



**Mennonite  
Church**  
Canada

Resource Centre

# From our Churches

*Author: Matthew Bailey-Dick,  
Kevin Peters-Unrau,  
Chip Bender  
Scott Brubaker-Zehr*

*Church: Kitchener-Waterloo Mennonite  
Churches*

*Date: Earth Day, 2007*

---

This resource is part of a larger **From Our Churches** archives available as an inspirational resource to teachers, ministers and others of Mennonite Church Canada. Posted by permission of the author. Permission to reproduce and distribute is granted.

## **A Car Free Sunday** A Sample Order of Service

Prelude

Opening Hymn #

Welcome, Introductions and Announcements  
-greetings to visitors from other churches

Call to Worship: "Walking on Holy Ground"  
-a litany and invitation to take off our shoes

Opening Prayer

Hymn #

Children's Time

OT Reading: Ezekiel 34:17-31

NT Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

Sermon:

Hymn #

Offering and Offertory

Congregational Prayer

Sending: "Putting on the Footwear of God"  
A Litany and invitation to put on our shoes to walk the path of Christ

Hymn of Sending #546 Guide my feet

## CALL TO WORSHIP

“Walking on Holy Ground”

- Leader:** In the beginning God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. God spoke into being the sun, the moon, and the stars.
- People:** It was good.
- Leader:** God spoke into being the oceans and all that lives in the water.
- People:** It was good.
- Leader:** God spoke into being the earth and all the plants, trees, and animals that live on the earth.
- People:** Indeed it was all very good.
- Leader:** Then God said: "Let us make human beings in our image. So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the plants of the earth, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself. God created human beings; he created them godlike, reflecting God's nature. Then God blessed them.
- People:** Indeed we are very blessed.
- Leader:** God looked over everything he had made; it was so good, so very good! By the seventh day God had finished the work of creation and rested.
- People:** Indeed God rested.
- Leader:** Just before God rested God said to the people: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill the Earth! Take charge and take care!"
- People:** Indeed we took charge, we reproduced, we filled the earth, and we prospered.
- Leader:** But the people forgot to take care. They forgot that the earth and the Sabbath are holy.
- People:** Indeed we forgot.
- Leader:** This day into which we have trod is a holy day and this earth on which we trod is holy ground. As a sign of our desire to treat the earth as holy and good, I invite you to take off your shoes and leave them on the floor beside your feet for the duration of the worship service.

*Shoes are removed*

**All (stand):** Indeed this is holy ground.

## SENDING

“Putting on the Footwear of God”

- Leader:** Certainly God has called us to be good stewards of God's creation.
- People:** Life-giving God, we offer ourselves in service to you.
- Leader:** We are connected to other people of faith and conscience around the world who are working for a peaceful, just, and sustainable world.
- People:** This global community supports us; we support each other.
- Leader:** We are related to the earth and all its creatures in a web that cannot be broken without injury to all.
- People:** The earth and our fellow creatures support us; we are their advocates.
- Leader:** Therefore, let us be strong in the Lord. Let us put on the full armour of God. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. I invite you now to put on your shoes as a sign of your willing service to proclaim by word and deed the gospel of peace as good stewards of this earth. *Shoes are put on*
- People:** O God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, we offer our lives in service to you. Help us to walk in your ways. Send us forth in your mercy and grace.
- All:** Amen

## *Suggestions for Sunday School*

April 22, 2007 - Car-free Sunday

For those who walk to church on April 22, the image of the footprint will connect with their real, literal experience of making footprints that morning. For everyone, the image of the footprint is an invitation to reflect on a number of environmental, congregational, and spiritual issues.

Following the worship service, you are encouraged to use one or several of the following activities in order to explore the meaning of the ecological footprint, or to consider how God is calling you and your congregation to care for creation during the global warming crisis.

You will probably find a slightly (or very) different configuration of people in your church on Earth Sunday. Some of your members will have walked to another church, and some from other churches will show up at your church. The following activities are meant to provide creative ways for “regulars” and visitors to interact, get to know each other, and share the experiences of Earth Sunday. Any of these would make excellent intergenerational activities.

1. Trace your foot and then cut out the footprint shape. Write a letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper directly onto this footprint page, and express your views about how Canada could reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Alternatively, write a letter to David Martin (MCEC Executive Minister) and express your ideas about how the Mennonite church can be a leader on environmental issues.
2. Trace your foot and then cut out the footprint shape. Write your own personal ecological commitment onto the footprint (i.e. specific things you plan to do to reduce your ecological footprint, or lifestyle questions you want to struggle with). Take this footprint home with you, or have someone mail it to you several weeks later as a friendly reminder.
3. Study Ephesians 6:10-17 and consider ways that the gospel of peace includes environmental activism – for example, in what ways could the “shoes for our feet” include tools for making our church buildings more environmentally sustainable?
4. Trace your foot and then cut out the footprint shape. On the footprint, invite people to write stories and reflections about their morning of walking to church. They can share these reflections with each other, and then they can be sent to the Canadian Mennonite as a way of sharing the experience, the insights, and the questions more broadly.
5. Conduct a simplified environmental audit of your church building (use such-and-such as a resource for this). Both children and adults would enjoy this sort of “scavenger hunt” of going around the church counting light bulbs, radiators, windows, etc. Use this as a basis for talking about the ecological footprint of the church building, people’s homes, workplaces, etc.

## *Additional ideas and resources for Sunday School*

April 22, 2007 - Car-free Sunday

- 1. Recycled tin can planter** - Take an empty tin can and paint a creation scene around the outside of the can (flowers, gardens, sunshine, animals, etc.). An adult leader can assist with poking holes in the bottom of the can. Fill the can with earth and plant a few seeds (e.g. herbs or flowers). Place the tin can on a plate so it doesn't leak water.
- 2. Pinwheel** - Draw pictures of animals, plants, recycling logos, or other Earth Day themes on a square piece of paper. Alternatively, compose an Earth Day prayer and write it on the paper square. Then draw a straight line on the paper from each corner to the opposite corner (it should then look like an "x"). Cut along the lines about three-quarters of the way in to the centre. Curl every other corner in to the centre and tape in place. Push a pin through the centre to hold all the corners and to fasten the pinwheel to a stick or pencil eraser. If time allows, some may want to experiment with larger squares of paper or with multiple pinwheels attached together. When everyone is finished, the whole group can go on a "pinwheel spinning run" around the church.
- 3. Tree rings and our imagination** - Arrange for someone to bring a large log "slice" to church (piece of firewood or a log cut into one single slice). Spend some time talking about how the rings inside the wood show the annual growth cycle of the tree. Talk about the importance of long-term environmental awareness and long-term action. Now pretend that the middle of the wood represents the present day, and encourage people to use their imaginations to think about what the world could be like 20, 40, or 100 years from now - i.e. what positive environmental changes could happen with each subsequent ring in the wood? Draw pictures of these changes and attach them to the wood, or write a prayer asking God for inspiration and imagination so that we can make these changes happen in our lifetime.
- 4. Ecological tableau** - Invite small groups to plan and then take turns "performing" a tableau that depicts what is happening to the planet at the present time (they can be creative about how to depict pollution or climate change or whatever). After they have established their pose, ask other participants to suggest ways that the scene can be changed, and then invite the group itself to show an alternative outcome. Talk about how the Holy Spirit can guide us to live out a vision of a more healthy planet.
- 5. Foodshed activity** - The term "foodshed" (similar to watershed) is used to describe the flow of food from the area where it is grown into the places where it is consumed. People often use this term to think about local food supplies within a particular "bioregion". Using some large pieces of flipchart paper or a large blackboard, invite participants to collaborate on a diagram of the Waterloo Region foodshed. Where does our food come from? What foods would be available if we only ate from our local foodshed? Does God care about where we get our food from? Possible resources for this activity include the MCC Simply in Season cookbook, the website of Foodlink Waterloo Region ([www.foodlink-waterlooregion.ca](http://www.foodlink-waterlooregion.ca)) or the Foodshed Project ([www.foodshedproject.ca](http://www.foodshedproject.ca)).

6. **Nature hike** - Lead participants on a walk around your church building or in the surrounding neighbourhood. Invite people to be aware of the natural world - to spend time “being with” the trees, the grass, the pinecones, the bugs, etc. Perhaps the group could all sit or lie under a tree for a time. Share memories of feeling particularly close to God through experiences with the natural world. One or more photographers could come along and be instructed to take certain pictures that capture the images of growth, pollution, or renewal that people are seeing. An alternative is to prepare a scavenger hunt in which participants gather a variety of physical objects outside.

7. **The Earth Day Kitchen** - Choose one or two recipes from the “Simply in Season” MCC cookbook and invite participants into the church kitchen to prepare these foods. Recipes could be chosen to reflect the end-of-winter season when local root vegetables are still available.

### *Related Websites*

<http://www.faith-commongood.net/> - Faith and the Common Good - In particular, the section on “Greening Sacred Spaces” is an excellent resource for considering how to “green” your church building.

<http://www.reepwaterlooregion.ca/> - Residential Energy Efficiency Project - evaluating homes and other buildings for their energy efficiency

<http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/> - Christian Ecology Link (from the United Kingdom)

<http://www.kairoscanada.org/e/ecology/index.asp> - Kairos Canada Ecological Justice program - this is an interfaith project of churches across Canada

<http://www.mennocreationcare.org/> - Mennonite Creation Care Network

<http://www.earthministry.org/> - Earth Ministry (from the USA) - a good selection of resources for worship, education, and action on environmental themes

<http://www.ecofoot.org/> - Ecological footprint quiz