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## Worship Resources for

# *Mission Sunday*

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Mennonite Church Canada Formation

### **Introduction:**

These worship resources are designed to assist you in planning for worship on Mission Sunday. The focus of this special Sunday is on the mission of church, a mission to which all are called, all are equipped and all are sent. We hope that the whole family of God will understand that God is at work, setting things right in a broken world, redeeming and restoring all things in Christ to God's intended design. The purpose of the church in all of its life, including its worship, is to align its being and doing with this work of God, and thereby live into God's future; a future that has already begun. This particular worship resource has been prepared on behalf of Mennonite Church Canada Witness by Tim and Cindy Buhler, Witness workers in Macau, who hope and pray that this resource might assist our congregations to fully engage in God's mission, a mission that begins at home and reaches across the street to around the world.

### **Scripture Resources:**

Psalm 66:8-12, Psalm 84, Malachi 3:1-3, Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 4:18-19, Romans 3:23-28, 2 Corinthians. 3:18, Colossians. 3:15-17, Hebrews 2:14-18, Hebrews 12:1-2.

### **Theme: Refined for God's Purpose** (Mal. 3:1-3)

#### **Call to Worship:** (based on Psalm 84)

**Leader:** How lovely are your dwelling places, oh LORD of hosts. My soul longed and yearned for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.

**People:** **LORD, bring us to the place and meet us here in the courts of your presence today.**

**Leader:** The bird also has found a house and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even near your altars, oh LORD of hosts, our King and our God. How blessed are those who dwell in your house! They are ever praising you.

**People:** **In your presence there is safety and rest. Our hearts are full of praise for your blessings!**

**Leader:** How blessed is the one whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion! Passing through the dry valley of Baca they make it a spring; the early rain also covers it with blessings. They go from strength to strength; every one of them appears before God in Zion.

**People:** **LORD, teach us to find our strength in you and not in ourselves. Turn the difficult valleys in our lives into springs, as we learn to walk in your strength.**

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

**Leader:** Oh LORD God of hosts, hear our prayer; give ear, oh God of Jacob!  
Behold our shield, oh God, and look upon the faces of your anointed. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand outside. We would rather stand at the threshold of the house of our God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

**People:** **Nothing compares to being with you in your presence, God. Draw us in to dwell with you.**

### **Invocation**

Lord, come here among us. Give us a glimpse of future glory as we worship and praise you. Through your son Jesus and your Holy Spirit we find our place in your inner courts to worship you. Meet us, help us to be moldable, refine us for your redeeming and reconciling purposes. Refine us to reflect your Son, Jesus. Triune God, we desire your kingdom. Refine us as we live into your future as the family of God. Refine us to engage the world around us with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Confession & Affirmation:** (adapted from Malachi 3:1-3 & Romans 3:23-28)

Leader: Who can endure the day of His coming?

**People:** **We have all sinned and fall short of your glory.**

Leader: Who can stand when He appears?

**People:** **We who are justified freely by his grace through the redemption by Christ Jesus.**

Leader: For God is like a refiner's fire and like launderer's soap.

**People:** **God presented him as a sacrifice. We are atoned through faith in his blood.**

Leader: God did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. God is like a refiner and purifier of silver; he is willing to purify and refine us like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have people who bring offerings in righteousness.

**People:** **God does this to demonstrate godly justice, for God justifies those whose faith is in Jesus.**

Leader: Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith.

**People:** **For we maintain that we are justified by faith.**

**ALL:** **We confess our sin, praise God for redemption, and welcome God's refining so we can live for God's glory. Amen.**

### **Suggested Songs for Worship**

**Invocation:**                    \**Better in One Day* – Matt Redman,  
  \**Refiners Fire* – Brian Doerksen,  
  HWB 128 *Create in Me a Clean Heart*,  
  HWB 112 *O Lord, our Lord, how majestic*

**Praise and Adoration:**       HWB 69 *The Lord is King*,  
  HWB 99 *We Praise Thee Oh God, or*  
  HWB 106 *All Hail the Power of Jesus Name*

**Confession:**                    HWB 142 *Brothers and sisters of mine* or  
  HWB 150 *Wonderful grace of Jesus*

**Proclaiming:**                 HWB 567 *How firm a foundation*,  
  HWB 289 *Filled with the Spirit's power*  
  HWB 304 *There are many gifts*,  
  HWB 311 *The church's one foundation*,

<b>Offering:</b>	HWB 363 <i>Renew your church</i> HWB 389 <i>Take my life,</i> HWB 392 <i>Heart and mind, possessions, Lord</i>
<b>Sermon Response:</b>	HWB 349 <i>Spirit of the Living God</i> or HWB 418 <i>Move in our midst</i>

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HWB–Hymnal: A Worship Book

*\* These songs are easily accessible for Churches with a CCLI licence.*

## Children's Features

Download today's children's story at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/399](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/399) or use the following object lesson.

### **Title: Refined to Walk**

**Materials:** Masking tape and 6-8 Books

Today we will learn about how God is a refiner who helps us serve God better. (*Talk about what they think refine means and explain that they will understand better after the lesson today. Take time to settle, to find that quiet spot inside where we know God is near, and pray that God will help you know and help you love him better through this children's time.*)

Choose one volunteer to demonstrate the object lesson. Make a 4-5 foot line on the floor with the masking tape. Have the volunteer stand at one end of the line with the intent of walking down the length on the line with arms straight out at his or her sides and with palms up in a 'T' position. Ask the child to walk to the end of the line and turn around. Ask if that was challenging or easy. Now put a book onto each hand and have him/her walk back down the line. Add another book onto each hand and walk again. Continue in this manner until walking straight becomes difficult. Then take books off and have them walk again. Tell the children that there are things in our lives that keep us from walking close with God and walking on God's way. Those things are like these books. God's working in us is like taking these books off one by one. Connecting with God's refining activity in us makes it easier for us to walk in a straight line on God's path. It helps us hear God better and understand what it is he wants us to do. (*Repeat the demonstration with other children if time allows.*)

### **Wondering Questions:**

#### **1. What might some of the things be that make it hard for us to walk on God's path?**

*Possible Answers: disobedience, selfishness, material things, negative influence of friends, apathy (not caring), laziness.*

#### **2. I wonder what God's path for each of us looks like and where it leads.**

*Possible answers: talk with someone about Jesus, move to another country and share about Jesus, be kind to someone who doesn't deserve it, give money to someone who needs it, help someone when we don't feel like it.*

**Prayer:** Thank you God, that you have a good and loving plan for our lives. Thank you for helping us to live on your path. Thank you that knowing you helps us know and do the right things and helps us share your love with others. Amen.

**Scripture:** Malachi 3:1-3  
Hebrews 12:1-2

**Offering Prayer:** Heavenly Father, provider of all our needs. We thank you for all that you have provided through your son Jesus, riches we cannot fathom, riches that are greater than this earth can ever reveal. Thank you for providing for all our needs and more. May we understand that we have been blessed to be a blessing. May our gratitude to you be reflected in our generosity. May Christ, who preached good news to the poor, who proclaimed freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, release for the oppressed, and who proclaimed the year of the Lord's favour, be glorified by the gifts we now offer back to you and the purposes of your kingdom. In Christ Jesus, Amen.

### Sermon Starter

**Title: Refined for God's Purposes** (Mal 3:1-3, Psalm 66: 8-12, Hebrews 2:14-18)

God **calls** us to engage the world around us with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ. Just as God called and refined the Levites for service, God refines us and **equips** us to serve God's purposes. God molds us as we welcome the working of the Holy Spirit in us, refining us as fire refines silver, equipping us to fulfill his command to be **sent** as ambassadors who engage a world that is still enslaved by the fear of death with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus.

**A) Illustration of refining:** A workman refines the metal of a tool so it is strengthened and useful. Refining it simultaneously gives it strength and makes it beautiful. The beauty and strength of the tool reflect the workmanship of the craftsman. The workman is best honoured when the tool is used for its purpose. We are refined for God's saving, reconciling purposes. The beauty we develop as we are refined is a reflection of God's glory. It is the way God equips us to face the challenges of being faithful ambassadors in our complex world. God's refining process within us as individuals, as congregations, and as the wider church helps us to reveal God's presence here on earth.

### B) How is the church *sent*?

1. Sent as a Body – Being sent is who we are not only what we do. Being “sent” (mission) is the character of the church. The character of all disciples and the focus of the church is one of being sent into the world. No one has to serve all the needs, but we belong to a larger body that does. (Matthew 28:19-20.)
2. Sent to be a Reflection – As Christ was sent and showed us the Father, we are sent and reflect Jesus as part of his body and part of the new covenant. The new covenant binds us together, so that together, we can reflect God's will for the world. (Supplementary Scripture: 2 Cor. 3:18.)
3. Sent to be a Presence – We engage the world as Christ engaged the world, as God-with-us, Immanuel, bringing the oppressed into a “spacious place,” proclaiming “the year of the Lord's favour,” the already but not yet reign of God. (Supplementary Scripture: Luke 4:18-19.)

### Closing Song

#### Prayer of Blessing

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Col. 3:15-17.