



Peace Sunday 2024 Worship Resources

Prepared by the
MWC Peace
Commission for
22 September 2024

1

Theme and texts

a. Theme:
Kintsukuroi:
The broken vessel is often more beautiful than the original

b. Why this theme was chosen:

2 Corinthians 4:7 describes the gospel as a “treasure” in “clay jars.” These humble vessels bring to mind the Japanese tradition of *kintsukuroi* that creates (or recreates) pottery from broken pieces. Damaged vessels are put back together, often with gold binding, to create a useful object once again. The new piece tells a story about the past and is infused with glory that is greater than the former, as in Haggai 2:9.

c. Biblical texts:

- 2 Corinthians 4:7
- Haggai 2:9

2

Prayer Requests

- We mourn with our brothers and sisters in Myanmar for the losses they have experienced in the civil war and the ongoing trauma. We weep for all who have been exposed to war and violence. We pray for the Spirit of comfort and power to enfold the church members that they may be beacons of light and Christ’s peace to those around.
- We pray for Mennonite Church South Korea as they advocate against war in a militarized society. We pray for courage and creativity as they voice opposition along with the local residents to the construction of a factory to produce weapons, and advocate against war. We pray for their work alongside ‘The Frontiers’, engaging in peace activities with the aim of transforming the military base on Jeju Island into a University for World Peace.
- We pray for the farming families in rural Colombia who fear for their livelihoods and their lives. May they be able to safely return to their land. We pray for the peace processes that continue to struggle to take root in all corners of Colombian society. May patience and nonviolence prevail. We pray for the people of the Mennonite Brethren church “La Samaritana.” May they receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so they can act with courage and love to transform violence into justice, truth telling and shalom.
- We confess our fears to God about the growing climate crisis. The resulting disastrous weather causes disruptions to food production and displacement from homes and creates conditions of violence. We pray that the church would be empowered by the Spirit of Christ to be beacons of peace in a time of turmoil. May we live with simplicity and generosity. May we place our hope in the Creator and follow the call to seek shalom with all creation.

3

Song Suggestions

From the MWC International Songbook 2022

- #11 Kirisuto No Heiwa / May the peace of Christ be with you
- #2 Dhuh Pangeran / O Prince of Peace
- #36 True Evangelical Faith / Wahrer Glaube wird / La fe de Cristo / Iman Injili Yang Murni

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

- Liturgies
- Teaching resources
- Testimonies

b. Additional resources available online:

- Pictures (including all used in this package)



**5
Activities**

2 Corinthians 4:7 describes the gospel as a “treasure” in “clay jars.”

These humble vessels bring to mind the Japanese tradition of kintsukuroi that creates (or recreates) pottery from broken pieces. Damaged vessels are put back together, often with gold binding, to create a useful object once again.

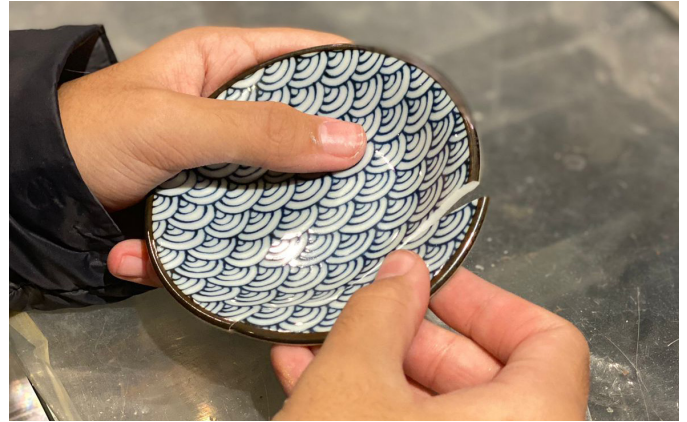
The new piece tells a story about the past and is infused with glory that is greater than the former, as in Haggai 2:9.

As a community, try out this form of art.

- Go throughout your neighbourhood, collecting rubbish, and cleaning up.
- Find broken vessels (e.g., dishes or vases).
- Clean the broken items that can be reused.
- Work together to piece them back together, not into what they were but to create (or recreate) something new and beautiful.

For example, see the pictured cross constructed from broken clay jars. Iglesia Cristiana Menonita Centre de Fe, Anolaima, built this park “Igleparque” in their town about 2 hours’ drive from Bogotá. It is open to the public. Church members guide visitors through to view its many features and to share the message of the gospel.

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



Elina Ciptadi



Andrew Suderman



Andrew Suderman

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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.



Liturgies

A prayer for peace

(A responsive reading. Leader reads the light print; congregation reads the bold)

Lord, have mercy!

Christ, have mercy!

When, O Lord, will we learn that peace does not come through force?

When, O Lord, will we learn that peace does not come through fighting?

When, O Lord, will we learn that peace does not come by conquering others?

When, O Lord, will we learn that peace does not come through killing?

We look on with horror at the ever-escalating violence that grips the people and their nations in the Middle East.

We mourn the faith placed in weapons, perpetuating cycles of violence.

We mourn the faith placed in military might.

We mourn the faith placed in violence, as if that can bring about right relationships.

We mourn the faith placed in political rhetoric and posturing.

Christians are called to embody a faith that seeks the welfare of others, not their demise.

Christians are called to embody a faith that lays down our arms.

Christians are called to build bridges of respect, mutuality and resolution even with those who may be hostile.

Christians are called to love our enemies, or refuse to have enemies.



Juan Francisco Novoa Duque

In small groups, the congregation at Iglesia Misionera el Progreso, Colombia, uplifts the Peace Sunday requests in prayer.

Christians are called to invite others, including those of other faiths, to seek alternatives to violence.

Christians are called to embody a faith that follows the way of the Prince of Peace.

Rockets will not bring peace.

Invasion will not bring peace.

Guns will not bring peace.

Violence will not bring peace.

Enough! *Basta! Ça suffit!*

God, the Father of heaven, **have mercy on us.**

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, **have mercy on us.**

God the Holy Spirit, **have mercy on us.**

Holy Trinity, one God, **have mercy on us. Amen.**

(adapted by Level Ground Church, Abbotsford, B.C., Canada)



Teaching resources

The mosaic of Scripture and of the church

Reading Scripture has always been at the heart of the church's life, but from early on, different ways of reading and understanding have led to conflict and division.

What is Scripture?

Already in the early centuries several movements arose with differing claims about the meaning of the Gospel and how to understand Scripture. In the 2nd century, Marcion (c. 85-160 CE) refused to recognize the Scripture of the Jewish people, writings which Christians had used from the beginning. He founded a new and large church which used only Marcion's edited canon of Paul's epistles and the Gospel of Luke. During this same period, Gnosticism was making headway, denying the Incarnation and claiming the true knowledge came from the "secrets" of "those who know", and composing their own Gospels.

many epistles that were also commonly accepted as Scripture during this time, since the New Testament as we now know it was not yet finalized.

A king or a fox?

One way that Irenaeus dealt with this question was to describe Scripture as a mosaic. He used the image of the Bible as a beautiful image of a king, constructed by a skillful artist out of precious jewels. What happened with other readings such as those of Marcion or the Gnostics was to take the mosaic apart, reshuffling the pieces so that the final image was no longer a king, but something else, such as a fox.

In Irenaeus's mind, the king was of course Jesus. The bishop of Lyon was part of the church when it was still a persecuted minority and had not aligned itself with the political power of the Roman empire. In this context, king Jesus was not like the Roman Caesar, but the nonviolent Christ of the Gospels, much the same as in the Anabaptist tradition.

Along with other theologians of this period, Irenaeus understood the incarnation as a profound reflection of God's nature, the God whose self-giving love on the cross and resurrection redeemed humanity from captivity to Satan who used violence to keep humanity imprisoned. For Irenaeus, the mosaic of Scripture, i.e., its proper reading, was to point to this Jesus and not to another; not to change the king into a fox. His theology has continued to influence the church up until today. In 2022, for example, Pope Francis attributed to Irenaeus the title of "doctor of unity."

Irenaeus's solution of course did not solve the problem. Differing readings of Scripture persisted. During this same period the early church recognized that guideposts were necessary for this kind of reading of Scripture.

José Arrais



French-speaking MWC representatives at a Mennonite meeting (left to right, back): Max Wiedmer (Reseau mennonite francophone), José Arrais (MWC regional representative), Anne-Cathy Graber (Faith & Life Commission), Roland Nussbaumer (AEEMF General Council delegate); (front) Salomé Haldemann (translator & interpreter), Gaëlle Oesch (YABs Committee 2022-2024).

Irenaeus was born around 140 in Asia Minor, moved to Lyon (in today's France) where he became bishop. As part of his ministry, he wrote to argue against Marcion and the Gnostics. Irenaeus recognized the challenge represented in trying to make sense of the many narratives in Jewish Scripture, which the church interpreted in the light of our Gospels and



Rules to guide

These guideposts were called “rules of faith,” and Scripture was to be interpreted in line with the guideposts. They left a lot of room for discussion, but also set limits beyond which the king would become a fox. The first rules of faith were formulated in reaction to Marcion and Gnosticism, and the process has gone on ever since.

Mennonite World Conference’s understanding of the “king” in the mosaic is close to that of Irenaeus. Jesus, who announced God’s kingdom and was crucified as the “king of the Jews”, taught and lived nonviolence. His acceptance of death on a cross corresponded to his rejection of hatred and vengeance, his resurrection signaled the defeat of death and evil.

Unfortunately, throughout her history, the church has sometimes turned the “king” into a “fox,” using Scripture to construe a Jesus who called Christians to fight and to make war. The Anabaptist movement reacted to these restructurings of the mosaic.

Shared Convictions

In more recent times, MWC member churches together produced guideposts to the reading of Scripture which are called “Shared Convictions.” The fourth of these seven convictions recognizes the importance of Scripture.

As a faith community, we accept the Bible as our authority for faith and life, interpreting it together under Holy Spirit guidance, in the light of Jesus Christ to discern God’s will for our obedience.

The fifth conviction depicts an understanding of Jesus close to that of the early church.

The Spirit of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all areas of life so we become peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies, seek justice, and share our possessions with those in need.

Ireneaus described the mosaic of Scripture as a “collection of jewels”. But the narratives that come to us in the Bible tell of much brokenness. Brokenness of relationships, between humanity and God, between humans, as well as humanity’s relationship with nature. The “jewels” of Scripture tell stories of a broken world, of violence, of rejection and abuse.

But the real jewel is the narrative of God’s faithfulness, God’s determination to make things right, through self-giving love. God, in Christ, is taking the broken aspects of our lives and of the world and working to make things right, to reconcile. To that, we are called to witness, through deed and word and through our common life as a global fellowship.

The seventh shared conviction reflects this project of reconciliation and healing and incorporates it into the life of our communities.

As a world-wide community of faith and life we transcend boundaries of nationality, race, class, gender and language. We seek to live in the world without conforming to the powers of evil, witnessing to God’s grace by serving others, caring for creation, and inviting all people to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

To transcend these boundaries, we must be aware of the narratives of brokenness in Scripture and in our lives that God is redeeming through self-giving love. Then the mosaic of the world-wide fellowship is comprised of brokenness turned into jewels.

—Neil Blough is former director of the Paris Mennonite Centre and professor emeritus of church history at Faculté Libre de Théologie Évangélique Vaux-sur-Seine, France.



On Peace Day 2023, Rev. Maira Benjamin Migire, a pastor from the Tanzania Mennonite Church in Zanzibar joined a dialogue with different religious leaders about peace in Zanzibar, Tanzania.

Maira Benjamin Migire



Testimonies

Reflections on *Kintsukuroi* Brokenness into glory

Kintsukuroi, a traditional Japanese technique, involves repairing ceramics with lacquer and gold, embracing damage as part of an object's history instead of concealing or discarding it.

This process entails identifying broken areas and delicately mending them with precious gold, resulting in unique pieces that blend brokenness with magnificence, elevating its value and beauty.

In the realm of international relations, unfairness and injustice can escalate into conflicts and wars, fracturing families due to lack of respect and consideration. By engaging in dialogue akin to a potter assessing broken angles, and addressing wounds with love, understanding, tolerance, and compassion, relationships can be restored, and peace can prevail.

The transformation of brokenness into glory signifies a shift where imperfections no longer denote flaws but rather symbolize growth and resilience. The incorporation of gold highlights the beauty within brokenness, enhancing its value and significance.

During Peace Sunday, a symbolic act involving a paper tree was carried out, where individuals identified their “potters” whom they would turn to for support during challenging times. This fostered a culture of love and kindness among participants.

Despite the existence of conflicts, divisions and injustices globally, there remains a pathway toward peace and healing by embodying the role of the potter in the hands of the Father, treating others with love and compassion akin to gold filling cracks to enhance beauty and wholeness.

Individuals can contribute to a more harmonious and interconnected world.



Hong Kong Mennonite Church

Hong Kong Mennonite Church celebrated Peace Sunday in 2023. Pastor Wincy Wan (foreground, centre) holds up a peace tree from the worship resource activity.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Through your gentle touch, we can experience your precious healing. Our imperfections are treated with special honour.

Father, please help us to be sensitive to people's wounds. Through your grace and gifts, may we embody your love, empathy and compassion.

We are willing to meet the needs of others.

Grant us the courage to embrace our brokenness, receive healing and reveal your glory through our wounds.

Thank you, Father. You are Jehovah Rapha. Your healing brings us unity and peace.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

—Wincy Wan is a member of the Peace Commission. She is a pastor of a Mennonite church in Hong Kong.



Kari Traoré in Burkina Faso.

Clay in God’s hands

Kintsukuroi, the practice of creating or recreating from broken pottery led my thoughts toward Jeremiah who was sent by the Lord to go to a potter’s house. When Jeremiah got there, he noticed that “Whenever the object of clay which he was making turned out badly in his hand, he tried again, making of the clay another object of whatever sort he pleased.”

Then the message of God was: “Can I not do to you, house of Israel, as this potter has done? says the LORD. Indeed, like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, house of Israel.” (Jeremiah 18:4,6 NAB)

The Lord’s message to Jeremiah is that God does whatever God wants, sometimes according to a human’s attitude.

Unfortunately, because of our stubbornness, we often invert roles, considering ourselves God and God the clay.

That’s what we can understand in Isaiah 29:15-17: “Your perversity is as though the potter were taken to be the clay: As though what is made should say of its maker, “He made me not!” Or the vessel should say of the potter, “He does not understand.”

Somehow the apostle Paul shared this idea when he said: “Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for a noble purpose and another for an ignoble one? What if God, wishing to show his wrath and make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction?” (Romans 9:21-22).

Let’s give to the Lord the direction of our lives.

Prayer

Oh Lord, break in me what is not yours and rebuild me according to what you want me to be, in order to glorify your name!

—*Kari Traoré is a member of the Peace Commission. He is a pastor of a Mennonite church in Burkina Faso.*

