

Saludos desde Bolivia!

Enjoy an update from Chenoa Stock on the Joining Hands UMAVIDA mission and life in the Bolivian Andes.



Delegation visit to a Methodist Church service (2014).

Thank you for your continued support of my ministry through your prayers, messages and financial gifts. I continue to serve because of you and your accompaniment.

A New Family Call

*A letter from Chenoa Stock serving
in Bolivia*

Almost eight years ago, I arrived in the capital of Bolivia, La Paz. Eight years of being blown away by the surrounding Andes mountains, of learning and continuing to improve my Spanish, of building relationships with colleagues and friends, and of working with the Joining Hands Network, UMAVIDA (Joining Hands for Life) on our mission for long-term, sustainable change through advocacy campaigns.

UMAVIDA members with delegation
participants in La Paz, Bolivia.



Our work of accompanying communities affected by mining contamination and their search for environmental justice has been full of joys and challenges. With our network partners, we walked with these communities as they called for the first environmental audit ever done on a mining company in Bolivia and

subsequently worked for an updated Water Law. With our US partners, we helped to monitor that audit and review its final document in order to hold the government accountable for the information reported. With our youth, we hosted and participated in various water schools and youth congresses with our Peruvian sister network in order to increase youth awareness about the local and global water and environmental situation, encouraging them to act and take part in the ongoing environmental movement.

UMAVIDA has allowed me to work with a variety of partner organizations, constantly learning more deeply about different issues, such as women's rights, child miners, urban farming, sustainable agriculture, and youth formation. Our work with different alliances helped us to connect with the greater environmental cause within Bolivia and around the world.





Photos: (Top, Clockwise) 1. Youth on a trip to Lima, Peru, participate in the People's COP +20 March (2014). Their banner says "Seeds of Water." 2. Delegation visit to El Alto, Bolivia, to learn about community urban gardening (2017). 3. Workshop in Oruro, Bolivia, with Dr. Serrano, who accompanied us in our call for an environmental audit. 4. Environmental Youth Congress in Cochabamba, Bolivia, with representatives from four countries (2012). 5. Delegation visit to the mines in Potosí, Bolivia (2012).

These are just a few of the joys I have experienced in my eight years as a part of the almost 20-year partnership between UMAVIDA and the PC (USA) Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP). I lift up these joys and the many people and institutions who have been a faithful part of it throughout these years, including you all. Without their and your dedication and commitment, we could not have been witnesses to caring for God's Creation as we have been in this time.

I reflect on this partnership with you, as the moment has come to celebrate the past while also looking to the future. In the recent past, as I have mentioned in other newsletters, the political situation in Bolivia has made environmental work more difficult. Internal conflicts within the network have also affected its best functioning. Due to these factors, UMAVIDA's work has slowly changed directions, steering away from advocacy, and now no longer aligns with the Joining Hands mission. With this adjustment to the network's goals, and after a number of years working to mitigate these difficult circumstances, PHP has decided to end the partnership with UMAVIDA, although PHP will continue to work with other civil society groups in southern Bolivia on water and food issues with indigenous peoples in alliance with our ecumenical partner, Church World Service (CWS).

Though this brings to an end a chapter of my service here, I can only be grateful for all I have seen, learned and experienced through UMAVIDA's brothers and sisters. In this time, I grew as a person and mission co-worker; I made friends and colleagues whom I treasure; I traveled to different parts of this beautiful country for work and leisure; I met and married my best friend; and I became a mother. For all this and more, I give thanks.



Photos: (Top, Clockwise) - 1. A delegation visiting El Alto, Bolivia, participates in the Creation Celebration (2017). 2. Environmental Fair with youth photojournalism reports on display (2012). 3. Delegation visit to Machacamarca, Bolivia, to talk with communities affected by mining (2014). 4. A delegation visiting Huanuni, Bolivia, witnesses and learns about mining contamination (2017). 5. Delegation visit to the Lutheran Church in El Alto, Bolivia, followed by an “aphthapi” potluck (2013).

But my gratitude does not end there. God has opened a door for my family to continue serving as your PC(USA) mission co-workers here in South America. My husband, José, and I have decided to take a team assignment, serving together as mission co-workers in Lima, Peru, starting in the new year. We will serve together organizing and accompanying mission delegations from PC(USA) churches through PERUSA, a new program of the Joining Hands Peru Network. PERUSA can set up mission study tours and work/study delegations for both Peru Network members and for our church partner, the Evangelical Church of Perú (IEP).

PERUSA offers a broad range of services to US churches, ranging from building relationships for advocacy and environmental justice to helping them build mutually transforming partnerships with local churches in Peru. Through this new assignment, we will still be connected with a Joining Hands partner, seeking to care for God’s Creation and to walk together with Peruvian churches in service to God’s mission.



We feel blessed to have been given this opportunity to follow God's call and are looking forward to learning and experiencing a new country and culture and to meeting new colleagues. We would invite you to come with us to Peru, to learn with us and continue supporting us in this new call as a family. We would also ask for your prayers as we prepare for this great transition, both professionally and personally. I thank you for your support throughout these years serving with UMAVIDA. Your accompaniment is what makes God's mission work. Once José begins his service in the new year and we have a new support number, I will share that with you. For now, you can continue to support me/us using the same

ECO number as always (E200335).

As we move into this new service, we go with excitement, and also in the faith and courage that you are with us, God is beside us and the Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Let the justice journey continue.

Peace and blessings,

Chenoa



Click [here](#) to read any of Chenoa's past newsletters!

