



Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday Worship Resources

Prepared by the
MWC Regional
Representatives
in Africa for
22 January 2023,
or at any time
convenient for your
congregation.

Theme and texts

a. Theme:
**Jesus
Christ:
Our Hope**

**b. Why this theme
was chosen:**

Even in the midst of deep troubles, we come together from around the world to follow Jesus, who gives us hope. This is also the theme for Renewal 2023 in Mennonite World Conference.

**c. Biblical texts
options:**

Old Testament:
Isaiah 40:28-31

Psalm:
Psalm 62:1-6

Gospel:
Luke 18:35-43

New Testament:
1 Peter 1:3-6

**d. Relationship between
the theme and biblical texts:**

- Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
- Rest and hope come from God alone.
- The blind beggar knew hope in Jesus.
- Praise for a living hope.

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Prayer requests

Prayer Requests from Africa:

- Give thanks and praise for the vibrancy of many African churches, where so many members are youth and young adults. Pray for church leaders to be well-trained, and faithful in ministry.
- Pray for peaceful solutions to those experiencing violent conflict, especially in eastern Congo and Burkina Faso.
- Pray for the many people in Africa who are experiencing hunger and drought, due to the impacts of climate change and the war in Ukraine.

Prayer Requests from MWC:

- Give thanks and praise for the generous hospitality of the Indonesian churches in hosting a joyful global Assembly in 2022.
- Pray for the newly appointed leaders in MWC, the six new people on the [Executive Committee](#), and the three new chairs of [MWC Commissions](#).
- Pray that as each church grows in understanding what it means to be a communion together, this will help each member church to also deepen their understanding of the depth and breadth of the love of God.

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Song suggestions

Songs from MWC 2022 International Songbook

- #14 *Geta, Geta/You are Lord/Kaulah Tuhan* (Ethiopia)
- #19 *Bon berger, ton people t'adore/ We your people sing your praises/ Kami Umat-Mu Memuji* (Rwanda)
- #21 *Kwake Yesu nasimama/ Here on Christ the Rock I Stand* (Kenya)
- #6 *Sapagkat Ang Diyos/ Because God is Love* (Philippines)
- #7 *Tapaiko Cheuma/I am Your Child* (Nepal)

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Multimedia resources

See mwc-cmm.org/awfs

- [Video greetings from around the world](#)
- [Scripture texts read in multiple languages](#)
- [Song videos from the MWC Assembly in Indonesia](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Interactive map](#)
- [MWC speaker's bureau](#)





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Offering

- In African churches, the offering time is as important as the sermon. Go to page 13 to learn more about offering practices in African churches.
- MWC invites congregations to take a special offering for our global Anabaptist communion on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday. One way to do this is to invite every member to contribute the cost of at least one lunch in their own community to support the core ministries and Commissions of MWC. This is a manageable amount in every MWC member church around the world.



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Additional Resources

In this package

- Suggested liturgies for gathering and benediction
- Biblical background for sermon content
- Stories and testimonies from Africa for sermon content
- Anabaptist historical context
- Children's story and activity
- Tithes and offering ideas from Africa
- Cultural suggestions from Africa



General Council members visited local churches in Kisumu, Kenya, after Renewal 2018.
Photo: @realfoto_Kenya

The biblical texts, prayers, song suggestions, sermon ideas and other resources in this package have been prepared by members of MWC out of their experience in their local context. The teaching does not necessary represent an official MWC position.

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Please send your photos and testimonies regarding your celebration to 📷 photos@mwc-cmm.org



Suggested liturgies for gathering and benediction

Gathering/Call to worship

(loudly)

Leader: Give me a J

People: J

Leader: Give me an E

People: E

Leader: Give me an S

People: S

Leader: Give me a U

People: U

Leader: Give me an S

People: S

Leader: What do we have?

People: Jesus!

Leader: What do we have?

People: Jesus!

Leader: There is HOPE in the name of

People: Jesus!

Leader: There is HOPE in the name of

People: Jesus!

Benediction:

Leader: God is good

People: All the time

Leader: All the time

People: God is good

Leader: All the time

People: God is good

Leader: God is good

People: All the time



**Church members sing in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, during the Deacons delegation visit in 2020.
Photo: Siaka Traoré**



**A Mennonite Church Uganda congregation greets the global family during then-Deacons chair Henk Stenvers' visit in 2019.
Photo: Henk Stenvers**



Biblical background for sermon content

Choose texts that work in your context.

Old Testament: Isaiah 40:28-31

- Jesus Christ our hope is a theme that comes at the right time, an appropriate theme in the aftermath of crossing zones of turbulence in our world and in our lives in particular. Hope is a pure and disinterested confidence in the future. Don't we say that we have no hope when there is no life? To have hope is to have faith, to continue to put one's trust in God, even if everything does not go as we want. In our context of insecurity, aggravated by the COVID-19 crisis and many other evils that rage around us, hope presents itself as the breath of life.
- The children of Israel at one time also went through such disappointments and moments of crisis. According to them, they felt they no longer were important in the eyes of God. Many of them may have the same feeling of being not counted by God. This is common when we are going through uncertain times. God knows this, and knows our fears and our worries. Despite the uncertainty, God speaks to us saying, "Give hope to my people!"
- Although not everything is as we were used to before, God is faithful to God's promises. God remains God and has not changed. God asks you to place your trust, your hope in God. In Isaiah 40, God says over and over "Raise your eyes up and look! Who created these things? Who makes their army march in order? He calls them all by name." God says in Jeremiah 29:11: "Yes, I the LORD, know the plans I have for you. I declare it, these are not projects of misfortune but projects of happiness. I want to give you a future full of hope."
- God wants to give you hope when you think that nothing is going well in your family life, your health, your work, or your relationships

with others. God asks you to look up to God. Like God, God wants you not to be tired, nor to get bored. When you think nothing is right, God tells you to take flight like an eagle. God wants you to put your trust in God. Do not see everything as a failure, but count the benefits God put before you. You will see that in worship, the blessings of God are great.

- Hope in God will increase our strength to serve the Lord.

Psalm: Psalm 62:1-6

- David exhorts himself to continue to wait on God. We must persevere in the good we do and strive to do more and more.
- Everyone has been confronted with the actions of some ill-intentioned people and irritated by others. But God allows these things. Of course, they are difficult to deal with, but they also give the opportunity to develop more virtuous behaviours.
- The more faith is exercised, the more active it becomes. The more we meditate on the perfections of God, on God's promises and our experience, the more we overcome our fears and are kept in peace (Isaiah 26:3). In the same way that David's faith rises to unshakable certainty, his joy will turn into holy triumph.

Gospel: Luke 18:35-43

- Jesus is the hope of the marginalized. Jesus is the one who can hear the voice of the voiceless. Let us open our ears, our eyes, to hear and see those who are marginalized in order to give them hope.
- This blind and desperate man was depending on the generosity of people of good will. It was a generosity that certainly did not meet all of his needs. This man wanted to be independent. He must have heard of Jesus, and he put his hope, his faith, in Jesus



without having seen him. This man said to himself that the day when Jesus would pass by him, he would not miss the opportunity to challenge him. His hope was in Jesus.



**A service of thanksgiving for graduates at
Paroisse Missionnaire Shalom de Bukavu in DR Congo.
Photo courtesy of Jay creative2021**

was his deliverance and his hope. It may be that we are not the victim of a physical handicap, but of some kind of handicap that cannot be seen by the human eye. We too must make this cry to Jesus every day, saying “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me”. Thus, Jesus will heal our physical and spiritual handicaps. In return, we turn to him in gratitude and ask him, like Saul did on the road to Damascus, saying “Lord, what do you want me to do?” (Acts 9:6)

- Hoping in Christ can bring healing to our lives.
- What situation is so hard for you that it is hard to have hope? Who is trying to silence you? Fix your eyes on Jesus. Do not allow anyone to silence your hope in Christ. Cry out even more! Call upon Jesus, and he will respond. Jesus gives attention when you call out to him, with hope.

New Testament: 1 Peter 1:3-6

- Jesus made it clear to his disciples what the price is to pay for following him. Jesus did not promise us mountains and marvels. On the contrary, he told us if we want to follow him, we must take up our cross, the symbol of suffering and perseverance. What is reassuring to us about this kingdom reality is that Jesus has promised to be with us in good times and bad.
- Jesus is our hope in this present life, and Jesus is also our living hope for all time. We put our trust in Jesus for eternity. No matter what is going on for you, and what is not going well, put your trust in Jesus. Don't give up on Jesus, your spiritual life. Rise up and put your hope once again in Jesus.

Sermon content provided by:

- Siaka Traoré, pastor, Eglise Evangélique Mennonite du Burkina Faso
- Seliselwe Sibanda of Brethren in Christ Church, Zimbabwe
- Pastor Absalom Sibanda, Evangelist, Brethren in Christ Church, Zimbabwe

- This day is a day of grace for the blind man. He hears the noise of a crowd, he inquires and learns it is Jesus of Nazareth who is passing by. He says to himself, “my hope is fulfilled”. Then, louder than all the noise by the crowd, they hear “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” The crowd, out of contempt, say to him “Shut up”. It is then that he cries louder and louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus, the hope of the hopeless, pays attention to him, and makes him the most beautiful offer, “What do you want me to do?” Some versions say, “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus, I would like to hear you ask me such a question every day of my life, because you are my hope.
- Just like the young King Solomon, the blind man asks for what is essential and necessary, and what men have failed to give him, “Lord, let me recover my sight.” The Lord answers him. He is fulfilled and is the happiest man on earth that day.
- Certainly, this man was marginalized because of his physical disability. Jesus



Testimonies from Africa

By our side

When we receive the life of Jesus, a living hope is born in us, with our desires turned toward what does not perish: eternal life with God. This new life is constantly being tested in various ways. This is the story of a young Fula (a person from the semi-nomadic Fulbe people) from Burkina Faso who converted from Islam to Christianity.

This happened at the start of terrorism in a Fulbe village in northern Burkina Faso. The muezzin (the person who calls people to prayer) of the mosque gave his life to Jesus to obtain salvation. The imam and all the Muslim community were not happy with his decision. They accused him of treason.

One day, the imam summoned the muezzin before several Muslim followers. He was placed in the middle of the circle, and the imam asked the audience, “If one of your oxen gets lost from the herd, and you find it, what do you do?” The Muslim faithful answered firmly, “we bring him back and we tie him well so that he does not get lost again.”

The new convert asked for the floor to give the answer he had in his heart. “In my humble opinion, if your ox goes astray and you find it in a green pasture grazing fresh grass, you leave it there, and with a happy heart you go to lead the rest of the herd to him so that all your oxen may also benefit from this green pasture.”

The imam and his retinue became angry and withdrew.

A few days later, unidentified gunmen broke in the new believer’s home in the night. Because of the heat, he and his family slept in the yard outside the house on mats. The attackers kicked him awake and ordered him to follow them.

He obeyed without flinching. As they moved through the dark night, one of the attackers fired a shotgun at him but did not hit him.

In a spirit of survival, the new believer fled and hid in a friend’s kitchen until dawn. Sensing the danger had passed, he came out of his hiding place and showed himself to his friend. The friend went home discreetly to check if his family was well, and to bring him some clothes. The new believer left the village to save his life.

Jesus is our hope: even if we go through the valley of the shadow of death, he is by our side.



**A mosque in Burkina Faso.
Photo: Jürg Bräker**

God fights for his children

Psalm 62 expresses the cry of Christians in the West African Sahel. Several Sahelian countries have been experiencing terrorist attacks for more than 10 years. Like David, we feel hungry and harassed by the enemy. David was abandoned by his faith collaborators, betrayed. In these difficult times, David did not use violence, trickery or any physical means to get rid of his enemies. He left it to God and he put his trust in God.



**Brethren in Christ Church Mozambique annual general conference
July 2022 in Milange, Mozambique.
Photo: Danisa Ndlovu**

God is our home, our refuge and our hope in times of trial.

There was a retired high school teacher in eastern Burkina Faso. For some time, this region has been controlled by terrorists. One day they found him in the church, teaching. They asked him what was he was doing, and he replied that he was teaching the Bible. The terrorists told him that the stage of the Bible has passed and it is now the time of Muhammad; he must change his religion. He replied that at his age he cannot change his religion.

They told him he must stop teaching, and they will take him to their leader. They forced him to take his car, which they also got into. On the way, the terrorists said that this car now belongs to them. The teacher started to pray, asking God to give him wisdom in how to respond to the terrorists.

Arriving at the leader of the terrorists, he was asked who owned the car. He responded, "It belongs to my sister-in-law." The leader answered: "You are fortunate it belongs to a woman because we do not take away women's property". They ordered him not to teach about Jesus anymore because it

is now Muhammad's time. He replied that it was not Muhammad that Jesus was talking about who would come, but the Holy Spirit who was to come and help believers.

After a period of interrogation, where the teacher remained calm and confident, they sent him to a place where he could easily return home.

The teacher placed his faith and hope in God, who promised his children by saying to keep calm and that God will fight for them (Exodus 14:14).

My true hope

Working as a nurse is a challenging job. It needs a heart with passion, patience and love. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I saw the hand of God in my life as he protected me. There were times when I despaired with anxiety, but when I remembered how King David in the Bible hoped in the Lord and encouraged himself, I would be revived.

I was pregnant when the coronavirus pandemic started. I'm also asthmatic. My gynecologist stressed how I should be careful not to catch COVID-19 because it would be too risky for both me and the child. I wondered how I would fare working at the biggest hospital in the country, Parirenyatwa, that was also treating COVID-19 patients.

One time at work, a difficult patient was admitted. He was frustrated and agitated. Worse still, he showed quite an attitude and did not want anything to do with nurses, doctors and being in the hospital. He was coughing so badly. Many of my colleagues were fed up with his antics. I then offered to nurse him, trying to create a nurse-to-patient relationship, chatting kindly and giving him his medication, and coaxing him to wear a mask. He was impossible, but eventually complied after 20-30 minutes of persuasion. I was happy too as I tucked him in.



As I was leaving, I saw two people in full PPE (personal protective equipment) running toward the cubicle. They said the patient I was nursing was COVID-positive and that he should be changed to the COVID ward.

I was filled with great fear when I thought of all the time I was chatting with him closely while he did not have a mask on. I worried. But I reminded myself that worry is like a rocking chair. I'd keep rocking in one place and get nowhere. I prayed.

I drew on my *hope* in the Lord. I remembered that those who hope in the Lord keep flying high like eagles, they run and do not become weary; they walk and do not faint. I mustered all my hope in the Lord and believed I would be well. Days went by, I continued with my work and felt strong. I had no COVID-19 symptoms.

On another vivid occasion when my baby was three months old, I nursed a patient who had been admitted the previous night. I bathed and dressed the patient's wounds only to be told she had to be transferred to a COVID-19 ward. I worried about how I would quarantine with or without my breastfeeding baby. I just had faith and hoped God would continue to protect me. He did, because up until today I haven't suffered from COVID, despite being highly exposed countless times. Yes, I am very cautious, but I do believe God protected me and I'm very grateful. I shall keep hoping in Jesus. Jesus is my true hope.



*Hazel Nenguke,
Brethren in Christ Church, Zimbabwe*

Hope is a position of optimism

I was in a dark space June to July 2021 when my husband and my mom fell ill at the same time. My mother later passed on in August. Then in February to March 2022,

my husband fell ill again. It took more than two weeks for the doctors to come up with a diagnosis. Meanwhile, I watched helplessly as he suffered: weak body, not eating, losing weight, drenching sweats. I almost despaired.

At such times, the mind questions and almost blames God. I then remembered that God never promised a problem-free life (Psalm 34:19, Psalm 23:4) and God reminded me that I was not alone and that I needed to look up and call to God (Psalm 34:17-18, Psalm 55:22, 1 Peter 5:7, Psalm 121).

I learned not to focus on the situation, because this would fill me with despair; not to focus on myself, as I would then start feeling pity for myself; not to look for someone to blame, as that would lead me to complaining; and not to focus on the present, as that would make me miss the point of what God wanted to achieve in my life.

I learned that hope is a position of optimism: God is good (Exodus 34:6); God is working for our good (Romans 8:28); and God is in control (Psalm 22:25). Above all, these dark moments have a beginning, a middle, and an end; they last for only a season (Romans 25:4, Hebrews 6:19).

And in all this we have to remember the greatness of God and who we are in Christ.

I can never downplay the power of family relationships in getting through this bleak period, especially the encouragement and support from my biological and spiritual family, and the hope they created. What would I be without this blessed hope in my Lord? My husband became better and we cannot sing praises enough. I keep hoping for many more days of good health and happiness.



*Virginia Makanza,
Brethren in Christ Church, Zimbabwe*



Anabaptist historical context



**A marker stone identifies the "Anabaptist bridge" in Zurich, Switzerland.
Photo: Henk Stenvers**

Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday is an annual event for MWC member congregations around the world, worshipping together in spirit using the same worship resources, knowing that we belong to each other in this global family of faith.

Anabaptism is a Christian movement that traces its origins to the Radical Reformation. The most widely accepted date for the establishment of Anabaptism is 21 January 1525, when Conrad Grebel baptized George Blaurock in Felix Manz's house in Zurich, Switzerland. George Blaurock immediately baptized several others on confession of their faith. These baptisms were the first "re-baptisms" known in the movement.

Anabaptism developed into several groups in Europe during the 1500s – including the Mennonites (named after Menno Simons from the Netherlands) – and spread in multiple locations. Members of this movement continued to move and grow in numbers around the world in the centuries to follow.

Mennonite World Conference began in 1925 as a way of bringing together the many churches from different streams of Anabaptism. Today MWC has member churches in 58 countries, each with their own story of how they began and came to be part of our Anabaptist communion.

How Mennonites came to be

The Anabaptist movement began as part of a renewal movement within the Catholic Church in Europe in the early 16th century. Some of its inspiration comes from the Catholic tradition: the strong sense of discipline and community found in monasticism, for example, the attentiveness to the Holy Spirit that could be found in Catholic mysticism, or the emphasis on following

Jesus in daily life in *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas á Kempis. Anabaptism also owes a debt to Martin Luther and the early Reformation movement, particularly Luther's emphasis on the authority of Scripture and his emphasis on the freedom of the Christian conscience. And the movement was shaped by deep social and economic unrest of their time that exploded in the Peasants' War of 1524-1525.



The Anabaptists themselves, however, would have said that they were simply trying to be faithful followers of the teachings of Jesus and the example of the Early Church.

Although dates can be somewhat arbitrary, the Anabaptist movement “officially” began on 21 January 1525 when a small group of Christian reformers gathered for a secret worship service in Zurich, Switzerland. The group was frustrated by the hesitance of their leader, Ulrich Zwingli, to enact the changes to Catholic rituals that they agreed Scripture demanded, especially regarding the Mass and the practice of infant baptism. In their reading of Scripture, true Christian baptism assumed a conscious commitment to follow Jesus – something no infant could do. So on 21 January 1525, this small group agreed to baptize each other as adults. Although it would be some time before the full meaning of baptism came into focus, the early Anabaptists understood this act to symbolize the presence of the Holy Spirit in the gift of God’s grace, a commitment to a life of daily discipleship, and membership in a new community of God’s people.

Members of the movement generally referred to themselves as “Brethren” (*Brüder*)—or later by the more descriptive term “Baptism-minded” (*Taufgesinnten*). Their opponents labeled them Anabaptists (= re-baptizers), in part because “rebaptism” was a criminal offense in the Holy Roman Empire, punishable by death. At first, the group resisted the term “Anabaptist” since in their minds they were not rebaptizing, but rather baptizing correctly for the first time. But over time, the name persisted. Today, *Anabaptist* is an accepted English term for all Reformation groups who practiced believers (rather than infant) baptism, and the denominations descended from them such as the Amish, Mennonites, and Hutterites.

Over time, however, a coherent movement emerged. Its identity was forged, in part at least, from the need to respond to several basic challenges. First, in response to accusations of heresy by religious and political authorities in the first half of the 16th century, Anabaptists were quick to define themselves as faithful, Bible-believing Christians. Second, militant voices within their number who were ready to impose social and religious change with violence forced Anabaptists to clarify their identity as peaceful, law-abiding, nonresistant Christians whose only weapon was love. And finally, in the face of spiritualist dissenters who favored an internal religious experience that could avoid theological disputations and go undetected by authorities, Anabaptists were compelled to defend the public and visible nature of the church.

Despite the diversity of theology and practice evident in the first generation of Anabaptists, three coherent groups had emerged by the 1540s: the Swiss Brethren in the German-speaking territories; the Hutterites in Moravia; and the Mennonites of the Netherlands and North Germany who were organized around the leadership of Menno Simons. Although these groups differed in important ways, they nonetheless recognized each other as members of the same religious tradition, so that their internal disagreements often took the form of a family quarrel.



Excerpts from ***Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be***, by John D. Roth, Herald Press, 2006. Adapted and used with permission.



Children's story and activity

5. WORSHIP

Worship is a time when church members come together to pray, sing, read scripture, share with each other, and give praise to God. It can be a time of fellowship, restoration, comfort, celebration, or a call for renewed action. Believers can worship in a church building, in a home, or in a boat—worship can happen anywhere!

EARLY STORY

In the 16th century, it was against the law to gather as Anabaptists to worship. Instead Anabaptists often had to meet in secret to read the Bible and sing hymns. They met in the woods, in caves, or in barns.

In the Netherlands where there were many dykes and channels of water running through the towns, Anabaptists used those spaces to worship in secret. Pieter Pieters Beckjen sometimes did his preaching in a boat, so that the authorities on shore could not see or hear what was being said.

In 1546, when Andrew Smuel and Dirk Pieters of the Netherlands were arrested for being Anabaptists, they testified that they had studied the Bible together in a place other than at church:

Question: Where did the apostles go to teach?
Answer: They went into the synagogues, and preached the Gospel of Christ.

Question: We have heard that you also teach wherever you go.
Answer: We may have read the Gospel together.

Question: Where did you read it together?
Answer: At the dyke.



Pieter Pieters Beckjen (from *Martyrs Mirror*, page 739)

(from *Martyrs Mirror*, 477)

GLOBAL STORY

In the Kinshasa Mennonite Church in the Congo, joyous singing and drumming are important parts of worship. For song leader and drummer William Kulpeta, the construction of the drums and the different sounds each makes have special meaning in worship.

Drums are made from a single piece of wood that is hollowed out by hand till the sides are the correct width. An animal skin—goat, cow, or even antelope—is stretched across the open end of the drum.

Most churches use the tall, upright drum. Another drum is played with the drum head facing down. It has a small piece of wood (*pwita*) attached to the center of the drum head. The drummer reaches down into the drum and pulls on the *pwita* to put different amounts of pressure on the drum head. The other hand drums on the skin of the drum head. This makes a variety of sounds.



FAMILY QUESTIONS

- ▶ Where does your congregation gather for worship?
- ▶ What is the most unusual place you have gathered for a church service?
- ▶ What is your favorite part of worship?

"Worship" from *Let the Children Come to Me: Nurturing Anabaptist Faith within Families* by Lisa Weaver and Elizabeth Miller; Design by Judith Rempel Smucker. Cascadia Publishing House (2019). Used with permission.



ACTIVITY

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 18:20

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

CHOOSE A BIBLE STORY TO READ TOGETHER
in an unusual place.

Depending on your location and the time of year, consider: under a tree, while on a hike, next to a favorite window, or creating a "tent" inside with chairs and a blanket.




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TAKE IT FURTHER!

Start a journal of your interesting places. Write down where you were and what Bible story you read together. Draw a picture or have a grown-up take a photo to include in your journal.

PRAYER

Thank you, God,
for being with us,
wherever we are.

Amen




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"Worship" from *Let the Children Come to Me: Nurturing Anabaptist Faith within Families* by Lisa Weaver and Elizabeth Miller; Design by Judith Rempel Smucker. Cascadia Publishing House (2019).
Used with permission.



Tithes and offering ideas

The offering time is as important as the sermon. Often someone will give a testimony and Scripture on the theme of giving.

The pastor often asks one of the ushers to pray, to bless the givers and also that those who are not giving may be blessed to give.

Sometimes the ushers take the baskets around, and at other times members come up to the front to put their offering into a basket. In many places, the people sing and dance because giving is accompanied with much joy.

MWC invites a special offering to be taken for the global Anabaptist church community on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday. One way to think about this offering is to invite every member to contribute the value of one lunch in their own community to support the networks and resources of our global Anabaptist church family. Sacrificing one lunch is our humble way of giving thanks to God, and supporting the on-going ministry of God through the church.

This gift of “one lunch” per person once a year is something that all MWC members can do. Some people have resources to give much more than this, and should be encouraged to do so. Others with more scarce resources might be encouraged to hear that the Executive Committee of the Mennonite World Conference, with members from every continent, is confident that most adults all around the world can give the equivalent of one lunch per year for the work of the global church.

Here are some ideas on how to plan for an offering in your congregation.

- Plan for One Lunch offerings to be given in a special basket at the front, or culturally appropriate lunch containers during the worship service.
- Plan for a shared congregational meal



Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday celebration at Paroisse Missionnaire Shalom de Bukavu in DR Congo.
Photo courtesy of Bievenu Shashika

together before or after worship on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday.

- This could be “potluck”, with each family bringing big dishes of food to share, including an offering basket for MWC with the meal.
- Each family could bring a prepared packed lunch. These packed lunches are then available for auction or for purchase or donation to take home or eat together after worship.
- Plan for a time of shared fasting and praying for the global church during a mealtime before or after worship on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday, and include an offering for MWC during that time, for at least the value of the meal that is not being eaten.

Funds that are gathered through this special offering in each congregation can be sent directly to Mennonite World Conference (find ways to give at mwc-cmm.org/donate). Or, these funds can be sent to your national church office, clearly designated for Mennonite World Conference and indicated as an Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday offering. You can ask that they pass the funds on to MWC.



Cultural suggestions from Africa

- Check with Africans in your own community about incorporating their own worship traditions.
- The first hour of worship in Ethiopia is dedicated to prayer, including Scripture texts and songs guiding the hearts and minds of those who are praying, often on their knees.
- Many traditional hymns are adapted to an African rhythm, and will include dancing, clapping, ululating, and whistling. These are actions that are used in praise to God. Drumming enhances the beauty of each song.
- Often church members are all encouraged to come up to the front to put their offering into a basket. In many places, people sing and dance while giving their offering, because giving is accompanied with much joy.
- Many people in Africa wear beautiful traditional clothing, or a church uniform when they go to worship. Worship is a time to bring out one's very best in praise to God.
- In Ethiopia, right before the sermon, the leader calls on children to come forward who have memorized Scripture or are ready to sing a song. There is a rush as the children push to get ahead of each other. If a child is to sing, the congregation joins as an encouragement to the child. Even children who cannot yet read will recite memorized Scripture and receive cheering and clapping from the congregation.
- In some congregations in Africa, at the end of the service, every person greets every other person with a handshake or hug. This is done by people forming a line inside the building and greeting the first person at the door to the outside. One by one, people inside the building go through the door, joining the line on the outside of the building after greeting everyone who is already in the line outside. Everyone greeting everyone on their way out of the church building strengthens the experience of community for all.



Women dance in worship in Kisumu, Kenya, in 2018.
Photo: @realfoto_Kenya



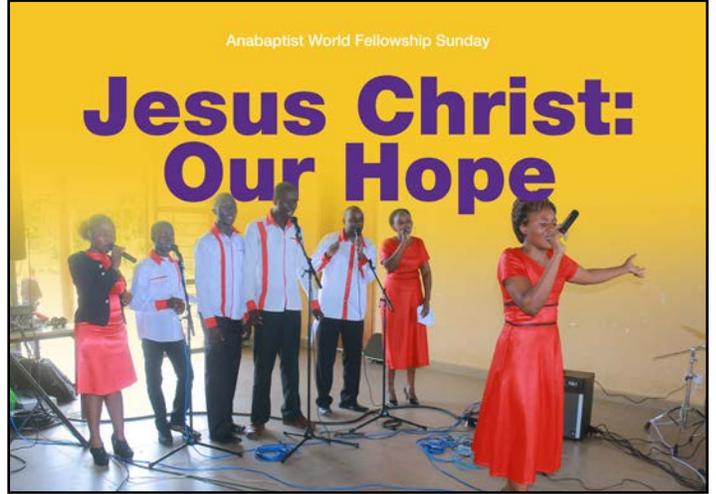
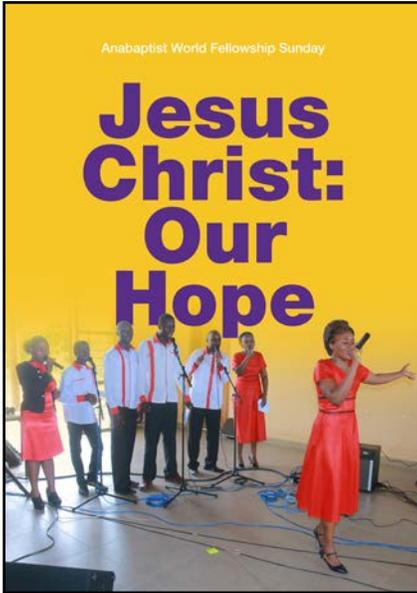
Church members greet each other after a service in Burkina Faso in 2020.
Photo: Siaka Traoré



Additional resources

Poster A

Poster B



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