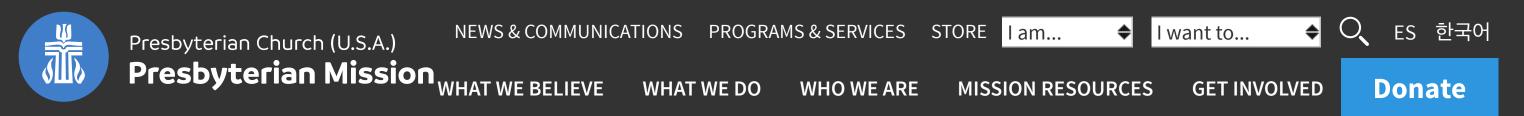
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New Life Emerging

March 21, 2022

A Letter from Chenoa Stock, serving in Peru

Winter 2022

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Dear friends,

"How did Jesus live?" my son, Leandro, asked me during our bedtime pillow talk on Ash Wednesday evening. With ashes still on his forehead, placed by the priest in the Catholic

preschool he is attending while we are in the U.S., our family Lenten reflection began. As I devote myself to Lenten practices, my son's question calls me into a deeper examination of Jesus' selfless life, his faithful ministry, his "how he live(d)," and also his sacrificial death. I remember and live in the hope that those ashes, the dust from which we came and to which we will return, are signs that, through death, through the ending of what was, lead us to discover new life and new possibilities.

On January 30, alongside our partners of the Evangelical Church of Peru (IEP), we contemplated these endings and new beginnings when we mourned the passing and celebrated the life of our sister and partner in faith, Jesusa Chavez Lima. Jesusa was diagnosed with cancer in August and was undergoing chemotherapy when she was diagnosed with COVID-19 over the Christmas holidays. Her body was unable to recover, but her spirit lives on in her ministries.



Jesusa was one of the first female ministers of the IEP. Before the IEP officially ordained female pastors, Jesusa was recognized and authorized by the Sicuani Presbytery and the Synod of Cuzco as a church pastor. Her role as teacher, preacher, leader and counselor brought many to the church. She was a pioneer for the inclusion and ordination of women in the IEP and served tirelessly to empower them in various ways. She produced materials for their formation within the denomination and their communities; traveled near and far within the synod to carry out workshops, theology classes, and Bible studies for the IEP's Women's Leagues; and worked to assure the inclusion of Quechua-speaking communities and congregations. For several years, she hosted a weekly radio program for those who searched for deeper theological formation and reflection. When the pandemic began, she brought the equipment to her house so she could continue to preach and teach to those who did not have internet access to watch worship services. She and her husband, Pastor Leopoldo Aguilar, continued to travel and preach throughout the pandemic to reach those communities that had become even more isolated. They are dear friends and partners to many PC (USA) congregations who have visited Peru and their IEP church and Bible institute in the Cuzco region. We will miss Jesusa's smile, her cooking, her giving heart, her energetic spirit and her faithful trust and love of God; but her teachings paved the way for so many siblings of the IEP, especially women, will live on in the new possibilities of their continued work and ministry for their churches and communities.

I, too, am planning to share about Jesusa's ministries and those of all our Peruvian partners in the months to come, as I officially will be on Interpretation Assignment (IA) in the U.S. from May through December. IA is a time for us, as mission co-workers, to intentionally dedicate more time to connecting with PC(USA) churches to share more deeply about the ministries of our partners in whatever way is best for your congregation. As of now, all events will be virtual until the PC(USA) employee travel ban is lifted. Once the ban is lifted, I will be able to arrange inperson events and travel to your congregations. If you are interested in sharing a space together to learn more about Peru and our partners' ministries, please let me know.

Let's get creative, even amidst the virtual restrictions! Perhaps a Peruvian partner could join us to talk about their ministry. Perhaps another mission co-worker could join us to share about another region. Maybe we could focus on a particular topic or issue relevant to both Peru and your congregation and community. The possibilities are endless!

So, as we walk together through this season of Lent, reflecting with Leandro on how Jesus lived, let us not be afraid, as we also contemplate how and why Jesus died, allowing our ashes and our darkness to call us to discover together new life after many years of isolation, new ministries that build on those who pioneered the way, and new possibilities to connect and share about God's abundant and hope-filled ministry around the world, especially in Peru.

I give thanks for your partnership, and I am very excited about the possibility of connecting with you after so many years.

God's Peace in this Lenten and Easter season,

Chenoa



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