



**Mennonite  
Central  
Committee**

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

*Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ*

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Dear friends,

Greetings from Akron, Pennsylvania. As the season transitions into spring, it is encouraging to see new growth and new life springing from the earth. I pray that renewal can be felt through all our communities as we begin to emerge back to life.

The canners will soon be returning to Akron and we will begin our normal summer maintenance schedule. Thankfully, the upcoming canning season looks more realistic as many of our communities and localities have begun easing restrictions. As the need for canned meat is strong and steady around the world, my intention is to operate the mobile cannery as safely and as normally as possible. But it is too early to know exactly what that means at this point.

We continue to search for the final member of this year's canning crew. Please let me know if you are aware of anyone who may be interested, or anyone who may be gently persuaded. The federal government has indefinitely suspended entry visas into the United States. This will require us to fill out the canning crew from inside the United States, something which has been a recent and ongoing challenge.

Aside from canning, MCC faces many other unknowns. The temporary closures of MCC Thrift shops and cancellations of relief sales due to COVID-19 greatly impact the financial outlook of all MCC's work. It is unclear what effect this may have on the mobile cannery in the longer term, but for right now we are continuing to purchase canning supplies and plan to transport them across the country as usual.

These challenges have also presented opportunities. We have been busy organizing canned meat distributions to many hard-hit communities in the United States, including places in California, New York, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Florida. This is in addition to the domestic distributions many of you annually contribute at your local food pantries, churches, etc. In the face of major disruptions to local food supplies, canned meat is proving again to be a blessing and gift of hope.

Thank you for your many valuable contributions to the mobile cannery and to MCC! I pray we fearlessly and carefully continue to seize opportunities to help our neighbors here and around the world.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Hillegass".

John Hillegass

Mennonite Central Committee