



**Mennonite
Church**
Canada

June 2003, *Equipping*

600 Shaftesbury Blvd,
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
Toll free 1-866-888-6785
T: 204-888-6781
F: 204-831-5675
E: give@mennonitechurch.ca
W: www.mennonitechurch.ca

St. Catharines 2003 Worship at Home Guide

What if...love and peace prevailed?

Scripture Theme: Philippians 1

Call to Worship

Leader: The world belongs to the Lord,
All: The earth and all its people
 Leader: How good and how lovely it is.
All: To live together in unity.
 Leader: Love and faith come together,
All: Justice and peace join hands.
 Leader: If the Lord's disciples keep silent,
All: These stones would shout aloud.
 Leader: Lord, open our lips
All: And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.¹

Scripture Reading

Reader 1 To all the saints in Christ Jesus
Reader 2 Grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
 Reader 1 I thank my God every time I remember you,
Reader 2 constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you,
 Reader 1 you from British Columbia and Alberta
Reader 2 for you from Saskatchewan and Manitoba
 Reader 1 constantly praying with joy for all of you
Reader 2 for you from Ontario and Quebec
 Reader 1 for you from the Maritimes
Reader 2 I pray with joy for you because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.
 Reader 1 I am confident of this,
Reader 2 that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion
 Reader 1 It is right for me to think this way about all of you,
Reader 2 because you hold me in your heart
 Reader 1 For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.
Reader 2 And this is my prayer,
 Reader 1 that your love may overflow more and more
Reader 2 with knowledge and full insight
 Reader 1 to help you determine what is best
Reader 2 so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless,
 Reader 1 pure and blameless
Reader 2 having produced the harvest of righteousness
 Reader 1 producing a harvest of righteousness
Reader 2 that comes through Jesus Christ
 Reader 1 through Jesus Christ
Reader 2,1 for the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:1-11



Prayer of Confession

Christ died that we might be reconciled to you, God, and to one another. People cannot believe in reconciliation with you unless there are human reconciliations which reflect it. And so we pray for the healing of the broken bonds of human life.

We pray for reconciliation between nations. We do not believe that the true interests of nations ever conflict sharply enough for war to be necessary. And yet we know that peace has often been exploited by those who love to oppress. Give us true peace, founded on justice and respect for human rights.

We pray for reconciliation between races, especially in countries where different races live side by side. May the principle of equal citizenship and equal opportunity be accepted everywhere. May the laws strengthen the hands of people of goodwill. May different races learn to speak the truth in love to each other. May wisdom and patience mean that the day of bloody revolution need never come.

We pray for reconciliation between churches. Break down the inertia which keeps us apart when the original causes of division no longer matter. Help us to judge whether present differences are sufficient to be allowed to obscure the unity we have in Christ. And may unions of churches take place in such a way that they do not become the occasion for new divisions.

We pray for the reconciliation between religions. May those who profess one faith no longer suspect and misrepresent those who profess another. May good be recognized wherever it exists. May we hold to the truth of Christ, and bear witness to it, but with goodwill and respect.

May Christ, who once reconciled Jew and Gentile, slave and free into one body continue to break down the walls which divide us. Amen.²

Readers Theatre "What if....?"

- Reader 1 What if Jesus meant what he said about loving our enemies?
Reader 2 *Loving our enemies?*
 Reader 1 And our neighbours.
Reader 2 *our neighbours?*
 Reader 1 And ourselves.
Reader 2 *Love our selves?*
 Reader 1 What if...we really did love God?
Reader 2 *What if...we really did love our enemies?*
 Reader 1 What ifwe really did love our neighbours?
Reader 2 *What ifwe really did love ourselves?*
 Reader 1 What if...we believed that God loves us?
Reader 2 *What if we believed that we were cleansed by the waters of baptism?*
 Reader 1 What if we accepted God's act of reconciliation on the cross?
Reader 2 *What if we lived like we were loved?*
 Reader 1 What if we lived to love?
Reader 2 *What if love prevailed?*
 Reader 1 What if love prevailed?
Reader 1,2 *What if love prevailed?*



Ritual and Renewal

We will be celebrating communion during the Sunday morning service at Assembly. You might want to think of including communion or some other act of symbolizing the love and grace we receive from God. One possibility is to include a hand-washing service where members are invited to basins to wash each others hands as an act of love and service. Another idea is to have a renewal of baptismal vows and invite people to basins of water, to wet their foreheads and be reminded of the renewing waters of baptism. You might want to include the following reading:

Renewal of Baptismal Vows

Leader: Sister and brother,
we have been buried with Christ in baptism
so we may rise with Christ to new life.
Will you affirm your baptismal vows
and renew your own covenant with God
in the power of the Holy Spirit?

**All: We declare anew our covenant:
to repent of our sinful ways;
to accept Jesus Christ as authority and example for our life;
to live in grace in God's holy community
according to Christ's rule and way.**

Leader: Let us pray:
God of abundant life,
you have heard our renewed promises this day.
Refresh us with your grace;
strengthen us with the anointing of your Spirit,
and keep us faithful to you all the days of our lives.
Grant that this water may become a water of rest, joy and gladness,
a water that reminds us of the death and resurrection of your Son
may it be a bath of rebirth,
bestowing the grace of adoption and the garment of immortality.
We ask this through Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

All: Amen. *(Balthasar Hubmaier, early Anabaptist)*

Possible Hymns

(HWB - Hymnal: A Worship Book; HSS - Hymnal Subscription Service)

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
| <i>Grace to you and peace</i> | HWB #24 | <i>There's a wideness</i> | HWB #145 |
| <i>The love of God</i> | HSS #875 | <i>Dona Nobis pacem,</i> | HWB #346 |
| <i>Come thou fount</i> | HWB #521 | <i>Let there be light</i> | HWB #371 |
| <i>Great God of wonders</i> | HWB #149 | <i>O let all who thirst</i> | HWB #495 |

—Prepared by Wanda Roth Amstutz, pastor, Grace Mennonite Church, St. Catharines, ON
wanda@gracemennonite.com

⁽¹⁾ taken from *A Wee Worship Book*, Wild Goose Resource Group, 1999. Chicago: GIA publications.

⁽²⁾ adapted from *The Complete Book of Christian Prayer*, 1996. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company.