

The day is near

Gathering

Spirit of Jesus come, inhabit our worship.
Burst anew like the dawning of a new day.
Wake us from our slumber and clothe us with
the garment of your love,
so that we may be prepared for your coming.
This morning as we worship, we long to lay aside
all that hinders us from seeing you more clearly
and knowing you more dearly.

Confessing/reconciling

Leader: Although we love one another, we also hurt
each other, choose sides, and hide our pain.

**People: Jesus, teach us a new way. Forgive us, O God
when we turn our backs on one another
and refuse to listen and harden our hearts.**

(pause for silence)

Leader: Jesus says, truly I tell you, whatever you bind
on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever
you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

*All: Take heart, God forgives us and calls us anew
to the way of reconciling love.*

Sending

Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I
am there among them." So, we go with the assurance that Jesus
has been among us and will go with us into the world. Do not be
afraid but boldly live as if the new day of the Kingdom has
already come. Love each other. Love your neighbor and above all
love God who has created you and redeemed you. Amen.

—Ken Beidler, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Bible readings for today: Romans 13:8-14; Ezekiel 33:7-11; Psalm 119:33-40;
Matthew 18:15-20. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Romans 14:1-12; Genesis
50:15-21; Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13; Matthew 18:21-35.



We live to the Lord

Praising/adoring

Leader: Praise the Lord! God's love for us is great!

People: With every part of our being, we praise God's holy name.

Leader: Praise the Lord who forgives, heals, redeems, and satisfies.

People: We praise God and remember what God has done for us.

Leader: God has removed our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west.

People: Like a father who has compassion for his children, the Lord has compassion for us.

All: Praise the Lord!

Witnessing

All: For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. We belong to the Lord.

Students: We praise God for those with the gift of teaching.

Teachers: We praise God for the minds that are open to your knowledge and wisdom.

All: Help us to learn from each other.

Students: Wherever learning takes place—Sunday school, public school, Mennonite schools,

Teachers: wherever teaching takes place—in homes, through books, as mentors,

All: God is there with all of us. Amen.

Sending

Dear God, As we leave today, help us recognize that each one of us teaches with our life of faith. Help us accept each other and build community: the weak and the strong, the young and the old. Let our faith grow so that we can reach out to others. Amen.

—Rachel Nussbaum Eby, Goshen, Indiana

Today is Christian Formation Sunday. MennoMedia, Mennonite Church Canada, and Mennonite Education Agency, equip the church to experience and share the gospel from an Anabaptist perspective. Rachel Nussbaum Eby is the Director of Communications for Mennonite Education Agency.

Bible readings for today: Romans 14:1-12; Genesis 50:15-21; Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13; Matthew 18:21-35. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Matthew 20:1-16; Jonah 3:10-4:11; Psalm 145:1-8; Philippians 1:21-30.



I choose to give

Praising/adoring

Leader: We exalt you, our God the King; we celebrate your abundant goodness and we stand in awe of your merciful righteousness.

Women: We celebrate that we serve you, our God, a God who is gracious and compassionate.

Men: Our God is slow to anger and rich in love.

Leader: Great and awesome is God in every worship.

All: Today we come to worship our God. Everyday we will exalt and praise God's name for ever and ever.

Confessing/reconciling

Righteous God, we confess that we sometimes choose what is wrong, harmful and even injurious to others; too often we choose simply to stay silent in the face of wrong and we ignore the plight of the weak and the vulnerable. We rejoice that you are slow to anger and full of compassion. In your mercy, forgive our wrongful choices and our hurtful silences. Free us to speak for those who are sinned-against, to stand up for those who are weak, and to act with justice and compassion toward all people.

Sending

Leader: Go in the peace that Christ gives, to live and work so that all may see the righteousness of God in your actions and choices.

People: We go as ambassadors of Christ's peace to show compassion and love to all we meet. Amen.

—Stanley Green, Elkhart, Indiana

Today is Peace Sunday. This Sunday's resources were written by Stanley Green, the Executive Director of Mennonite Mission Network, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA. The parallel agency in Canada is Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

Bible readings for today: Matthew 20:1-16; Jonah 3:10-4:11; Psalm 145:1-8; Philippians 1:21-30. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Psalm 25:1-9; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32



All lives are mine

Praying (unison)

Merciful God, as a child depends on loving parents,
we depend on your steadfast love and mercy towards us.
Feed us with your Word of life. Lead us in paths of your
righteousness and truth. Place our feet along the way of
justice and peace.
Our lives are in your hands. Amen.

Proclaiming

Leader: If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit,

Women: make my joy complete; be of the same mind and have the same love.

Men: Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.

Leader: Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

Women: Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who emptied himself,

Men: taking on human form, humble and obedient even to death.

Leader: Therefore God has highly exalted him and given him the name that is above all names,

All: so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Sending

Therefore God's people, go in humility and with the love of Christ burning in your hearts. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus who instead of grasping after power, lived and died as a servant and so showed God's love to the world.

—Ken Beidler, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Bible readings for today: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Psalm 25:1-9; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Psalm 80:7-15; Isaiah 5:1-7; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46.



Let your face shine, that we may be saved

Proclaiming

Leader: We give thanks and praise for the gift of World Communion Sunday. Whatever the diversity is coming to the table, today we partake in a worldwide wave of kneelers, prayers, drinkers, and eaters who love, remember, and try to follow Lord Jesus.

People: **Let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

Communion prayer

Thank you, Lord, for the people you invite to this table, brothers and sisters in Christ.

We come to this table, knowing that God created us and loves us all.

We come to this table, knowing that Jesus died for us all.

We come to this table, knowing that God's Spirit sustains us all.

We come to this table, to experience the mystery of our faith, Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

As we come to the table, grace us with your Holy Spirit so that we can understand the wideness of your love.

We are one people, one body, your Church in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

"Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead . . . press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus."

May we go in peace, filled with the light of your Spirit, ready to join God's redeeming activity our world. Amen.

—*Elsie Rempel, Winnipeg, Manitoba*

Today is World Communion Sunday. This Sunday's resources were written by Elsie Rempel, Formation Consultant for Mennonite Church Canada. Mennonite Church Canada engages the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ by forming a people of God, becoming a global church, and growing leaders for the church.

Bible readings for today: Psalm 80:7-15; Isaiah 5:1-7; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Philippians 4:1-9; Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 23; Matthew 22:1-14.



Stand firm in the Lord

Praising/adoring

O Lord, may your name be exalted on earth as it is in heaven.
You gather the nations and prepare a rich feast for all peoples.
You take pity on the poor and needy in distress,
a shelter and shade for the brokenhearted.

Recall in us your saving ways so that we may utter with your
people scattered throughout the world our cries of grateful
praise.

Offering

Generous God, every good and perfect gift comes from you.
We bring our offerings to you aware of all that we have received.
We know that every effort of our minds, the labors of our hands,
and the fruits of our imagination are gifts from you. Take these
gifts and use them to bring healing and hope to our world.
Amen.

Affirming faith

Leader: Rejoice in the Lord, again I say rejoice.

People: Let your gentleness be known to everyone.

**Do not worry about anything but let your requests
be made known to God,**

Leader: whatever is true, whatever is honorable,

People: whatever is just, whatever is pure,

Leader: whatever is commendable and excellent, keep on
doing these things.

*All: Though trials come, stand firm in the Lord. May the
peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding
guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.*

—Ken Beidler, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Bible readings for today: Philippians 4:1-9; Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 23;
Matthew 22:1-14. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 96:1-9,
(10-13); 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22.



I call you by your name

Praising/adoring

Sing to the Lord a new song, sing all you people.
Bless God's name. Declare God's glory among the nations.
Say among the nations, "The Lord is King."
Along with the trees and the mighty sea, the forests and the
fields,
Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

Proclaiming

Leader: Though the nations are in turmoil and leaders rule
over people, the Lord reigns.
**People: Though the earth trembles and the mountains move,
the Lord remembers the lowly.**
*All: The Lord says, 'For the sake of my servant Jacob and
Israel my chosen, I call you by name.'*
Leader: Beside the Lord there is no god, from the rising of the
sun in the east
**People: to the farthest reaches in the west, there is no one
greater.**
Leader: God forms light and creates darkness. The Lord does
all these things.

Prayer for service in the world

God, you send us out into the world to be ambassadors of
your love. May our words and our actions be received with joy
by those to whom we minister. May those we meet today and
this coming week be receptive to the Spirit of Jesus. When we
face resistance, help us to trust in you. Empower us with the
Holy Spirit so that our lives may be living witnesses to your love
and reconciling peace. Amen.

—Ken Beidler, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Bible readings for today: Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 96:1-9, (10-13); 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18; Psalm 1; Matthew 22:34-46.



We had courage in our God

Gathering prayer

Holy One, in your love through Christ,
we have the confidence to draw near to you.
Even greater than a mother feeding and looking after
her children,
so is your unending care for us.
In trials of all kinds we can stand firm, be brave,
and take heart,
for our courage is in Yahweh alone. Amen.

Leader: Come worship our Triune God whose invitation is
open and reviving—free!
Come and know how deeply you are loved.

Confessing/reconciling

*All: Lord, we confess that we have fallen short of your call
to be holy.*

*We have sought the approval of this world,
failing to love You completely.*

*Out of shame for self and our own needs,
we have not loved our neighbors with great care.*

In your mercy, through our Lord Jesus, please forgive us.

Leader: Your Creator loves you so dearly that Life was given
through the gift of Good News! Dedicate yourself to
the sharing of your Christ-life which is forevermore.

Sending

Go now brothers and sisters, knowing that as you walk
in God's good intentions,
you will be blessed with the peace that all is well.
Things will work out in their season:
your God-directed role in the establishment of God's kingdom.
Love God completely and you will know how deeply
you are loved.
Go out loving your neighbor with the same gentle grace.
Amen.

—Sue Nickel, Delta, British Columbia

Bible readings for today: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18; Psalm 1;
Matthew 22:34-46. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Psalm 43; Micah 3:5-12;
1 Thessalonians 2:9-13; Matthew 23:1-12.



Bring me to your holy hill

Call to worship

O send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
Let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.
Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.
Psalm 43:3-4

Prayer

Leader: For faithful prophets who went before us,
who reminded us of your righteous love and mercy,
who called us to obey

All: we give you praise, O God.

Leader: For others who went before us,
who confused their wishes with your way

All: we ask for your mercy, O God.

Leader: And we pray for ourselves,
who are tempted to confuse your will with our own,
who need courage, wisdom,
and a supportive community of faith.

All: We ask for your guidance and grace. Amen.

Benediction

May Christ, who humbled himself and is now our exalted Lord,
live within us as we go from here,
freeing us to serve and discern the way to God's holy hill,
and leave a legacy of faithfulness. Amen.

—Elsie Rempel, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Today is Mennonite Heritage Sunday. Mennonite Church Canada is strengthened by the work of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, which is devoted to helping us learn about and from the faith and history of the Mennonite Church and its people. Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee is the parallel agency in the U.S. This Sunday's resources were written by Elsie Rempel, Formation Consultant for Mennonite Church Canada.

Bible readings for today: Psalm 43; Micah 3:5-12; 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13; Matthew 23:1-12. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Amos 5:18-24; Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13.



Let justice roll down

Praising/adoring

Leader: Lord, we have fashioned idols,
and come to worship to look good.
We, too, deserve the harsh and startling words
that you spoke to Israel through your prophet Amos.

**People: And yet Lord, it is good and right
that you despise such cruelty, injustice, and greed.
What if you didn't?
You are the One who desires goodness and mercy.
Praise be to your name!**

Leader: Praise be to Creator God who invites us to reflect
God's merciful love and healing, until that moment
when Jesus ushers in good and perfect, eternal justice!

Offering

Lord God, it is difficult for some of us to surrender 'our' money. Our offering is tainted by the seduction of earned righteousness. Money is our culture's most beloved idol and too often we are no different. We ask that your mercy transcend our motivations, and your love see past our human imperfections so that what is gathered today will bring forth your justice. May it flow like healing waters and wash away evil and swathe all nations in your peace. Amen.

Sending

Do not sorrow, sisters and brothers,
for we believe that Jesus died, rose, and will come again for
his beloved.
Watch and be ready; although we do not know how or when,
we do know that justice will ultimately roll down.
We are invited to a wedding feast where eternal life, hope,
and peace are served!

—Sue Nickel, Delta, British Columbia

Bible readings for today: Amos 5:18-24; Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12; Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30.



From everlasting to everlasting

Gathering

Leader: From the beginning of time and through all eternity, our God deserves our acclaim.

Women: With our mothers and their mothers before them, we come to offer you our praise and thanks for your constancy and love.

Men: With our fathers, and their fathers before them, we gather to bring you our worship and adoration. Your mercy and your grace have never failed us.

Leader: Today, with sisters and brothers everywhere we sing the glories of our God.

People: Today, in this place we join our voices to tell the goodness of our God.

Confessing/reconciling

God, we confess we are so unlike you. Your purposes span countless generations but we live for today and are controlled by the whim of the moment. Our attention spans are so short and we are too easily bored. We seek the thrill of the next thing, we covet diversion but your love never fails. We confess that too often we love those we know, those who are like us. Your love embraces all people in every place and across all time. We rejoice that your love offers forgiveness and grace to us for our failings and frees us to love as you loved us.

Sending

Leader: Go, in the power of God's Spirit to love all of God's children, all of the time.

People: Loved by God, reconciled through Jesus Christ, we go, today and tomorrow, to bring God's healing and hope to all the families of our world.

—Stanley Green, Elkhart, Indiana

Today is Mission Sunday. This Sunday's resources were written by Stanley Green, the Executive Director of Mennonite Mission Network, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA. The parallel agency in Canada is Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

Bible readings for today: Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12; Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Ephesians 1:15-23; Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 95:1-7a; Matthew 25:31-46.



I do not cease to give thanks

Gathering

Leader: We gather to worship the great I AM, God of all gods,
Creator, Word made flesh, sustaining One.
We worship the Lord who alone holds the mighty
waters and spreads out the heavens like a tent.

**People: To whom can we compare our Lord and such power?
To which one of us has God ever turned for counsel?
Do we have the courage to come before such holiness?**

Leader: Hear what the Lord Yahweh says:
I have given you my beloved Son-Lamb.
Through him, I myself pasture my sheep and give
them God rest.
I look for the lost and welcome back any who have
strayed.
I bandage and heal those who are broken
This is who I AM: your true and loving Shepherd.

Prayer

Praise be to your name, Lord, for mercy. Welcome us this morn-
ing as your church, your body. Transform us into your flock who
binds up the broken and offers healing in the midst of pain. Help us
to warmly invite the hungry to your banquet feasts and clothe the
vulnerable who enter our doors. We cannot do this on our own,
almighty Savior, but we can when the eyes of our minds and hearts
are enlightened through your Spirit. In your name we pray. Amen.

Sending

Such a great thing God has done: Christ, our safe One,
has been appointed as the universal and supreme Head of the
Church.
All is made complete as Christ fills everything and everyone
with God.
All nations will be gathered and the saints will be blessed by
the King Jesus,
welcomed to the greatest party ever to celebrate joy-filled,
eternal life!
Hallelujah!

—Sue Nickel Delta, British Columbia

Bible readings for today: Ephesians 1:15-23; Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 95:1-7a; Matthew 25:31-46. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Isaiah 64:1-9; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37.



Restore us

Call to worship

Leader: Get up! Pay attention and prepare to follow.

People: The Shepherd of Israel leads us like a flock.

Leader: Get up! God's face is about to shine upon you.

People: No ear has heard nor eye seen God's full glory!

Leader: Get up! God's salvation is near.

People: The mighty One tears open the heavens and comes down.

Prayer of confession

Loving God, we come before you acknowledging that we are imperfect and you are holy. Yet because we trust that you daily extend both grace and mercy to us, we can confess our faults to you. In your everlasting love, reshape and reform us into your image so that we can be conduits of your love and forgiveness. We ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ, who saves us. Amen.

Blessing

Leader: Go into the world, awake and aware of God's presence!

People: We go into the world, listening for God's voice.

Leader: Go into the world, watching for the activity in God's kingdom!

People: We go into the world following in the footsteps of Jesus.

Leader: Go into the world, receiving the hope of salvation!

People: We go into the world reflecting the Spirit's radiance.

Advent worship resources are produced cooperatively by Mennonite Church Canada Formation, the Denominational Ministry of Mennonite Church USA, and *Leader* magazine. This year's resources were written by a team from Pacific Northwest Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

Bible readings for today: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Isaiah 64:1-9; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37. **Bible readings for next Sunday:** Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Isaiah 40:1-11; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8.

