is critical. Güete hopes his walks raise awareness and inspire generosity within the church. To learn more about MEA’s Hispanic Ministries programs or to enroll, visit [www.MennoniteEducation.org/hispanic-ministries](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/hispanic-ministries).

## MEET THE MEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



We welcomed new members to the Board in July, and we also said goodbye to a longtime member.

**Roy Williams** (right column, second from the bottom) has served on the MEA Board of Directors faithfully since 2011 in various capacities. Most recently he served as Treasurer and Chair of the Audit Committee. We will miss Roy's wisdom, institutional memory, wit, and candor.

The current Board includes (clockwise from top left):

**Nathan Alleman**, of Waco, Texas, continuing as Board

Chair; **Judy Hostetler Mullet** from Harrisonburg, Vir., and Lindale Mennonite Church, Vice-Chair; **Conrad Swartzentruber**, Superintendent of Dock Mennonite Academy, ex officio as the Chair of the Mennonite Schools Council (preK – grade 12 schools); outgoing member Roy Williams; **Jane Wood**, President of Bluffton University, ex officio as the Chair of the Mennonite Higher Education Association; **Erick Martinez** from Dallas, Texas, a member of Monte Horeb Iglesia; **Jessica Clopton-Robinson** from College Hill Mennonite Church in Tampa, Fla., Treasurer and Chair of the Audit Committee; and **Rose Bender Cook**, pastor of Whitehall (Pa.) Mennonite Church, Secretary. We are excited about new energy and fresh perspectives as we enter into a time of strategic planning this fall.

## AMBS PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW

In accordance with its bylaws, the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) Board of Directors launched a regular presidential review of Dr. David Boshart in October 2022. Michael Danner was a member of the Review Committee, and MEA staff Jolene VonGunten provided administrative support. The Committee completed its role in April, and the AMBS Board voted unanimously to reappoint Dr. Boshart to a second four-year term. We are pleased to be part of this important work.

## NEW WEBSITE

Having outgrown the old site, MEA launched a new website in April. The new site offers user-friendly search features for degree programs and faith formation resources, a communications hub for news from across Mennonite education and Mennonite Church USA, as well as time-honored resources such as a prayer calendar, job board, and enrollment reports – all wrapped up in a sharp, new look. Shé Langley, the founder of [RankLift](#) digital marketing agency, designed the site to improve functionality, provide interactive elements, and enhance the overall user experience. Site navigation is also improved, with intuitive accessibility. To learn more about MEA's mission and work, and to experience the new website, visit [www.MennoniteEducation.org](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org).

## "AT HOME" RESOURCES

Inherited from our friends at Mennonite Church Canada, the At Home worship guide series leads individuals and families through the days and weeks of Lent and Advent with the goal of deepening their experience of the season. Daily and weekly Scriptures are woven with worship rituals, prayers, activities, and background information. The 2023 edition of **Advent at Home, "How will we know?"** is currently in production. Talashia Keim Yoder, a graduate of [Hesston \(Kan.\) College](#) and current student of [Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary](#), Elkhart, Ind., is writing the curriculum. Erin Ramer, a graduate of [Bethany Christian Schools](#), Goshen, and [Goshen \(Ind.\) College](#) is the designer and illustrator. Ubaldo Rodriguez is providing Spanish translation, and Michael Danner and Jolene VonGunten from MEA are co-editors. Advent at Home is scheduled to be released mid-November and will be available for free download at MEA's website:

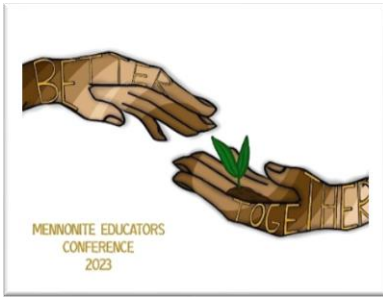
[www.mennoniteeducation.org/resources](http://www.mennoniteeducation.org/resources). **Whether at home or in the classroom, MEA is committed to helping teachers and parents as they impact children and young people.**

## PRAYER SUPPORT

The MEA prayer newsletter is a monthly prayer resource that continues to be a blessing to the schools and local congregations. These prayer requests come directly from schools and educational programs across all levels of Mennonite education to help congregations and individuals know how best to pray for the schools and the work being done toward faith formation. The prayer requests can be shared in bulletins each week and/or printed or emailed to congregations each month for home use. To view or subscribe, visit [www.mennoniteeducation.org/monthly-prayer](http://www.mennoniteeducation.org/monthly-prayer).

## MENNONITE EDUCATORS CONFERENCE

MEA's Jo Helmuth provided event planning and logistical support for the [Mennonite Educators Conference](#) in Leesburg, Va, February 2 – 4. Following a three-year hiatus



due to the pandemic, the theme **“Better Together”** resonated deeply with the 330 attendees, who represented fourteen Early Childhood – grade 12 schools from across the U.S., plus an international

affiliate from Albania. Eastern Mennonite University Professor Emerita Dr. Judy Hostetler Mullet (a new MEA Board member) was one of the keynote speakers, and Harrisonburg-based [The Walking Roots Band](#) gave a concert and led a worship session. The event was co-sponsored by Everence Financial, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Disaster Service, and Mennonite Mission Network.

## JOB BOARD

MEA publishes a weekly [Job Board](#) and distributes it to congregations, schools, constituents, and donors across the denomination and beyond. Schools partnered with MEA can list their job openings at no charge. Organizations connected with MC USA can list a job ad for a small charge. There are a significant number of vacancies at all levels across Mennonite education.

## MENNONITE LEARNING NETWORK

MEA operates the Mennonite Learning Network, a Moodle platform for online learning. Current partners include MEA's Hispanic Anabaptist Biblical Seminary (SeBAH – [Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano](#)), [Semilla](#),



[Mennonite Mission Network – Sent training](#), the [Collaborative MBA program](#), and

the [Doctorate in Nursing Practice consortium](#). MEA is shaping plans to make this platform available more broadly to MC USA area conferences as an online learning platform they can access at reduced costs compared to getting the services on their own.

## BUILDING FAITH

The Mennonite Early Childhood Network operates Building Faith, a website ministry for parents of young children. The goal is to provide **resources for families** who want to nurture their children's spiritual growth. The ministry develops new concepts on a monthly basis with Scripture-based lessons, activities, and prayers. The resource is also available in Spanish. Visit [www.BuildingFaithFamily.com](http://www.BuildingFaithFamily.com).

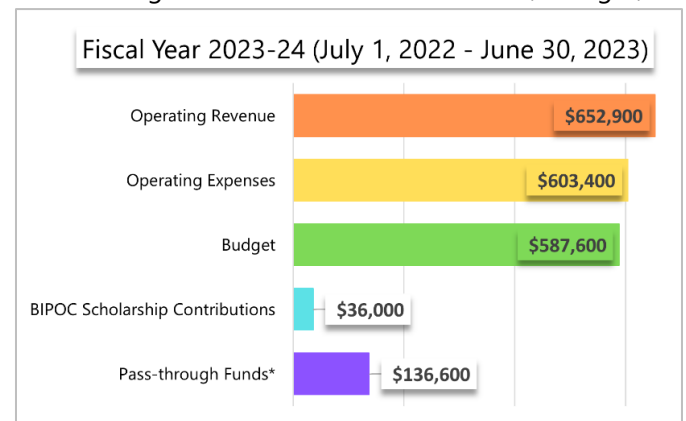
## MEA INVESTMENT FUND

Since 1995, [The MEA Investment Fund](#) has served MC USA-affiliated schools, congregations, area conferences, and other programs with Mennonite education-related assets that are integrated into an investment pool. Pooling funds offer many benefits to the participants. Today, over twenty entities participate in the pool. As of June 30, 2023, it was valued at \$195.2 million.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The following chart shows the financial activity for the fiscal year 2022-23. (Investment-related gains and losses are not included.) MEA is in a good financial position currently. COVID's silver lining was reduced travel costs, which had been a huge line item, and there were staffing changes. We do have a safety net now. However, looking forward, there is concern about changes in significant funding sources and whether contributions will continue a downward trajectory. In July, the MEA Board approved a deficit budget for 2023-24.

\*Pass-through Funds are donated for schools, colleges,



and seminaries sent through MEA.

**On behalf of the staff and board of directors, thank you for supporting Anabaptist-Mennonite education.**

Submitted by Michael Danner  
Executive Director