

Albuquerque Mennonite group publishes online environmental justice magazine

“Mní wičhóni” means *water is life* in the Lakota language. A rallying theme of the water protectors at Standing Rock in North Dakota, it has been taken up more broadly as parts of our world—and certainly the American West—are experiencing increasing dryness. Our region’s current drought cycle is most likely compounded by climatic changes brought about by human activity over the past several hundred years.

For those of us in the watersheds that originate within our conference area (the Colorado, Platte, Arkansas and Rio Grande), the growing implications of limited water resources are having a direct impact on our lives and our plans for the future—and certainly for our children and grandchildren.

Indigenous spirituality teaches us that all of life is connected—that we belong to the earth, rather than the earth belonging to us. This is also implied in scripture, as we are instructed to care for and steward creation. Any activity we take to improve the health of our watershed comes out of our understanding of what Creator intends for us as we live on this earth.

Enter Albuquerque Mennonite Church’s Sue Brown. With 85 years of life experience, Sue continues to use her energy, vision, and determination to help AMC, the surrounding Albuquerque community, and our broader region become more involved with and connected to the life and health of our local middle Rio Grande watershed. Sue has gathered resources, learned WordPress content management, and contacted dozens of local writers and organizations to create an online magazine called the *Mid Rio Grande Times*. The project is sponsored by AMC’s Faith in Action committee.

With a small cohort of writers, editors, designers, and others with interest and knowledge about the mechanics of producing a digital resource, the *Mid Rio Grande Times* is approaching its 21st issue. Each issue contains short, readable pieces on topics such as soil contamination and remediation, increasing the desert tree canopy to help keep our cities cooler, and improving water storage and use practices. This past spring *Mid Rio Grande Times* received a \$1,000 grant from Mennonite Creation Care Network to help cover publishing costs. With an accumulation of about 60 articles, additional book reviews, and lists of local food sources and community activities the online magazine has become a veritable handbook for all things watershed-related in the middle Rio Grande region.

Why would a church get involved in producing this kind of a project? AMC doesn’t openly promote itself within the publication, but if you look closely, you will find us. And sometimes readers make the connection—that the local Mennonite faith community cares about environmental health and climate justice as a natural way to live out our commitment to following Jesus.

We hold on to the promise of life-giving water—given literally and metaphorically in Revelation 22:
The spirit-messenger then showed me the river of live-giving water shining as bright as crystal. It flowed out from the seat of honor of the Great Spirit and the Lamb. The river flowed down the center of the village’s wide pathway. On each side of the river was a life-giving tree. Every moon this tree was bearing fresh fruit—twelve different crops a year! Its leaves were good medicine for the healing of the nations. —Rev. 22: 1-2, First Nations Version

To subscribe to the *Mid Rio Grande Times*, visit: <https://midriograndetimes.org>.

It’s free!