



**Mennonite
World Conference**

A Community of Anabaptist
related Churches

**Congreso
Mundial Menonita**

Una Comunidad de
Iglesias Anabautistas

**Conférence
Mennonite Mondiale**

Une Communauté
d'Eglises Anabaptistes

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August 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are writing to invite you and your congregation to observe Peace Sunday together with brothers and sisters in the global Anabaptist church family on 18 September 2016.

Following the recommendation of the 2003 Peace Council in Bulawayo regarding the establishment of Peace Sunday, the 2006 Peace Commission in Pasadena has chosen the Sunday nearest to 21 September (International Day of Peace) as a Peace Sunday to be observed by Mennonite World Conference member churches.

The International Day of Peace was established by the United Nations Resolution no. 36/67 dated 30 November 1981 to be observed for the first time on the third Tuesday of September 1982 to coincide with the opening of the General Assembly. Later, the UN General Assembly set 21 September as the permanent date for the International Day of Peace. The resolution states,

“The Assembly, reaffirming the contribution that the observance and celebration of the International Day of Peace makes in strengthening the ideals of peace and alleviating tensions and causes of conflict, (decided that) beginning with the fifty-seventh session, the Day should be observed on 21 September each year, with this date to be brought to the attention of all people for the celebration and observance of peace.”

The resolution further declares,

“... that the International Day of Peace shall henceforth be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day; (and that the Assembly) invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, regional and non-governmental organizations and individuals to commemorate, in an appropriate manner, the International Day of Peace, including through education and public awareness, and to cooperate with the United Nations in the establishment of the global ceasefire.”

The Secretary-General Kofi Annan, at the time, also asked all United Nations departments and agencies to expand their observance, extending a special invitation to civil society and highlighting the Minute of Silence at 12 noon.

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In light of this, the 2006 Peace Commission held in Pasadena decided on 11 March 2006 that,

1. The Sunday nearest to 21 September (the International Day of Peace) would be designated as a Peace Sunday to be observed in our churches around the world. For 2016, this will be 18 September.
2. The MWC Peace Commission staff would prepare suggestions for scripture readings, prayer concerns, and ideas of activities to help churches observe this day.
3. Churches are invited to report back to the Peace Commission on their activities for this day.
4. Churches who already observe a different Sunday as Peace Sunday are encouraged to continue with their practice, and are invited to include the global church concerns in their prayers on the global Peace Sunday.

Along with this letter, we are sending you worship and resource material suggestions for a Peace Sunday service that you may want to use in your churches on 18 September. Given the levels of hostility and polarization in our world, we focus on Jesus' teaching about loving our enemies. What does it mean to love our enemies? How do we transform the way we see "the other"?

MWC would like to hear how you observed Peace Sunday. If you have stories or reports of activities and worship events in your congregations, please send these to MWC Peace Commission (see email address below), so that we can share them with the MWC church community. God's blessings to you as you work for peace!

Yours in Christ's peace,

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