



Peace Sunday 2021 Worship Resources

Prepared by the
MWC Peace
Commission for
19 September 2021

1

Theme and texts

a. Theme:

Finding hope and healing in crisis

b. Why this theme was chosen:

In these/this gospel passage(s), Jesus brings salvation in the midst of crisis. We desire and need this peace, especially after this year! And as followers of Jesus, we follow his example and work to bring peace in the midst of chaos.

c. Biblical texts:

- Matthew 14:22-33
- Mark 4:35-41

2

Prayer Requests

- Pray for God's mercy to stop the Covid-19 pandemic, both in Indonesia and throughout the world, so that the plan for holding MWC General Assembly 17, 2022 in Semarang, Indonesia, can still be realized, according to God's grace and love.
- Pray for peace and stability of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Pray for brothers and sisters who are persecuted because of their faith in some parts of the country.
- The situation in Myanmar is getting worse. The junta is armed and killing every day. On the other hand, COVID-19 is spreading in the country for the third time. People have abandoned their villages. They live in the jungle with no food and in the rain. Pray especially for our church people, struggling to make ends meet and fleeing war.
- Latin America has registered a disproportionate number of deaths by COVID-19, with Brazil, Colombia and Argentina particularly affected. Pray for vaccination availability and distribution to increase. Pray for vulnerable workers who risk exposure. Pray for churches to respond with compassion and wisdom to the needs in their communities.



Anna Vogt

3

Song Suggestions

Visit mwc-cmm.org/peacesunday for lyrics and more information

- Stand by Me by Charles Tindley
- Make me an instrument of your peace
- Master, the tempest is raging
- *Tenemos Esperanza*

Please check your church's copyright protocols before using these songs in public gatherings.

4

Additional resources

mwc-cmm.org/peacesunday

a. Additional resources in this package

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

b. Additional resources available online:

- Pictures (including all used in this package)



5

Activities

Boat in the midst of the storm

- Have a large backdrop painted blue (blue sea and sky).
- Create a boat cut-out to place on the “sea” backdrop.
- Provide blue paper “wave” cut-outs. (Ensure colour is not too dark to see the writing on it.)
- Ask congregants to write on the “waves”: what issues or realities they are experiencing that might be causing crises? These could be personal, communal, societal, etc.
- Encourage congregants to place these waves all around the boat.
- Invite congregants to think about how God, through Jesus and the church community, offers assurance, help or support – a safe place in the boat – during these times.
- Take the time to validate the things that have or can cause chaos.
- Reflect on how to help one another in extending Jesus’s arms of comfort and assurance.



Stormy weather on the Mediterranean Sea.
Photo: Maria Lupan (Unsplash)

Drawing comfort

Who has demonstrated Jesus’ comfort and assurance to you? Draw or take a picture of them.

If they give you consent, share the photo publicly with a word of thanks.

With permission, send your story and photo to photo@mwc-cmm.org to share with the global Anabaptist family.



On 20 September 2020, BICC Matopo Mission Church, Zimbabwe, celebrated Peace Sunday with a peace-giving service. The members present expressed the need to carry out trauma healing especially concerning political and community-related issues that still cause pain in many people’s lives. Photo: Mqhele Jubane

Contact Information:

Andrew Suderman | MWC Peace Commission Secretary

AndrewSuderman@mwc-cmm.org | mwc-cmm.org/peace-commission

How did you use these resources to practice peace?

✉ Send your stories, photos, videos or artwork to photos@mwc-cmm.org

The biblical texts, prayers, song suggestions, sermon ideas, testimonies 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.



Activities

Reader's Theater

Jesus Calms the Storm

Based on Mark 4:35-41 (NIV)

Parts:

- **NARRATOR**
- **JESUS**
- **ALL** (congregation as the disciples)

Feel free to adapt the script to Matthew or Luke's version of the story. Also, feel free to add sound effects for the storm, either recorded or a portion of the congregation live.

NARRATOR

Jesus had been teaching and healing all day in Capernaum, near the Sea of Galilee. When evening came, Jesus said to his disciples,

JESUS

Let us go over to the other side

NARRATOR

Leaving the crowd behind, the disciples took Jesus along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.

A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.

Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him,

ALL

Teacher, don't you care if we drown?

NARRATOR

Jesus got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves

JESUS

Quiet! Be still!

NARRATOR

Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

JESUS

Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?

NARRATOR

They were terrified and asked each other,

ALL

Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!

Adapted from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Reader's Theater: Jesus Calms the Storm (Mark 4:35-41) © 2014 Lisa Ann Moss Degrenia. (Revlisad.com)



Sea of Galilee
Photo: Karla Braun



Suggested liturgies for gathering and benediction

Call to Worship: Turning a cheek

Strength is commanding the wind and sea to obey,
Strength is wielding a slingshot in the face of
a raging giant.
Strength is accepting vulnerability from inside
the boat,
Strength is standing in solidarity with the powerless.
Strength is turning a cheek,
Strength is loving an enemy.
We come to worship
a God who redefines our vision of strength.

—Katherine HawkerSelf, 1997, *“Liturgy Outside:
reflections to foster faithful resistance”*
(liturgyoutside.net)

Benediction

Send us into the world’s turbulence as instruments of
Your peace,
and send us as agents of Your justice,
that all might know the truth of Your ways.

Send us as artists
who bear the joyful burden of Your creativity,
that we might bring light into the darkness,
and hope among the despairing.

And grant us the joy of fellowship,
with Your Spirit and with one another,
this day and forever. Amen!

—Rev. Mark S. Burrows. Included in the Spring,
1998 issue of **Connections** magazine.



Bethel Mennonite Church, Balodgagan, India, celebrated peace Sunday 4 October 2020, with the materials from the Peace Commission. Every family brought a piece of cloth for the peace activity. Church member Mrs. Nivedita Ganjboir helped people stitch the cloths together like an MCC quilt, with a Peace Sunday banner on the backside.
Photo: Ashish Milap



Prayers

Loving Through the Storm

The worst storms, Jesus, are the ones caused by our fear,
when we grow afraid of losing our power,
or we grow suspicious of the power of others,
when we refuse to acknowledge your mysterious authority;
Yet, it's in the storm that we find our capacity to love.
In releasing our weak claim to power
and opening to your reign,
we discover a new way of seeing ourselves –
as called and useful and beloved –
and the other, whoever they may be –
as dignified and precious and beloved.
Here in the storm, Jesus, we need you,
and we need each other,
and the love you give us to share,
leads us through sacrifice and self-giving
to peace and calm,
if only we will loose our hold on fear.
Amen.

— *John van de Laar, "Sacredise: Liturgical Resources for Progressive Communities"*
(Sacredise.com)

Prayer of Confession

(*inspired by 1 Samuel 17:32-49, Mark 4:35-41*)
God of love and power, we listen to the stories of miracles and doubt that these things can happen today.
We look at the waves of misfortune, distress, misery, distrust, and anger and wonder how we can still those waves.
We feel the pressures of power and fear flooding into our lives, threatening to drown us and wonder where you are.
Forgive us for the littleness of our faith.
Forgive us for our doubts.

Help us to place out trust in you, Lord Jesus. Help us to fix our eyes on you and on the ministries to which you have called us.
For we ask these things in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Words of Assurance
(inspired by Mark 4:35-41)

Fear not!
God is with us, stilling the storms and raging fears in our lives.
Place your trust in God always.
Amen.

— *Nancy C. Townley, "Worship Connection" on "Ministry Matters"* (www.ministrymatters.com)

Establish your peace

Dear God,
In these times of searching for peace and resolution to conflicts
Establish your peace, O Lord!
In the midst of corruption, impunity and violence,
Establish your peace, O Lord!
In the midst of the journey of your Colombia people,
Establish your peace, O Lord!
In this searching for justice and peace for Colombia,
Establish your peace, O Lord!
In the midst of the pain of children, women and men,
Establish your peace, O Lord!
Establish your peace, O Lord, according to your will.
Amen.

— *Adaía Bernal, an Anabaptist-Mennonite pastor from Colombia. Published in MCC Washington's Days of Prayer and Action for Colombia (DOPA) resource in 2013.*



Teaching resources

“Finding Healing and Hope in Crisis”

Jesus walks on water (Matthew 14:22-33) and Jesus calms the storm (Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41).

You can imagine Jesus walking on top of the turbulent water thrashing against the boat, or the storm-high waves covering the boat, and understand the fear the disciples must have felt – to the degree that they thought they were seeing a ghost, or were sure they would be drowned in a shipwreck. We too can go through circumstances that flood us with fear, in which we feel nauseous without being ill, or where we are sure we will fail and don’t even try.

The storms in our lives can be varied: our health is in peril; our finances or marriage on the brink of despair; our child’s life in danger. I don’t know which one you are going through, but at these tumultuous times we experience true anxiety; we feel alone, depressed, undeserving of God’s grace; without hope, as if we are trapped in a deep, dark hole that we cannot escape from. On a personal level, these daily occurrences seem increasingly more difficult. It also happens on a global level with conflict and disagreements that turn into violent clashes that can even lead to the loss of life for some people. So, some people ask, “*Where is the world headed?*” We cannot deny the truth of these circumstances.

We are not exempt from these experiences as children of God because “In the world you face persecution....” John 16:33 (NRSV). Our Christian duty is to reflect the victorious character of Jesus.

I invite you to imagine Jesus walking over the turbulent water as related in Matthew 14:27 when he said to the disciples: “*Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.*”

After a time of much anguish, like when you are about to lose your life, or you think you are going to

fail, hear the calming voice of Jesus in Matthew 8:26 saying “*Why are you afraid, you of little faith?*” *Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm.* Oh, what a glorious experience!

This wonderful sensation of being protected by the love of God through the manifold expressions of God’s power is available to you for your life. Jesus is extending his hand to assist you and will not let you perish in the turbulent water of this life. He is here to heal you of all your infirmities and all the pain it is possible to experience. There is no one who better understands these difficult situations that we must live through. When the night is at its darkest and most threatening; when you have lost all hope; Jesus walks toward you with every intention of rescuing you, sustaining you and consoling you.

It is possible that you can hear his voice saying: “*Why are you afraid, you of little faith?*” (Matthew 8:26). Often, we need to pause and turn our face to Jesus so that we may live out our peace; that peace that allows us to overcome the situation; that peace that fills us with strength to carry on, that enables us to do that which our anguish gets in the way of.

Take the time that you need to today to repeat the words of the disciples: “*What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?*” (Matthew 8:27) We put our trust in God. He will not put us to shame.



Adriana Belinda Rodriguez Velasquez is a member of the Peace commission. She is a member of Caminando con Dios, part of the Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Hondureña.



Testimonies

Do not be afraid

The 17th of August 2011 is an unforgettable date for me. It is Indonesia's independence day, one day after my 49th birthday – and the day the Chinese government tightened the regulation of bird's nest imports from Indonesia.

Many entrepreneurs collapsed due to Chinese government's decision. We were one of the entrepreneurs who were affected by the decision.

Our business stopped. Almost every day the price depreciated to the point that exporters refrained from buying raw materials. Unexpectedly, loss after loss must be experienced by me.



Agus Setianto (top right), Jovita Sulaiman (middle) with their children. Photo: supplied

I hoped that the working conditions would recover soon so I could pay my obligations on time. However, for almost eight months the conditions did not recover, instead it worsened! Our business had to be auctioned.

During the hard times, my wife gathered our children and conveyed the impact of the condition to them. We were preparing them mentally if we had to move to our shop because the house had to be handed over to the bank. My wife asked the children to pray for the peace and gratitude to keep our family close.

We imagined they would be terrified, crying and asking questions. However, our children were calm. "It's okay, Mum; living in the shop is the same as living in an apartment," said our youngest daughter.

"I'm sure this house will still be our home, I'm not afraid. God will surely help," said our eldest daughter.

"But mum, dad is still able to work with the drinking water business, isn't he?" said our son. My wife said yes.

We were very blessed with their answers and it gave us the strength to remain enthusiastic to fulfill our responsibilities toward them. I could feel that in the condition we were in, the experience of faith with God was increasingly evident in our lives.

We held hands together and prayed, asking God to give us strength and comfort.

We prayed to be spared unnecessary costs. We prayed for our health, for our daily needs, school fees; to avoid breakdown to the vehicles, electronic devices, household appliances; even for the lightbulbs in our house to last.

We prayed for God to watch the words that came out of our lips and keep us away from quarrels and conflicts, so that we would always be together in the face of struggles.

In my morning prayer on 12, 14 and 16 January 2012, I recorded in my journal that I read about God's fire, purifying gold, and not relying on your own strength.

It really gave me the confidence. We were sure that we were not alone. God would hold our hands and lead to victory after victory.

—Agus Setianto is national co-coordinator of Assembly. He is a member of GKMI (Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia) Gloria Patri, Semarang, Indonesia.

