



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

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Worship Resources for

Heritage Sunday

October 28, 2007

Mennonite Church Canada Formation

Introduction:

These worship resources are designed to assist you in planning for worship on Heritage Sunday. The focus of this special Sunday is on the spiritual heritage of the church, and to help us remember the testimony of those who are now “saints above” in such a way that we are inspired to follow their example by living faithfully out of that tradition and leave a legacy of faithfulness for future generations.

For the church, looking back is an endeavor into the study of God – theology. Looking at history is a way of seeing where God has moved and shaped things, thereby giving us a better understanding of God and His purposes. Numerous times God calls people together to remember God’s ways and faithfulness to us. We remember this heritage by reading the stories in the Bible and by looking at how God moved in the lives of people and the church of our tradition. This can remind us of God’s character and provide us with examples of faithfulness that lead to life, as well as remind us of the consequences of unfaithfulness. This is how remembering helps us follow and live.

This particular worship resource has been prepared on behalf of Mennonite Church Canada Formation by Conrad Stoesz, Archivist in the Mennonite Heritage Centre of Mennonite Church Canada.

Theme: Remember, Follow and Live

Suggested Bible Texts: 2 Chronicles 34, Isaiah 51:1-2, Hebrews 13:7, Hebrews 11:1-40

Suggested Hymns:

HWB 328 *O God Our Help in Ages Past*
Faith of our Fathers and Mothers (see page 5)
HWB 332 *Blessed assurance*
HWB 398 *I love to tell the story*
Eternal one, Thou Living God (see page 6)
STJ 26 *God is our refuge and strength*
STJ 107 *God remembers*

HWB–Hymnal: A Worship Book

STJ–Sing the Journey

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11

Introduction /Call to Worship

L: Come and worship our God

P: Great is the Lord and worthy of glory!

L: Come and worship the God who is faithful.

P: O God our help in ages past!

L: Come and worship God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

P: Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

L: Come and worship the God who takes interest in all of us.

P: Just as I am, I come!

L: Come and worship the God who is active in history and is part of our lives.

All: This our story and song! Amen.

Invocation

God, who always remembers us, who dwells with us, and is the source of our confidence and helps us be certain of what we do not see, attend to our worship now and accept it as a pleasing sacrifice. Help us remember that we are in your presence, and that you are at work in our world as you have been in ages past. With the cloud of witnesses, we thank and praise you for being with us as we worship and learn this day. Amen.

Confession of Sin

Lord, we all come to you with a mixed history; our own histories, the histories of our families, a church history. Help us deal with and then let go of past wrongs we still hold in our hearts. Lord, give us opportunities to share the stories of your faithfulness, mercy, and love with others. Show us how you have been present in the past to help us for the future. Give us the courage and ears to truly hear others' stories and to tell our own stories. With the Psalmist, we say thank you for giving us "the heritage of those who fear your name," a gift we can all claim as our spiritual heritage. Amen.

Confession of Faith: "Remembering Faith and the Faithful"

(based on Hebrews 11 and Isaiah 51:1-2)

L: Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. It is by faith that we understand the universe was made by God.

P: We will remember and tell the story

L: By faith Enoch was taken from this life so he did not experience death

P: We will remember and tell the story

L: By faith Noah built an ark

P: We will remember and tell the story

L: By faith Abraham made his home in a foreign land

P: We will remember and tell the story

L: By faith Abraham offered his son Isaac

P: We will remember and tell the story

L: By faith the people passed through the Red Sea

P: We will remember and tell the story

L: By faith the walls of Jericho fell

P: We will remember and tell the story

L: By faith we follow Jesus

P: We will remember and tell the story

L: Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn. Amen.

Prayer for the offering

God, whose giving knows no ending, thank you for the many gifts with which you have entrusted us; gifts of health, safety, friendship, beauty, family, community, possessions, money, and the gift of life itself. We remember that this offering is only one small part of the ways you have blessed us to be a blessing. Help us find ways of using all our gifts for your glory, so that our lives reflect your intentions for our world. Use our gifts of money, time, and talent so that your will may be done, and you will be remembered and glorified. Amen.

Children's time: Family Stories that Keep us Safe

Who loves a good story? Yes, we all do. We read books, we watch movies and TV, and, best of all, we tell stories. Stories help us understand life. God's story – history – is centuries old and is happening right now. God is still at work in our lives. We each have stories from our lives; stories that have been passed down through our families and shaped us – that are a part of who we are. I hope to hear some of your family stories when we talk after worship. Stories are to be remembered and shared, because lessons from them help us live well. So, I invite you to settle your bodies and your minds. Become quiet, find that spot inside where you know that God is very near, and listen to this story about one of God's people.

It was a hot summer day and Andrew was excited about going out for ice cream with his dad John. They parked the car and got ready to cross the street. Andrew knew already which ice cream he wanted – bubble gum ice cream! Andrew was so excited that he did not want to hold his dad's hand to cross the street. Andrew and his dad argued about holding hands to cross the street. Andrew thought he was old enough to cross the street on his own and wanted to get the ice cream as quickly as he could. Andrew's dad thought it best that they hold hands to cross the street and stay safe.

The discussion was going nowhere, so finally Andrew's dad took him to a park bench near by. Andrew was not happy. He wanted his ice cream. He sat crossly on the bench – he was mad. Andrew's dad then told him this story:

“Years ago, when John was seven, his dad took the family out for ice cream. It was a hot day and the family had worked hard outside all day. They all looked forward to a cool ice cream cone. John's younger brother Peter was also very excited; he was five years old. Peter jumped out of the car and did not wait for his mom or dad to help him cross the street. Peter ran across the street. Peter did not see the car coming and did not listen to his parents telling him to stop. It was too late. A car driving by did not see Peter and hit little Peter. People yelled, “Oh no!” John saw it all happen, what would happen to his little brother?

Little Peter did not move as he lay on the hard street. His father ran and scooped him up and the family ran along to the car and they took Peter to the hospital. Everyone was worried. The driver of the car came to the hospital. He felt horrible that he had hit Peter. He apologized and wondered how Peter was doing. John sat with his mom – they were worried too.

After some tests the Doctors at the hospital said that Peter would be fine. There were no broken bones and the family could take Peter home.”

Andrew's eyes were big as he exclaimed, “That happened to Uncle Peter!” “Yes,” said Andrew's father, “and that is why I need you to hold my hand when we cross the street. We have rules in our family to help us stay safe. That is why it is important for you to listen to me about crossing the street.” “Ok,” said Andrew, as he gave his dad a big hug. As he slid off his lap, Andrew reached out for his dad's hand. “Let's go get some ice cream,” said his dad. And what do you think Andrew said? He said, “Yeah!”

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for good and important stories. Thank you for parents who love us and keep us safe. Help us remember the important stories they teach us so we can be safe and share them with others. Amen.

Sermon Starter

Story- “The Importance of Remembering”

News started to come on December 26, 2004 of a disaster in Asia. Over the next days and weeks we learned of the earthquake and tsunami that affected hundreds of thousands of people. Many people were on the beach when the earth shook and the water rolled out. Of course the waves came rolling back in force and many on the beach and in the towns were killed. For weeks there were news reports about the events and its consequences. But, among all the news reports, this one stuck out for me as different.

After the tidal waves hit causing their destruction, reporters were sent out to cover the story. The epicenter of the earth quake was 40 miles from the island of Simeule, Indonesia. This was the first coastline to feel the effects of the massive 33 foot waves that smacked the shoreline. Reporters found devastation just like other places, but there was something different. The island lost 7 of it 75,000 inhabitants. Only seven, whereas other locations lost thousands. Why? Why so few? When the islanders were interviewed and asked about this they told the reporters that in 1907 there was another earthquake. The ground shook and the water moved out but came back with a vengeance and killed many people. This experience, this story, was told and retold from one generation to another. For almost 100 years the people kept this story alive telling the next generation that when the earth shakes and the water moves out, everyone must head for higher ground. On December 26, 2004 the people of Simeule moved to higher ground. When the earth shook and the water moved out, they knew what to do because they remembered. They remembered and therefore lived.

So the question for today is – when the earth shakes and the water moves out for you, what stories do you hold on to? What about for your children or grandchildren? What stories and wisdom will be remembered to guide them? What stories, and therefore values, are we passing on in our homes and churches? Stories have the power to meet us where we are and point us to whom we want to become. The values encompassed in the stories we tell are the values we will emulate and encourage in others.

Stories that shape and guide us do not need to be dramatic stories. Encourage people to share these stories as they are equally important in shaping people. People doing the sermon could talk about stories in their own lives that have shaped and guided them. Time could be given for people to tell their own guiding stories in small groups or together as a congregation. Ask people to submit their stories for an in-house publication that reflect the shaping of the congregation. We need to acknowledge the importance of stories in our lives and secondly to tell these stories for our own good and for the edification of others. Story sharing builds community, fosters greater understanding, and imparts valuable lessons.

Litanies of response: HWB 752 or 826

Benediction

Oh God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come. Give us eyes to see your guiding hand in our lives. Give us the words to tell others the lessons that lead to life. Give us ears and hearts to hear and feel your presence in the lives of others. Give us the courage and wisdom so that we can affirm with the joyful refrain that when “this is my story” it is a part of your story too. Amen.

Faith of our fathers and mothers*

ST. CATHERINE LM with refrain

1 Faith of our fath - ers, liv - ing still in spite of
 2 Faith of our moth - ers, liv - ing still In cra - dle
 3 Faith of our fath - ers, we will love both friend and
 4 Faith of our moth - ers, gui - ding faith for youth - ful

dun-geon, fire and sword, oh, how our hearts beat high with
 song and bed-time prayer, in nursery lore and fire - side
 foe in all our strife, and preach thee, too, as love knows
 long - ing, youth-ful doubt, how blurred our vis - ion, blind our

Refrain

joy when-e'er we hear that glo - rious word!
 love, thy presence still pervades the air. Faith of our
 how, by sav - ing word and faith - ful life!
 ways, thy pro - vi - den - tial care with - out

1,3 fathers, ho - ly faith, we will be true to thee till death.
 2,4 mothers, ho - ly faith, we will be true to thee till death.

* Public Domain

ETERNAL ONE, THOU LIVING GOD* 313

WINCHESTER NEW L.M.

From *Musicalisch Hand-buch*, published
by George Rebelein's Widow, 1690
Arranged by William Henry Havergal, 1847

Samuel Longfellow, 1875

1 E - ter - nal one, Thou liv - ing God, Whom
 2 The same our trust, the same our need, In
 3 We bless Thee for the grow - ing light, Th' ad -
 4 With wid - er view, come loft - ier goal; With
 5 A - new we pledge our - selves to Thee, To

chang - ing years un - chang'd re - veal, With Thee their way our
 sor - row's stress, in du - ty's hour; We keep their faith, by
 vanc - ing thought, the wid - 'ning view, The larg - er free - dom,
 full - er light, more good to see; With free - dom, tru - er
 fol - low where Thy truth shall lead; A - float up - on its

fa - thers trod; The hand they held, in ours we feel.
 Thee de - creed, That faith the fount of all our power.
 clear - er sight, Which from the old un - folds the new.
 self - con - trol, With knowl - edge, deep - er rev - 'rence be.
 bound - less sea, Who sails with God is safe in - deed!

LIFE IN CHRIST: PILGRIMAGE AND GUIDANCE

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