



Mission Sunday, Nov 11, 2012

Introduction

These worship resources are designed to assist you in planning for worship on Mission Sunday, Nov. 11. The focus of this special Sunday is on the mission of the church, a mission to which all are called, all are equipped, and all are sent. This particular worship resource has been prepared on behalf of Mennonite Church Canada Witness by Karen and Andrew Suderman, Witness workers in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, who are helping to develop the Anabaptist Network in South Africa (ANiSA).

The focus of this resource is on *being an engaging Church*, something for which South Africans are longing. The Church was extremely active in South Africa during the

struggle against Apartheid. Now that Apartheid has been officially dismantled, the lament arises from within the South Africans that it has lost its prophetic voice even though racial injustice continues. Many South Africans are yearning for and working to build a church that engages its world, speaks Truth and Love in the face of injustice, walks with the poor and oppressed, and witnesses to God's shalom in places of pain, division and inequality.

The call to be such a church is not limited to South Africa, but is part of God's mission around the world. On this Mission Sunday, the selected Scripture texts and prayers call all of us to join God in this ministry, through our personal engagement and our offerings that support those who minister in our name.

Theme: A Living, Engaging Church

Scripture Texts:

1 Samuel 16: 1-13; 2 Corinthians 5: 17-19;
Ephesians 4: 1-4; James 3: 17-18;

Suggested Hymns:

- HWB #1 – *What is this Place?*
- HWB #26 – *Holy Spirit, come with power*
- SJ #91 – *Like a mother who has borne us*
- HWB #37 – *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*
- HWB #309 – *Built on the rock*
- SJ #27 – *God of the Bible*
- HWB #383 – *God, whose giving*
- HWB #411 – *I bind my heart this tide*
- SJ #61 – *How can we be silent*
- SS #39 – *Will you come and follow me*
- HWB #418 – *Move in our midst*
- HWB #389 – *Take my life*

Invocation:

Almighty God, make us aware this day that we dwell in you. Holy Spirit, empower us to offer our minds, our souls, our lives, and our resources as an act of heart-felt worship. Come, Lord Jesus, come save us. Help us follow your example of giving the best of yourself so that we are freed to give the best of ourselves.

Call to Worship:

Leader: Praise the LORD!

All: Praise the LORD, O my soul!

Left: *I will praise the LORD as long as I live;*

Right: *I will sing praises to my God all my life long.*

Leader: Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals in whom there is no help.

Left: *When their breath departs, they return to the earth;*

Right: *On that very day their plans perish.*

Leader: Happy are those whose hope is in the LORD their God

Left: *Who made heaven and earth*

Right: *The sea, and all that is in them;*

Leader: Who keeps faith forever;

Left: *Who executes justice for the oppressed;*

Right: *Who gives food to the hungry.*

Leader: The LORD will reign forever; Your God, O Zion, for all generations.

All: *Praise the LORD! (Adapted from Psalm 146)*

Prayer of Confession:

Lord, we come before you as your people, aware of our broken world where many do not have enough. We recognize how often we fall short of giving enough of ourselves, our energy, our time, and our resources to your work. We blame our busy schedules.

Forgive us for living by our priorities instead of your priorities. Forgive us for tightly holding on, and trying to be in control, instead of letting go and trusting your lead.

HWB - *Hymnal Worship Book*, SJ - *Sing the Journey*, SS - *Sing the Story**

* Song book abbreviations match those used for corresponding worship resources in *Leader Magazine*



Work in us. Help us embrace your kingdom work so that our whole lives might become a ministry, a pleasing sacrifice of worship poured out to you. Amen.

Children's Time:

Children's stories from the Mennonite Church Canada collection that arise from other Scripture texts and match this theme are "Discipleship Checklist"

(www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1755)

and Gifts from God to the World

(www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1756).

Two picture books beautifully capture the theme of this Sunday by pointing to the idea that peace is more an action than we think.

- *God's Dream* by Desmond Tutu, www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1757.
- *The Peace Book* by Todd Parr. Available through www.bookdepository.com

Sermon Leads:

1. The book of James integrates the components of belief and action. Without these two elements one does not have faith; you act because you believe and you believe because you act. James states that there is a difference with *how* peace is brought about, not that it is simply brought about. How does the church bring about peace and participate in God's shalom project today?
2. David was an unlikely king. He was not first-born, he was not the biggest, nor the strongest, but he did have leadership potential. God saw beyond his low social status and chose him, the least likely, to become king over a nation and helped him grow into that role. If God sees potential beyond social stereotypes, how does that direct us in how we should serve our brothers and sisters?
3. Ephesians gives us an all-encompassing picture with regards to the nature of God's vision for the world (Ephesians 1:10). "Christ is our peace" is emphasized in chapter 2:11-18. Christ himself breaks down the walls that divide us, thereby allowing for a new community and humanity to emerge. It is this new worshiping community's role to make known what once was a mystery (3:5-6), because Jesus Christ has called for a new humanity where old divisions are overcome (Ephesians 3:10). Paul plays with the words of calling and being called out, *the church* literally means 'the called out ones.'

In Chapter 4 Paul challenges his readers to examine how they are living out their calling to live into this mystery ("I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called out." Eph. 4:1) This message from Ephesians is revolutionary in the South African context, where old divisions still linger and divide. How does it speak into your church, city/town, country?

4. Through Jesus we have been given the opportunity for a new creation to emerge; the church, which consists of the called out ones who find their unity in Christ. This new creation has been given the gift and responsibility of reconciling what has been divided. This is a big task. How does the church live into and demonstrate reconciliation?

Offering: HWB #750

Benediction (*A Four-fold Benedictine Blessing* by Sr. Ruth Fox, OSB (1985) used by the rector of an Anglican church the Sudermans attend when in Pietermaritzburg.)

May God bless you with discomfort
at easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger
at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for His justice, His freedom,
and His peace.

May God bless you with tears
to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation,
and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort
them and to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference in this world,
so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

And the Blessing of God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit
be upon you; those you love and those for whom you pray--
This day and for evermore.....

Amen.

Go now, to Love and Serve God and each other.

Direct your comments about Special Sunday Worship Resources to Elsie Rempel at erempel@mennonitechurch.ca.