



# Peace Sunday 2020 Worship Resources

Prepared by the  
MWC Peace  
Commission for  
20 September 2020

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## Theme and texts

### a. Theme:

**When one member suffers,  
all members suffer:  
Peace as accompaniment  
and solidarity**

### b. Why this theme was chosen:

If we are interested in embodying God's peace and justice in this world, what happens to one affects and should also matter to others.

### c. Biblical text:

1 Corinthians 12:12–27  
Ruth 1:1–17  
Ephesians 4:1–6  
Galatians 6:1–5

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## Prayer Requests

- We pray for everyone who has been affected by Covid-19. For those who have died; for those who have been ill; for the family members that this has affected; for those whose jobs and livelihoods have been affected by the economic downturn that this pandemic has caused; for all of us as our lives and our "normals" have changed.
- *We lament* systemic racism that leads to killings and daily indignities for people of colour. We grieve the violent actions by both protesters and law enforcement. We confess the lack of equity and justice that at times from characterizes our own responses. We acknowledge the long, intercontinental roots of racism that include complicity in the slave trade. *Creator God, reach into our hearts and our troubled world to bring repentance and right relationships!*
- Pray for our brothers and sisters in Hong Kong as they experience significant upheaval and conflict in its relations to mainland China.



Paroisse Missionnaire Shalom, DR Congo

- Praise God for the evangelistic fervour and faithfulness of our brothers and sisters in Africa. With economic challenges, severe climate events and diseases like malaria compounding the threat of COVID-19, they continue to worship God and serve their neighbours with what means they have, sharing the gospel in word and deed.

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## Song Suggestions

Visit [mwc-cmm.org/peacesunday](http://mwc-cmm.org/peacesunday) for recordings

- "Esuno Kokoro uchini" / "Peace in my heart" by Mitsuru Ishido, Japan / story on page #9
- "You're not alone" by Bryan Moyer Suderman, Canada
- "Dhuh Pangeran" / "Prince of Peace" by Saptojoadi Sardjoni

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## Additional resources

[mwc-cmm.org/peacesunday](http://mwc-cmm.org/peacesunday)

### a. Additional resources in this package

- Suggested liturgies for gathering and benediction
- Teaching resources
- Testimonies

### b. Additional resources available online:

- Pictures (including all used in this package)
- Song recordings
- [Mennonite World Conference Declaration of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples](#)



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**Activities**

- **Creating a patchwork quilt or blanket**  
Sew, stitch, knit or crochet a blanket that brings together different strands or smaller pieces of fabric into one whole. Such a project demonstrates the interconnectivity and the beauty that emerges when we all come together in accompaniment and solidarity. (participants at the Global Mennonite Peacebuilding Conference and Festival in June 2019 made a beautiful quilt during the event near Amsterdam. Read [“A Comforting Story.”](#))

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[mw-cmm.org/peace-commission](http://mw-cmm.org/peace-commission)

How did you use these resources to practice peace?

Send your stories, photos, videos or artwork to

[photos@mw-cmm.org](mailto:photos@mw-cmm.org)

**Congregations in Honduras, India and Germany made peace trees following the suggestions in last year's Peace Sunday worship package.**

Vikal Rao



Arup Ghose & Margaret Devadasan



Marcel Yanes



Ashish Kumar Milap [go.mw-cmm.org](http://go.mw-cmm.org)



Barbara Hege-Galle





## Introduction

### Solidarity and our interconnectedness

– Andrew Suderman

As I write these words, our world is embroiled in several struggles. First, we have been clutched by a global pandemic which has disrupted any sense of normalcy we may have assumed. Our second struggle is with overt expressions of deeply rooted racism that continues to kill and oppress black and brown brothers and sisters. Both of these – the pandemic and systemic racism – are not isolated struggles. They both highlight the inequality (racial and economic) that continues to cause suffering and pain.



**“It takes one to have Jesus inside their hearts to understand peace and also be delivered.” BICC Zengeza in Harare, Zimbabwe.  
Photo: Duduzile Moyo.**

These struggles highlight the realization that God’s peaceable kingdom is not yet a reality here on earth. If, however, we pay attention to the cries of those who cannot breathe – due to COVID-19 or police brutality – we can learn to respond in solidarity with those who are in pain and/or oppressed.

The biblical narrative tells us the story of a God who walks with those who are disheartened, disenfranchised and who suffer. It also invites those who believe in this God and who follow his Son Jesus Christ to see how all of humanity is interconnected:

when one suffers, creation is not well; things are not as they should be. If we are interested in embodying God’s peace and justice in this world, what happens to one should also matter to others. If we seek to be a Peace Church, we must therefore recognize our interconnectedness, challenge injustice, while accompanying those who suffer.

Recognizing our interconnectedness, however, means calling into question the myth of “the individual.” The notion of “the individual” suggests that one is “free” or “separate” from others. It assumes that one can be “independent” from others; pushing against the idea that others may determine or affect one’s actions. Thus, the battle that rages on when we seek to emphasize “the individual” is one that seeks to be free *from* others.

One thing that COVID-19 has highlighted in the past few months, however, is how we are all intrinsically bound. And this is a reality that those who are oppressed and exploited could have already told us. Put simply, what we do affects others. What others do affects us. For better or for worse, we are inextricably bound. We only need to see how COVID-19 has spread to understand this reality.

In South Africa, the notion of *ubuntu* provides a significant philosophical reminder. *Ubuntu* has become the short hand for the phrase *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* which means “a person is a person because of other people.”

In South Africa, *ubuntu* provided an alternative logic to the history and experience of colonialism and apartheid. Apartheid, which literally means “apart-hood,” was the rigid structure that was based on racial segregation. It emerged out of European colonization and formed a legal system that was based on and promoted white supremacy and white privilege while suppressing and oppressing those it deemed as “not-white.” Apartheid was a form of social engineering that promoted separation and fear



of the “other,” thus justifying oppression and violence against those it deemed as “not-white.”

Throughout the struggle against apartheid (which officially came to an end in 1994) and into the early years of South Africa’s democracy, the concept of *ubuntu* provided motivation and vision. It highlighted how apartheid and its separation and exclusion attacked not only one’s dignity, but one’s humanity! Desmond Tutu, for example, regularly referenced the notion of *ubuntu* as he challenged the logic and separating practice of apartheid. “My humanity,” he would remind people, “is bound up, is inextricably bound, with yours; and yours with mine.”<sup>1</sup>

It seems to me that this notion of *ubuntu* is a concept we might want to embrace at this time (if not from here on in!). It may help us to better understand Philippians 2:3-4:

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than [one]self. Let each of you look out not only for [your] own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

*When one member suffers, all members suffer.*

Embracing such a vision of interconnectedness, however, has consequences. What happens to someone else matters to us, and what happens to us matters to others. And this may affect not only who we are, but what we do! It offers, in other words, a *social* vision, not an *individualistic* one!

Embodying such a vision, however, takes a posture of solidarity. It assumes that we are not walking on our own but with others. There are many joys in embracing such a posture. But, it also means that we share in the suffering: when one member suffers, all members suffer.

Thus, if we want to be healthy, we must also work to ensure that others may be well. If we want a world where everyone is treated with respect and dignity –

as human beings and as gifts of God – then we must ensure that the “least of these” (those who might not count in the eyes of the principalities and powers) are front and centre in the quest for dignity and humanity. At the most fundamental level, this is what it means to be in solidarity with others.

To live in solidarity, however, means that we must understand the struggles others face. In other words, a posture of being in solidarity with others means that we must also be aware of and question our constructed social realities in order to better understand why or how others are suffering.

Herein lies the significance of lament. To understand lament – someone’s cry, someone’s pain, someone’s time of anguish – is to recognize that things are not as they should be. And this animates us (or should animate us) to investigate why some are suffering and explore how we might confront the issues that cause such suffering. Lament offers an opportunity to shape our social vision; it challenges us to recognize what is not right, where harmony is not yet a reality and what needs to change so that everyone may experience God’s *shalom*.

This creates an invitation to be the church –the “called out ones” – today. It offers an opportunity to embody the vocation of the church in solidarity with others: struggling to ensure that everyone has the medical care, food, economic and social security and the dignity they need.

When we respond to the invitation to be the church, we can participate in a vision of hope: that God is with us, works through us and has not forsaken us. It also stirs us to action to embrace our particular vocation in and for the world and to witness to Christ’s way of peace as we participate in making God’s manifold wisdom known for the world.

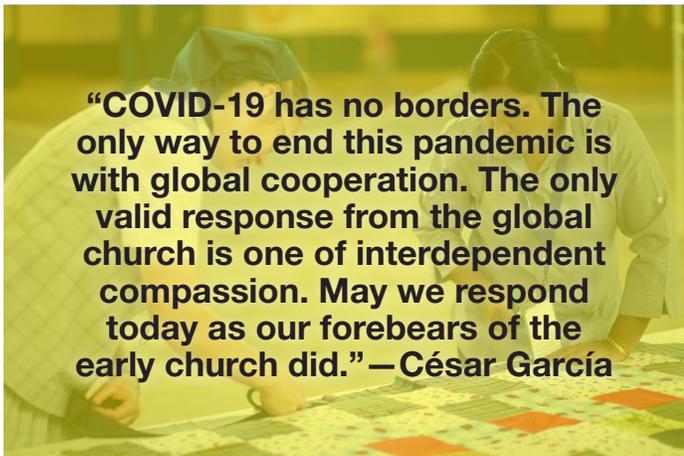
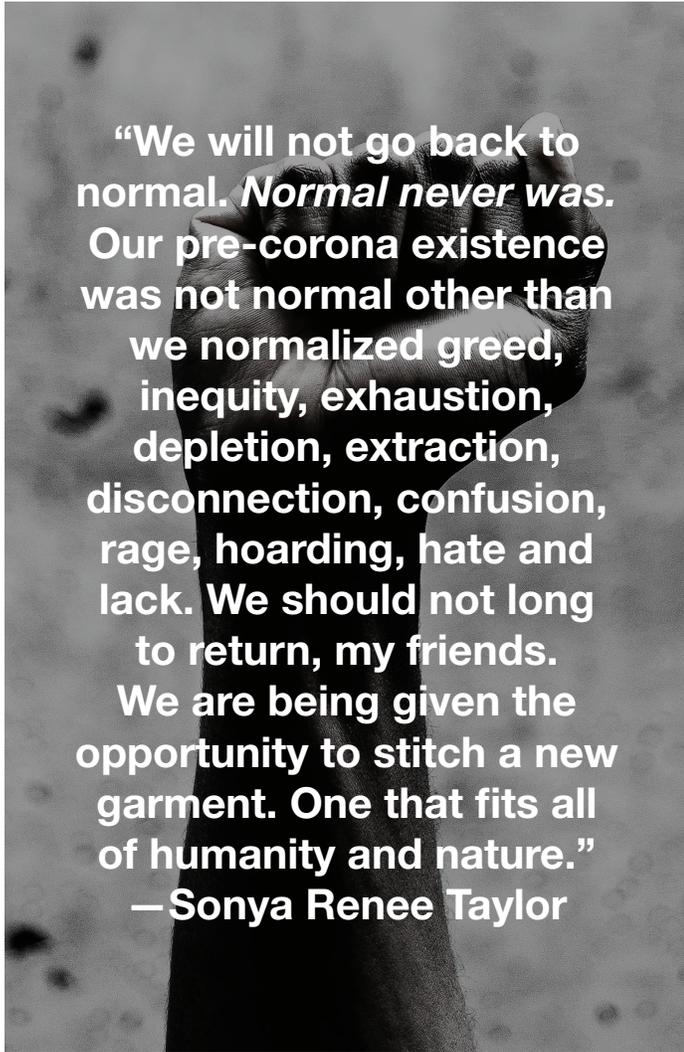
May God help us respond faithfully.

Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 31.



**Suggested liturgies for gathering and benediction**



**Opening prayer**

**Our Heavenly Father**

How enriched we are through the sanctifying knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whom You sacrificed for the world to usher in peace between humanity and God.

You broke down the wall of hostility that separates one from the other through Jesus, our unity; but LORD, we have either forgotten or ignored this Peace offering.

We acknowledge today your gracious and long-suffering nature

in turning our unworthiness into freedom and confidence

to kneel before Your Presence through the redeeming work of Jesus’ blood.

And as we commune with You through Your Holy Spirit, we are reminded of the riches of Jesus’ glorious inheritance we together have in the saints

and your incomparably great power resident within us to effect change in the world.

We are grateful, Lord God.

We make ourselves aware, LORD, of your intent to display your manifold wisdom,

through the church, to the rulers and authorities, both of the world and heavenly realms.

We, the body of Christ, take stock of this eternal purpose of yours

and approach your throne to stand in the gap on behalf of our lands

during these grave, dark times.

Forgive us Father, for breaking the bond of peace with our sisters and brothers

through reckless and dangerous acts, unjust laws and insensitive words.

We stand convicted in your court and hang our heads in shame.



Do we need to draw your attention to the plight  
of millions

affected by COVID 19, hurricanes, locust attacks,  
racism, casteism and other atrocities?

We have become part of a system  
that encourages police brutality and hate speeches  
by politicians,  
ignores criminal negligence of bureaucracies,  
cheers a jingoistic media and  
dispassionately watches the apathy of justice  
systems.

We are anguished, Lord God!

Holy Spirit make us, the church, realize that the solution  
lies in “we” and not “me”.

Remind us repeatedly that if one part suffers, then the  
body suffers.

Direct us to reach out to the lost, wandering, outcast  
and destitute

with the immense resources placed by the  
Sovereign LORD at our disposal.

Reaffirm to every Christian that we need to live a life  
worthy of our calling

and that love is shown best through action.

Provide courage to the leaders in the church to speak  
the truth in love to those in power

so that justice and righteousness flow across  
nations.

Almighty God, we look heavenwards for your kindness  
during these harsh times

so that the weary may find rest,  
the homeless may find shelter,  
the hungry may be filled,  
the refugee may find acceptance,  
the captives may find freedom  
and the peace that passeth all understanding  
may prevail.

Finally, Lord God, help us bear with another, carrying  
each others’ burdens

so as to fulfil the perfect law of Christ in this  
imperfect world.

May your glorious light shine forth and you receive your  
due honour, glory and praise.

Thank you, Lord God.

In Jesus’ matchless name we pray, Amen

*Prayer by Ravindra Raj is a church leader from  
Bharatiya Jukta Christa Prachar Mandali  
(United Missionary Church), India.*

### Other prayers and liturgies

#### Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced  
Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors  
Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home  
Remember those who must choose between  
preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children  
when their schools close

Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips  
Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult  
of the economic market

Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home  
Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,  
let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap  
our arms around each other,

Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of  
God to our neighbors.

Amen.

*By Cameron Bellm, from A Consoling Embrace:  
Prayers for a Time of Pandemic by Cameron Bellm.  
Published by Twenty-Third Publications, 2020. [\[link\]](#)*



## Teaching resources



**Mennonites join a walk in solidarity along the Migrant Trail, a path mirroring the journey of border crossing in the southern USA.**  
Photo: Saulo Padilla

### Walking with the Hurting

– Kenneth Hoke (USA)

#### Guiding Questions (for small groups):

The following are questions in which congregations could explore together during the service:

- Who are the hurting within “our” world? Think about the immediate reality of your community and contacts, then move out to broader circles.
- No one else can accompany the people who are immediately around you. How are we walking with them?
- How does Jesus’ peace call us to be with them?

#### Exploring the Scriptures:

##### I Corinthians 12:12-27

The challenge of being the people of God and living out God’s calling in the world, always begins with how we do this within the church. The text from 1 Corinthians 12 helps us to see this reality. Where is the challenge for your community to accompany one another in your own congregational family? Are there challenges within the body that are causing discord rather than peace? Are we vying for place or position? How do we address these challenges?

What are the examples of caring for one another within your community? How are you affirming these and encouraging this lifestyle as Christ followers?

Share examples of how we need one another.

Where is the challenge to accompany the suffering within your community? How do you share in their journey?

Where is the opportunity to rejoice with and honour those within your community? How do you share in their journey?

##### Ruth 1:1-17

Ruth’s story with Naomi speaks to us about displaced people in our world. Their journey to find food in another land and within a different people group is widely known within our world. Naomi experiences this in her travel from her homeland and then Ruth also knows the same as she goes to a new home.

We see in this account that displaced people find a home in a new land. They establish themselves there, marry, and at least for Ruth, have children. Ruth becomes so much part of her new homeland that she is even found in the genealogy of Jesus’ earthly family as found in Matthew 1.

How do we learn from this story about accompanying displaced people in our world? Where are the opportunities for us to welcome strangers, immigrants, displaced people into our community and to allow them to know the peace of Jesus?

How do we walk with displaced people who are not in our immediate community? What is our challenge to bring Jesus’ peace into their situation?

##### Galatians 6:1-5 and Ephesians 4:1-6

In these two passages, we come back to the challenge of accompanying one another on the journey of life. The focus is on the church, but as we have seen already, God wants us to be with each other as God also wants us to be with others in our world.

What are the challenges for us to accompany one another within the church? Unfortunately, it has often been easier for us to divide from each other than to do the hard work of peace and reconciliation within our communities.

How do we gently restore one another, have patience with each other, carry each other’s burdens?



How do we love one another and keep the unity of the Spirit?

Here is the challenge for us to live out the peace of Jesus within our immediate relationships within the church. This is the challenge to the normal Christian life as God's people. Why? Because we have one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.

Where is the Spirit speaking to us as the church to live the life of grace with each other as we accompany one another in our daily walk? This is not head knowledge: it is relational reality to which we each are called as followers of Jesus.

**Conclusion**

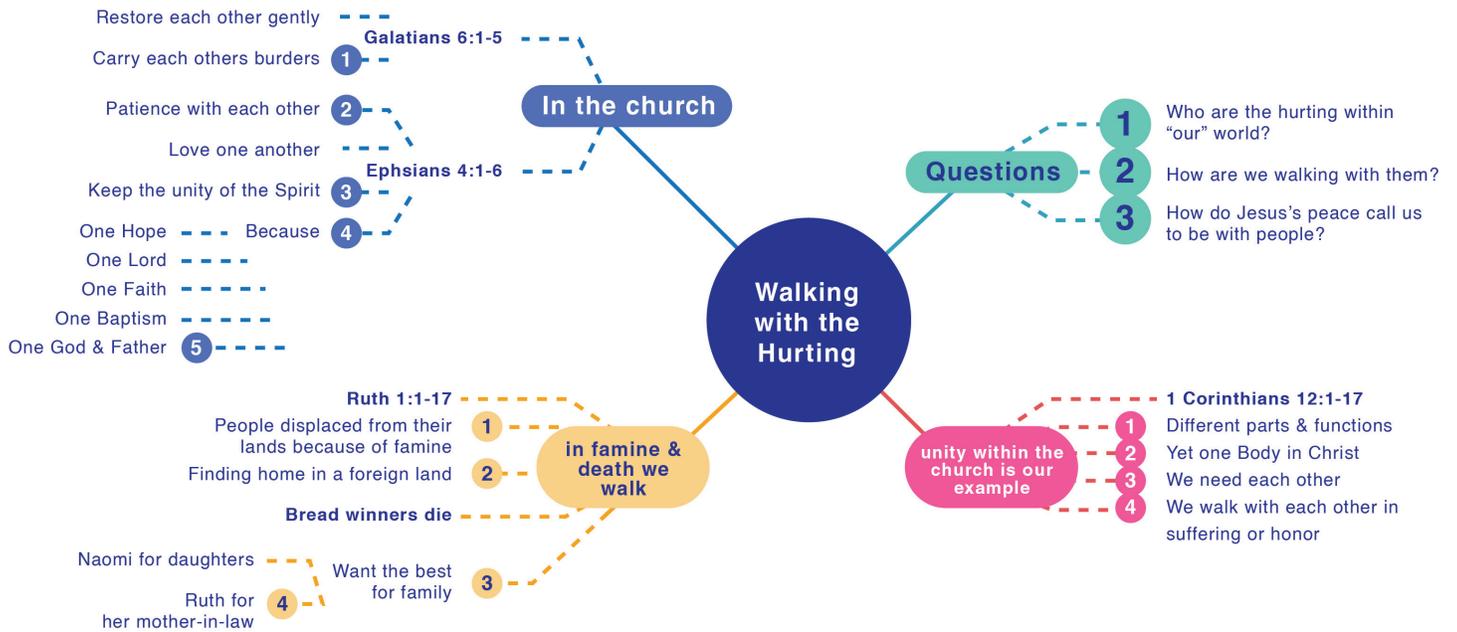
Come back to our three opening questions. How do we answer them as we come to the end of this time together?

What is it that God wants us to do as we hear and obey the Word of God?

Give opportunity for conversation and action, whatever is most appropriate within your community.

Share what the Spirit is saying to you with another person and vice versa. Pray for each other. Accompany each other as you go forward to do what you are hearing the Spirit say to the church.

*Kenneth Hoke has served the Brethren in Christ USA for decades as a pastor and denominational leader.*





## Testimonies

### “Peace in my heart”

– Mitsuru Ishido (Japan)

Verse 1:

*Esuno Kokoro uchini* (The heart of Jesus is reflected in my heart)

Verse 2:

*Esuno Heiwa uchini* (I have the peace of Jesus in my heart).

*Mitsuru Ishido wrote this song to encourage Nasu Keiko, a fellow Mennonite church member who was sewing masks to donate to refugees, foreign students and a church member with lung problems. He based the music on the pentatonic scale of Okinawa and plays it on sanshin, a three-stringed traditional Japanese instrument used in the Okinawa island region of Japan.*

There is an history of peace and war in Okinawa. Okinawa was once a Ryukyu kingdom, and from that time it had the tradition of being an island of peace; an island without weapons. For 300 years, Ryukyu kept its independence through its diplomacy of music and dance instead of the sword.

The heart of Jesus as the “prince of peace” and the “heart of peace” of Ryukyu islands have this common witness, so I tried to use the traditional scale of *Ryukyu*. I played the song on the Okinawan *shamisen* (sanshin), a traditional instrument that uses three strings and snake skin-drum.

In modern times, the Ryukyu Kingdom was annexed to the Shimadzu Han of Japan. Before the second World War, construction of military equipment was carried out. Today, the role of a strategic base called the “Keystone of Pacific” is being enforced, contrary to the traditions of the island peace.

During World War II, the most intense ground battle in Japan took place in Okinawa. In order to protect the main headquarters of mainland Tokyo, many civilians and soldiers were killed during time-consuming operations. They hid themselves in limestone caves called Gama, but at the end civilians were forced to choose death rather than being caught by the enemy and potentially leak information.



**Mitsuru Ishido with a sanshin, a three stringed instrument used in the Okinawa Island region of Japan.**

This led to the order of “mass self-determination” (mandatory suicide by majority).

The tragedy of a man in a family killing his mother or daughter by hand and finally attempting to commit suicide has left many wounds.

After the war, residents were detained in concentration camps. Hunger became prominent as the U.S. military base took homes and fields away.

However, amid the crippled life in the concentration camps, Okinawans drew on their peace tradition through music. They survived by creating a musical instrument made from cans that were picked up from the garbage. These are called Trash Can Sanshin.

Okinawa’s music and peace loving mindset has never died. Although trampled many times, the attitude of living on the foundation of peace and music has kept Okinawan music alive to the present day.

*Mitsuru Ishido is the General Council representative for Tokyo Chiku Menonaito Kyokai Rengo, a Mennonite church in Japan.*

Watch Mitsuru Ishido play and sing his song  
[mwc-cmm.org/peace-sunday](http://mwc-cmm.org/peace-sunday)



**Amnesty for Sangmin Lee**

– *SeongHan Kim (South Korea)*

It was Tuesday, 31 December, the last day of the year 2019, when Sangmin Lee called me with excitement to report news of his amnesty.

Early in 2014, Lee was sentenced to 18 months in prison for refusing, on the basis of his faith, to complete his mandatory military service.

Although Lee was freed on July 30, 2015, after serving 15 months of his sentence, his criminal record for refusing to participate in military service made it impossible for him to find employment at many businesses and in government-related offices.



**SangMin Lee today with his wife Shaem Song and their son Seojin.**  
Photo: supplied

Although I heard the news about special pardons for 5 174 people at the end of the year, I did not imagine that he would be one of the 1 879 conscientious objectors (COs) who received a special pardon this time. This decision was made based on court rulings in 2018 that acknowledge the decades-long yearning and repeated requests by COs for alternatives to military service.

On 27 December 2019, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea finally passed a bill allowing COs

to do 36 months of alternative service. At this point, the compulsory military service in ROK typically requires all young men to serve from 21 months (army) to 23 or 24 months (navy or air force).

Now, at least, we have an alternative service for COs in ROK.

However, this option still seems closer to punishment than a real alternative. In December 2019, the defense ministry (not the ministry of justice) announced a revised bill. In this bill, COs will alternatively serve for 36 months at correctional facilities. They have to stay inside correctional facilities, are not allowed to commute. The defense ministry will supervise them.

Sangmin Lee (like other COs) served his time as a prisoner for his faith and conscience. What is the difference between his prison sentence and “36 months at correctional facilities” – besides a longer term?

I am so glad that Sangmin Lee has been included among the more than 1 800 people finally restored their full legal status in Korean society. Sadly, we now must prepare a bigger prison for the longer sentences imposed on prisoners of conscientious. Who will give them real amnesty?

Pray for the people who conscience who refuse violence. May they receive real amnesty or special pardon.

*SeongHan Kim is MCC Northeast Asia Peace Educator based in Gangwon-do, South Korea. This Mennonite World Conference release was first published on the Bearing Witness Stories Project.*  
<https://martyrstories.org/>

Read more of SangMin Lee’s story:

[mwc-cmm.org/node/373](http://mwc-cmm.org/node/373)

[mwc-cmm.org/node/418](http://mwc-cmm.org/node/418)

[mwc-cmm.org/node/625](http://mwc-cmm.org/node/625)



**An incessant demand**

– Steve Heinrichs (Canada)

“Where are you, Mennonites?”

A colleague and I are in a Winnipeg café discussing the current land struggles of many Indigenous peoples. I listen intently as she speaks of the Unist’ot’en, Muskrat Falls and the Tiny House Warriors. I nod my head in understanding and offer affirming *mm-hmms*. But then, halfway through tea, she looks at me impatiently:

“Where are you, Mennonites? You tell all these old martyr stories. And here we are – suffering and dying! Where are your martyrs now?”

I’m taken aback, not sure how to respond. I confess that the church often fails to join the poor and run the risks that they take. I share some of what we’re doing to address such, and where we need to go. She’s not buying it. Her eyes dismissively turn to a far window. A minute of silence goes by and then we break, heading our separate ways.

Biking to work, my mind relentlessly replays her lament, “Where are your martyrs now?” I’m tempted to defend and distance myself. Yet my heart feels the cry – for earth, the poor and even the church.

At my office, sitting in sweaty cycle gear, I stare at my work wall and pray. It’s plastered with pictures of martyrs and sayings of saints – John the Baptist, Martin King, Ellacuría and more. My eyes hone in on one particular witness – a 42-year-old statement from the Asian Catholic bishops:

“As long as the ministers of the Church are not prepared to be martyrs for justice but are satisfied to live a life outside and above the life [of the oppressed], their impact will be mighty little.”

I take a deep breath and close my eyes.

Like many Mennonites, I hold close the 16th-century stories of Anabaptist suffering. Like many I’m haunted all the more by the dangerous memory of the Cruciform One – “Take up the cross, and follow me.” Yet I find such witness overpowering.



**Steve Heinrichs meets with Indigenous leaders, church leaders and concerned citizens to discuss Enbridge Line 3, another oil transmission line, in Manitoba, Canada.  
Photo: Kathy Moorhead Thiessen**

Am I willing, like Christ, to bear the weight of salvation? In a church that routinely remembers martyrs, am I prepared to walk the talk, or am I just playing dangerous confessional games?

Picking up my phone, I message Chris Huebner, a philosophy and theology professor at Canadian Mennonite University who teaches classes on martyrdom. Not long after, we connect at a local bar and talk for two hours. As Chris shares, I learn that

- 1. Exemplary witness, not death, is what matters.** Classically, the church has lifted up martyrs – those killed for their witness – and confessors – those who witnessed under persecution and survived. We can’t manufacture martyrs but we can choose to live costly lives.
- 2. There are martyrs among us.** “If we believe,” says Chris, “the kinds of things that Christians traditionally believe about God and the Church, that there will be martyrs is never a question. Who they are, and what they look like, is the hard part.” And yet, Chris continues, “If we believe what we say about Christ and the poor, then there’s no question that in the Canadian context the Indigenous story is full of martyrs.”



Biking home that evening, my heart is grateful for rich conversation, and full with even more questions. But I sense that's what I need. Abraham Heschel (1907–1972), a brilliant Jew who lived a persistent prophetic witness, once said:

“The prophet disdains those for whom God’s presence is comfort and security; to him it is a challenge, an incessant demand.”

Lying in bed that night, I contemplate my friend’s impatient demand – “Where are you, Mennonites?” – and thank God for her troubling, holy question.

*Steve Heinrichs is the director of Indigenous-Settler Relations for Mennonite Church Canada. With his partner Ann and 3 children, Steve lives in Winnipeg – Treaty 1 territory and the Homeland of the Metis Nation – and is a member of Hope Mennonite Church, a community of Jesus followers.*

*This article was first published in the Canadian Mennonite. Used by permission. [canadianmennonite.org/stories/incessant-demand](http://canadianmennonite.org/stories/incessant-demand)*

**Standing in Solidarity with the Wayana in the French Guyana**

– Sarah Augustine (United States)

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4:10–11, NRSV)

In July 2019, my friend Lina Sommer asked my husband Dan and me for help measuring her community’s exposure to mercury. Lina lives in French Guyana, in a remote, rainforest community called Taluene on the Upper Maroni river. The food in Lina’s community is contaminated by gold mining.

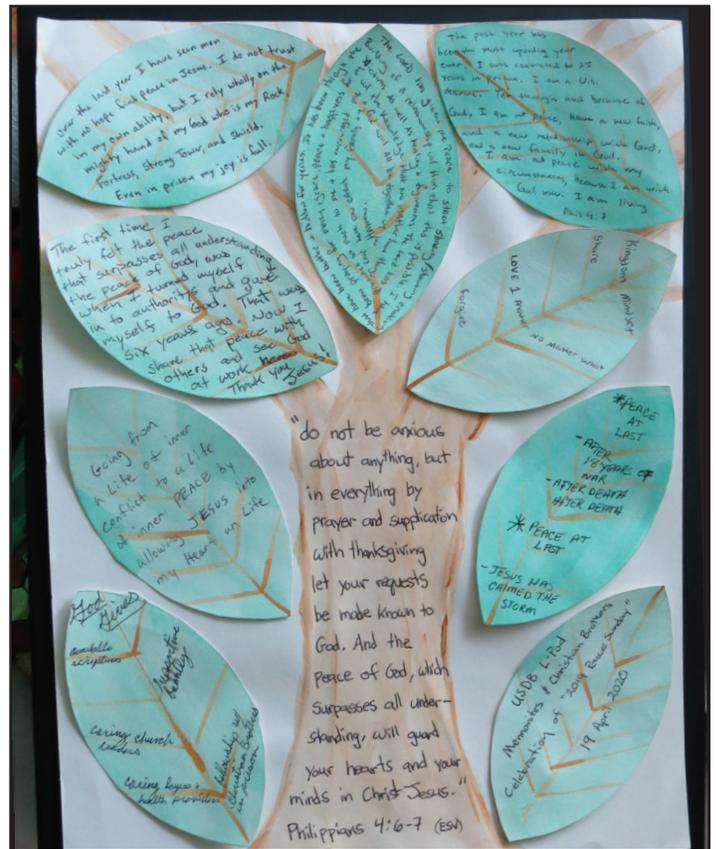
The Guyana shield is a region in South America that includes Suriname, French Guyana and Northern Brazil. Like Indigenous Peoples around the globe, Lina’s people do not have title to their traditional

lands or control of what happens in their homelands.

When governments agree to mining concessions on or near Indigenous lands, the people who live there have little power against national and corporate interests.

Lina is Wayana, and the Wayana and the other peoples who live on the Upper Maroni river depend on fish as a primary source of food. Gold mining contaminates fish where heavy metals bioaccumulate in fish tissue. Exposure to heavy metals like mercury causes neurological disease, early death and community disruption and displacement.

Although the French government regularly tests Indigenous People in French Guyana for mercury toxicity, they do not share the results with community members.



**Military prisoners in United States Penitentiary Prison Leavenworth used 2019’s Peace Sunday materials and made a peace tree.**



As a mother, Linia feels she should be told about the threat gold mining poses to her children. She co-founded the organization *Organization afin de promouvoir l'entraide et la solidarite entre les victimes du mercure* (Organization to promote mutual aid and solidarity among victims of mercury) to try to address the problem.

I am a North American Indigenous Woman, a Tewa. I know what it's like to feel helpless, a small person in a world where laws and policies do not always reflect the best interests of my family or my people.

When Linia asked us for help documenting the impact of mercury on her people, Dan and I agreed readily.

My husband and I began to work with Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in the Guyana Shield in 2004. We established the USA-based nonprofit Suriname Indigenous Health Fund dedicated to providing indigenous people in the Guyana region with the materials and technical support they need to find solutions of their own.

Although we have the necessary scientific equipment, it is challenging and expensive to launch a cross-national project that gets samples to us and results back to impacted community members.

When we returned to our home in Washington, I asked the Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition for help. They reached out to their network across the United States, making our plea for mercury test kits their year-end campaign. In response, the youth group at Shalom Mennonite in San Francisco, California, USA, made funding test kits their own special Christmas fundraiser.

With the help of the Coalition, we are able to fund test kits and invest in infrastructure to help us better communicate with Linia and with other remote communities in the Guyana Shield.

While the financial system that trivializes the health of Linia and her community continues, we stand with her in seeking solutions for her people. While the health system trivializes the participation of

Indigenous women, we provide test results to aid the self-determination of mothers who want to participate in the health of their children.

Linia hopes to identify and transport uncontaminated food to her community to reduce the exposure of her people to dangerous mercury levels causing death, disease and disability where no other alternatives for relief exist. We know this is an ambitious project, but it's the next step in finding a culturally-appropriate and community-led solution to a public health crisis. We hope to join with her.

When Linia asked us for help, we were able to stand in solidarity with her immediately. When we asked the Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition for help, they were able to respond by standing in solidarity with Linia and the Wayana people immediately as well. For us, this is an inspiring story of solidarity.

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