



**Mennonite  
Church  
Canada**

Resource Centre

# From our Churches

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## **Look at the Darkness, Giving Birth to the Sun!**

Four Worship Services for Easter

### **Palm Sunday: Hoping in the Twilight**

#### **WE PREPARE TO WORSHIP**

##### **Prelude & Processional**

HWB #667:

- Have children run down the aisles (*on the right and left*), waving a palm branch and shouting “he’s coming!” lines (#1, #2, #4, #5, #7)
- Have voices from various places in the congregation call out lines #3, #6, #8, #9, and #10 (*different individuals*) and altogether (*children and voices*) call out line #11

##### **Invitation to Worship & Welcome**

We gather together in the growing darkness of our lives  
In hope of your kingdom coming,  
Redeeming our darkening world:  
Bringing good news to the poor,  
Releasing the captives,  
Giving sight to the blind,  
And freedom to the oppressed.  
In remembrance of the hope  
Offered by your humble entry  
Into the city of Jerusalem,  
We gather in the twilight,  
Sensing the pain and brokenness around us,  
To proclaim your reign  
And worship you.

## **Congregational Singing**

HWB #185 *Hail to the Lord's Anointed*

HWB #237 *All glory, laud, and honour*

- Both with instruments if possible (*especially brass*)

## **WE BRING OUR LIVES TO GOD**

### **Announcements**

- Announcements are positioned here clearly to be a part of giving all of our lives to God – be sure to emphasize this as part of the service, not something that needs to fit in somewhere (*ie. Short prayer/comment: May God bless these and all our activities in our church, homes, and communities this week*)

### **Offering**

- Invite children to bring palm branches from processional to the front at this time.
- Lay them at the base of a display of lit candles, and symbols of the “twilight” around us: newspaper clippings, symbols of violence, on a dark blue cloth (symbols should be relevant to community and context)
- Music should be chosen according to theme as well (*ie: works like Bach's Prelude & Fugue in F# major BWV 858; Chopin's Trois nouvelles etudes, No. 3, Poulenc's Novelette in C Major, No. 1 might be appropriate*)

### **Sharing**

- Invite spontaneous sharing from the congregation
- Ask two or three people to prepare some experience of hope in their lives to share (*very briefly*), especially if congregation is not given to sharing freely very often

### **Prayer of Confession**

- Bring to God the concerns and praises brought up in sharing, or relevant to the congregation at this time
- Between each, invite the congregational response “Lord, hear our prayer”
- End in unison with HWB #702

## **Congregational Singing**

HWB #295 v. 1, 2, 3 Christ is coming

## **WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD**

### **Scripture readings**

Jeremiah 14:19-22, Isaiah 42:1-4

### **Meditation #1**

- Solo or small group singing/playing/reading HWB #405 *Where cross the crowded ways*
- for each verse, project images that fit the verse (*ie.: noise, need, toil, multitudes, hearts of pain, God's loves*)

### **Congregational singing**

HWB #348 (x3) *O Lord, hear my prayer*

### **Scripture**

Luke 19:28-40

### **Meditation #2**

- HWB #237 instrumental group only
- Show image of triumphal entry (*ie: Kings of Kings, Kimiyoshi Endo, Japan in Maren C. Tirabassi & Kathy Wonson Eddy, Gifts of Many Cultures: Worship Resources for the Global Community, Cleveland: United Church Press, 1995, p. 216*)

### **Congregational singing**

HWB #348 (x5) *O Lord, hear my prayer*

## **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

### **Prayer**

See #261 from *Prayers Encircling the World: An International Anthology*, Louisville, KT: Westminster John Knox press, 1998, p. 220

### **Reflection**

- Moment of silent reflection
- HWB #711

### **Congregational Singing**

HWB #343 *My hope is built on nothing less*

## **WE LEAVE IN HOPE**

### **Benediction**

May the God of our hope  
Reveal the redemption for which we yearn,  
Proclaim the coming of the morning  
And transform us in the promise of your love  
Through Jesus the Christ.  
Go in hope.

### **Congregational singing**

HWB #428 *Lord, let us now depart in [hope]* (use hope in place of “peace”)

# Maundy Thursday: Reflecting in the Night

## WE PREPARE TO WORSHIP

### Prelude

- Invite congregational members to enter silently and to join in the singing as they feel comfortable
- Select various people for congregation to bring in hand towels and soap
- Have instrumental group (*strings and lighter instruments*) and singing group singing *Come and fill our hearts* (from *Taize song collections*)

### Invitation to Worship & Welcome

We gather together in the darkness  
In hope of your kingdom coming,  
In reflection of your works of redemption in our lives:  
Humbling yourself  
Teaching us to be humble  
Serving us  
And teaching us to serve.  
In remembrance of the peace  
Demonstrated by your love  
At the Last Supper with your disciples,  
We gather in the night,  
Feeling the selfishness and hate in our world,  
To experience your peace  
And worship you.

### Congregational Singing

HWB #464 *Let the hungry come to me*  
Vv 1-3 – soloist; congregation joins for v.4, 5

HWB #461 *In the quiet consecration*

## WE BRING OUR LIVES TO GOD

### Offering & Meditation

- Invite people with towels and soap to bring them to the front at this time
- Lay them at the base of a display of a basin of water, and symbols of the communion table around us: one loaf of bread, one cup, on a black cloth (*display should be simple and uncluttered*)
- Music should be chosen according to theme as well (*ie: works like Brahms' Intermezzo, op. 116, no. 6; Maurice Dela's Hommage; Prokofiev's Vision Fugitives, Op. 22, No. 7 or 8 might be appropriate*)

## **Sharing**

- Ask four people (*child, teen, adult, senior*) to prepare some experience of community in their lives to share (*very briefly*)

## **Prayer of Confession**

- Bring to God the concerns and praises relevant to the congregation at this time
- Between each, invite the congregation response “Lord, hear our prayer”
- End in unison with HWB #702

## **Congregational Singing**

HWB #353 *Lord, listen to your children*

## **WE LISTEN TO GOD’S WORD**

### **Scripture reading**

Psalms 51:1-12, 15-17 (HWB #818)

### **Congregational singing**

HWB #247 (x1) *Jesus, remember me*  
(*optional: use plural pronouns*)

### **Scripture**

Philippians 2:5-11

### **Meditation #1**

- Solo or small group singing HWB #7 *Here, O Lord, your servants gather*
- After v.1, invite congregation to form a circle around the sanctuary, holding hands

### **Scripture**

John 13:1-20

### **Meditation #2**

- Invite people to wash each other’s hands (*one at a time, around the circle. Once finished, people receive the bread and cup and then return to their seats*).
- HWB #247 (x5) *Jesus, remember me* (*during hand washing*)
- After all hands have been washed, and everyone has received the bread and cup, soloist sings again HWB #464 *Let the hungry come to me* (v. 1&2) and eat and drink together

## **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

### **Prayer**

HWB #729

### **Reflection**

- Moment of silent reflection

### **Congregational Singing**

HWB #346 *Dona nobis pacem* (in a round, if possible)

## **WE LEAVE IN PEACE**

### **Benediction**

May the God of peace  
Guide us in the darkness of the night,  
Assure us of the coming of the morning  
And renew us in your promise:

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.  
Through Jesus the Christ.  
Go in peace.

### **Congregational singing**

HWB #428 *Lord, let us now depart in peace*

# Good Friday: Waiting in the Dawn

## WE PREPARE TO WORSHIP

### Prelude

- Invite congregational members to enter silently
- Select various people for congregation to bring in various styles and sizes of crosses
- Have no music at this time

### Invitation to Worship & Welcome

We gather together in the growing dawn  
In hope of your kingdom coming,  
In reflection of your works of redemption in our lives,  
In the anticipation of your triumph:  
Hated at your trial,  
Mocked at your death,  
Dying on the cross,  
Waiting in the grave  
In expectation of what we know will come,  
Predicted by your words  
After Peter's confession,  
We gather in the stillness before morning,  
Waiting and watching,  
To experience your light  
And worship you.

### Congregational Singing

HWB #248 *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

- V. 1, 2: soloist, congregation joins for rest of verses

HWB #252 *O sacred head, now wounded*

## WE BRING OUR LIVES TO GOD

### Offering & Meditation

- Invite people with crosses to bring them to the front at this time
- Lay them at the base of a display of a larger wooden cross on a light grey-blue cloth

### Prayer of Confession

- Bring to God the concerns and praises relevant to the congregation and context (ie. Good Friday) at this time
- Between each, invite the congregational response "Lord, hear our prayer"
- End in unison with HWB #702



## **Congregational Singing**

HWB #257 *Where you there*

## **WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD**

### **Scripture reading**

Matthew 27:45-54

### **Meditation #1**

- Read George Herbert's *The Thanksgiving*
- Light a candle and put it by the cross

### **Congregational Singing**

HWB #242 (x1) *Stay with Me* (with instrumental group: strings, no piano)

### **Scripture**

Psalm 22:1-24

### **Meditation #2**

- Read "Pieces of wood..."; from *Prayers Encircling the World*, pp. 50-51.

### **Congregational singing**

HWB #242 (x3) *Stay with me*

### **Scripture**

Psalm 22:25-31

### **Meditation #3**

- Read Matthew 27:45-54 in several languages
- Light a third candle and put it by the cross

### **Congregational Singing**

HWB #242 (x5) *Stay with me*

## **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

### **Prayer & Response**

HWB #829

## **Reflection**

- Moment of reflection while instrumental group (strings) and piano play through HWB #251

## **Congregational singing**

HWB #251 *How shallow former shadows*

## **WE LEAVE IN ANTICIPATION**

### **Benediction**

May the God of patience  
Speak to us in the silence of the dawn,  
Remind us of the coming of the morning  
And reconcile us to yourself  
Through Jesus the Christ.  
Go in anticipation.

### **Congregational singing**

HWB #233 *Joyful is the dark*

# Easter Sunday: Rejoicing in the Morning

## WE PREPARE TO WORSHIP

### Prelude & Processional

HWB #256 *Sing, my tongue, the song:*

- Soloist sing v. 1,2,3
- During this time, several people process to the front and lay flowers at the base of a cross, with the dark blue, black, and light blue-gray cloths draped around it, and a picture or bowl or drinking water beside it
- Other singers lay flowers at cross and join soloist in v. 4,5,6

### Invitation to Worship & Welcome

We gather together in the beauty of the morning  
In hope of your kingdom coming,  
In reflection of your works of redemption in our lives,  
In the anticipation of your triumph,  
And in the overwhelming joy of your resurrection!

You bring good news to the poor  
You release the captives,  
You give sight to the blind,  
Freedom to the oppressed  
And you proclaim the reign of God over even death!

In remembrance of the Word made flesh  
Causing turmoil and confusion  
By letting evil do its worst  
All to transform God's creation  
In the ecstasy of love,  
We gather in the morning,  
Celebrating the knowledge of your truth,  
To proclaim your reign over all  
And worship you.

### Congregational Singing

HWB #260 *When I survey the wondrous cross*

HWB #273 *Low in the grave he lay*

- Until the refrain of this song, the service has remained anticipatory, try using instruments (*not too militaristic sounding, though: conga drum, fiddle, flute, clarinet, piano, no organ!*) and keep the tempo lively (*at least for the refrain*).

## **WE BRING OUR LIVES TO GOD**

### **Offering**

- Invite children to bring to the cross yellow & orange colored cloths
- Throw the other cloths aside (but not away – leave as a “frame” to the bright colored cloth) and invite children to hang bright cloths on/around the cross

### **Sharing**

- Invite spontaneous sharing from the congregation
- Ask two or three people to prepare some experience of joy in their lives to share (very briefly)

### **Prayer of Confession**

- Bring to god the concerns and praises brought up in sharing, or relevant to the congregation at this time
- Between each, invite the congregational response “Lord, hear our prayer”
- End in unison with HWB #702

### **Congregational Singing**

HWB #280 *Christ the Lord is risen today* (use lower key in HWB Accompaniment Handbook)

## **WE LISTEN TO GOD’S WORD**

### **Scripture Reading**

John 20:1-10

### **Meditation #1**

- Small group and instrumentalist read, then sing HWB #222 *How brightly beams the morning star*
- Show images of morning and joy (ie: nature, children, people, colors, designs, etc.)
- Read *in Thy Hand*; “In Thy Hand,” reprinted from *Messages from Time to Time: A book Celebrating the Fortieth Wedding Anniversary of Masao and Fumiko Takenaka*

### **Congregational singing**

HWB #101 (x1) *Alleluia*

### **Scripture**

John 20:11-18

## **Meditation #2**

- Read “Collect”; “Collect,” reprinted from *With All God’s People: The New Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, compiled by John Carden (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989), p. 43. Copyright 1989, WCC Publications, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland

## **Scripture**

John 20:19-29

## **Meditation #3**

- Display visual of *Ode to Joy* by He Qi, China; see *Gifts of Many Cultures*, p. 220.
- Join hands in circle around the sanctuary, while singing HWB #101 *Alleluia*, come offer each other cups of water dipped in the bowl (*or use dipper*).

## **Congregational Singing**

HWB #101 (x5) *Alleluia*

## **WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

### **Prayer & Reflection**

- HWB #747 (remain in seats, but join hands again during the prayer)

### **Congregational Singing**

HWB #267 *Christ has arisen* (with drums, fiddle, flute, etc.)

## **WE LEAVE IN JOY**

### **Benediction**

May the God of joy  
Redeem us in your peace,  
Celebrate the glory of the morning  
And transform us as creations of your love  
Through Jesus the Christ  
Go in joy!

### **Congregational Singing**

HWB #530 *What wondrous love is this* (start with drums and add more instruments/volume each verse).