



Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday

Worship Resources

1 Theme and texts	a. Theme: Solidarity	b. Why this theme was chosen: Our MWC tagline lists “living out unity” as a core part of our identity. We exercise solidarity with our fellow Anabaptists across denominational lines locally, around the world, with the body of Christ more broadly, and with partners in building peace and pursuing justice. Solidarity is another word for the connection we exercise within the body of Christ. Unity expressed through actions reverberates beyond our efforts: we raise our voices and our finances in support; we stand together and lift each other up; we pay attention so that no one is left behind.	c. Biblical text options: Old Testament: Micah 6-7 Psalms: Psalm 40:1-11 Gospel: Luke 10:25-37 New Testament: 1 Corinthians 13:13	d. Relationship between the theme and biblical texts: • The directive to “act justly, love mercy and walk humbly” tells us how to come alongside others in need • The psalmist rejoices in God’s blessings which can be celebrated “in the great assembly”, just as we extend the blessings we receive with those with whom we stand in solidarity • The Good Samaritan shows costly solidarity and flips our ideas of who is “worthy” • Paul’s letter reminds us that love is above all
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2 Prayer requests

Prayer requests from MWC

- We give thanks for your creation with all of its beauty and diversity on earth and in the heavens. Your call to solidarity extends to all things you created.
- Lord, we seek your forgiveness for our failures to walk alongside our neighbours in times of need. We seek your courage and power to live out powerful human solidarity that builds the kingdom of God on earth even with people with whom we disagree.
- Together we pray that we may listen and respond to the Holy Spirit’s transforming power that we would have the courage to extend our agency to support others.
- We commit ourselves to solidarity inter-generationally: to listen to and learn from the young people in our midst, who face struggles with employment; to listen and learn from elders, who may be discouraged from a loss of their roles, and to all who struggle with loneliness in a busy and chaotic world.
- As peacemakers, we stand in solidarity for victims of war – within our communion and without – and we demand an end to the organized violence that only tears down.
- Pray for the current needs in the MWC family as expressed on the MWC prayers page:
mwc-cmm.org/prayers

3 Song suggestions

Songs are from the 2022 edition unless otherwise marked

Africa #22

Somlandela / We will follow / Je te suivrai / Seguiremos

Asia: #12

Dalam Yesus kita bersaudara / In Jesus Christ We are One Family

Europe (new)

[We want justice we want peace](#)

Latin America: #27 (2015)

Canción para resistir / Song of resistance

North America: #39

You’re not alone / Tu n’es pas seul / Kau Tak Sendiri

Song videos available online at
mwc-cmm.org/awfs.

Please check your congregation’s copyright protocols before using these songs in public gatherings.



4

Resources in this package

In this package

- Liturgies and symbols for gathering and benediction
- Sermons
- Testimonies from Europe
- Tithes and offering suggestions
- Celebration ideas
- Children's activity
- Poster

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Additional resources

See mwc-cmm.org/awfs

- Videos
- Photos
- Celebration map
- Anabaptist historical context
mwc-cmm.org/en/stories/how-mennonites-came-be/

6

Offering

One Lunch Offering

- 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.
- Go to [page 15](#) for more ideas to celebrate a special offering time for Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday.



Mennonite Church Rajnandgaon, India

Roopam Rao



Eglise Evangélique Mennonite "Béthel", Alcolsheim, France

Jean-Luc Husser Béthel, France



Amagugu Evangeli, Zimbabwe

Photo supplied

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

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



Liturgies and symbols for gathering and benediction



Gathering prayer

Based on Psalm 40:1-11

Oh Lord, we wait patiently for you,
preparing our spirits to make space for you,
knowing you hear our cry.

You have lifted us out of the mud and mire;
and set our feet on a rock, giving
us a firm place to stand.

You have put a new song in our mouths,
a hymn of praise to you, our God.

You have called us to point others to you
Those who see your care for us will
marvel and put their trust in you.
Oh Lord, you are faithful to those
who put their trust in you.
You have done wonders; and you
have wondrous plans for us.
Our retelling of your deeds will never end;
they are too many to declare.

Oh Lord, it is not sacrifice or burnt
offerings which you demand of us
but our spirits tuned to you:
our desire to do your will,
your law written upon our hearts.

Oh Lord, as we gather, we
proclaim your saving acts,
your boundless love and your
unending faithfulness.
You are our helper and saviour.

To you we worship, we serve, we pray.

Amen.

On a table at the front, place five candles of
different colours for each continent on top of
a map of the world (or beside a globe) along
with a white candle as the Christ candle in the
middle.

At the start of the worship service, name each
continent as its candle is lit, acknowledging
brothers and sisters in each continent.

Light the Christ candle last (or first) as the
source of light for the church everywhere.

During the service or at the end of the service
there could be prayers for blessing the sisters
and brothers in different regions of the world.

Additional resources to show the connection
with the global Anabaptist family:

- use the invocation and benediction for
candle lighting under “celebration ideas”
- watch greeting videos found in the
multimedia resources section
- display the MWC map (as a poster or the
interactive online version).



Welcome to you...

Welcome to you who are poor in spirit!
Welcome to you who mourn!
Welcome to you who hunger and thirst for justice!
Welcome to you who are peacemakers!
Welcome to you who suffer and bear what is unbearable in the name of Jesus Christ!

God, in Jesus, welcomes each one of you.
It is he who wants to bear with us the burdens of these days.
Let us open ourselves to his presence, and may his joy grip us this morning
By the grace of his Spirit!

—*Nathalie Werner in Paroles et prières pour le culte (words and prayers for worship) by Editions Mennonites.*

Repentance – Forgiveness

Lord, we worship and praise you,
we stand humbly before you.
We recognize that you accomplish your plans for the world.
We confess our refusal to see the promise of a new humanity.
We are overwhelmed by the matters of this world.
We are distracted from our commitments by other appeals.
We are victims of our prejudices, our fears, and our short-term vision.
We ask you to transform us in the image of Christ.
We ask you to take us into your service and use us in order that all peoples, all races, and all nations might grow together in peace and mutual understanding.
We ask these things in the name of Christ, who is the only one that can make our peoplehood a reality.

—*Michel Sommer in Paroles et prières pour le culte (words and prayers for worship) by Editions Mennonites.*

Confession of faith – Commitment – Consecration

To be shared with those who live in insecurity
All who are born of God have received the gifts of the Spirit of the Lord, are called to be one body loving each other in Jesus Christ, are well prepared by such a love to help their neighbors, not only with money and goods, but also by following the example of their Lord in accordance with the gospel through their blood and their lives. As much as possible they demonstrate mercy and piety. They take to heart the needs of others. They welcome the stranger in their homes. They comfort the afflicted, assist the needy, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and do not look away from the poor...

—*From Menno Simons (1496 – 1561) in Paroles et prières pour le culte (words and prayers for worship) by Editions Mennonites.*

A prayer for the offering

Our God, our Father, the Father of Light in whom there is no greed... teach us to build up a treasure for ourselves in heaven and not on this earth. Teach us to place our faith in you alone, and not in these passing material possessions. As you have taught us, we pray that your will be done on this earth as it is in heaven. We now bring you a portion of the riches you have entrusted to us. We pray that you will permit this offering to contribute to the manifestation of your will on this earth.
Amen.

—*Nicolas Widmer, in Paroles et prières pour le culte (words and prayers for worship) by Editions Mennonites.*



Intercessory prayer

Give us the power

God,

Give us the power to trust each other
and to choose the sustainable way
that frees your creation from distress.

Give us the power to share knowledge
and to seek for sustainable solutions
that allow future generations to live on

Give us the power to cooperate
to take decisions and actions
that bear fruit sustainably.

Give us the power
through your Holy Spirit

You who saw that it was good.

On the day after tomorrow as in the beginning.

For your kingdom come
and your glory shine
for ever.

Amen.

— *This prayer is taken from the book Dancing with the Golden Frog: Global Warming and the Lord's Prayer, by Herman Heijn, pastor at Doopsgezinde Gemeente Haarlem, Netherlands.*

A poem for spiritual reflection

I would love to start a mourning brigade
to share the loneliness of grief together
not to say anything that doesn't really matter
but just to mourn together
for what is no longer there

I would love to start a mourning brigade:
a group, a club or just one person
who can stay and remain regardless of the clock
but just for as long as it takes

Even if it lasts and lasts.

I would love to start a mourning brigade;
then I will come, if I may
with extra handkerchiefs and silent nods
and here and there a deep, dark sigh

For perhaps a moment of calm and breath.

— *Annegreet van der Wijk, from Bij Eb & Bij Vloed: negentig gedichten/gebeden en meer (At high tide and low tide: poems, prayers and more), published by Doopsgezind Bruderschapshuis Dopersduin. Annegreet van der Wijk is pastor at Doopsgezinde Gemeente Bussum-Naarden, Netherlands.*

Benediction

God, we pray, let nothing be lost, but seek us out,
see us,
that we may be found.

God, we pray,
inspire us with your Spirit,
that it is time to rediscover, to tidy up, to cleanse.

Breathe us in and out, set us in motion,
that we may commit ourselves anew to living and
dare to live with and through you and to be a word
of peace.

— *Hans Marseille, from Bij Eb & Bij Vloed: negentig gedichten/gebeden en meer (At high tide and low tide: poems, prayers and more), published by Doopsgezind Bruderschapshuis Dopersduin.*



Sermons

Those who share have more Micah 6:8

I stand in the early summer sun on the Loosli family's strawberry field on Moron in the Jura and comb through the small bushes for the ripest and finest strawberries.

What's on my mind on this beautiful June morning is the motto of the upcoming fall women's weekend: "Those who share have more."

The inspiration comes from the Just People course by Stop Poverty. The values we want to discuss are charity, sustainability, justice and mercy. Our key text will be Micah 6:8.

*"He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you but to
do justice and to love kindness and to walk
humbly with your God?"*

We take a deep breath. God has already laid down what is important in his commandments. There is nothing to add.

The task now is to combine the motto of the women's weekend, "Those who share have more," with Micah 6:8.

This motto challenges us, not only because of what it claims, but because it is contradictory: a *part* is *less* of something, not more! Less is less, not more.

When something is paradoxical and seemingly nonsensical, it may point to a higher meaning.

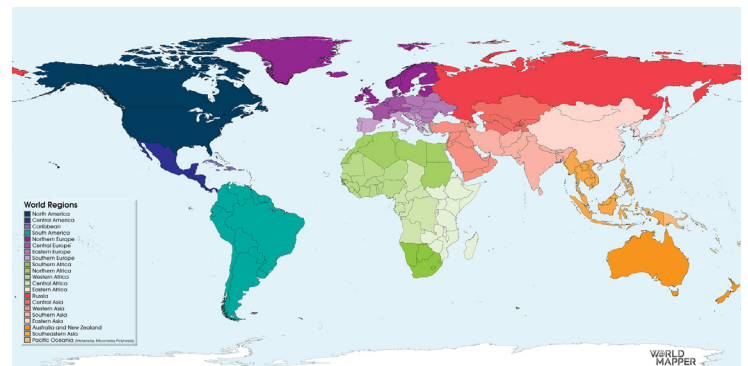
What could that meaning be?

When I share or give away some of the strawberries that I have gathered with the sweat of my brow on the sunny Moron, I have fewer strawberries, not more. So the "more" cannot refer

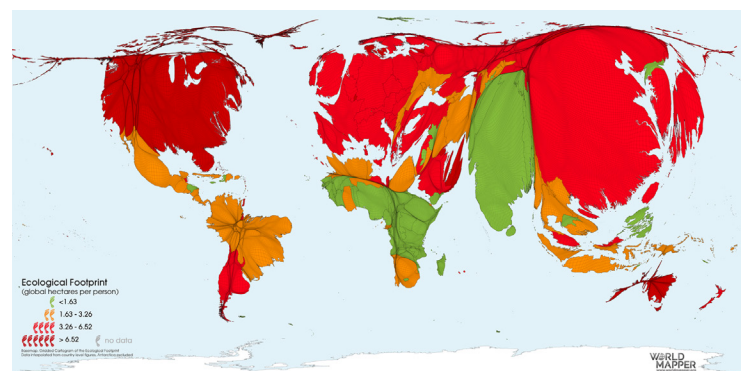
to the strawberries, but what then? What is the added value?

Change of scene

This is the world map as we know it. The colors represent the different continents:



This is a world map in which the natural contours are distorted. Europe, North America and parts of Asia are inflated because they consume more natural resources in relative terms.



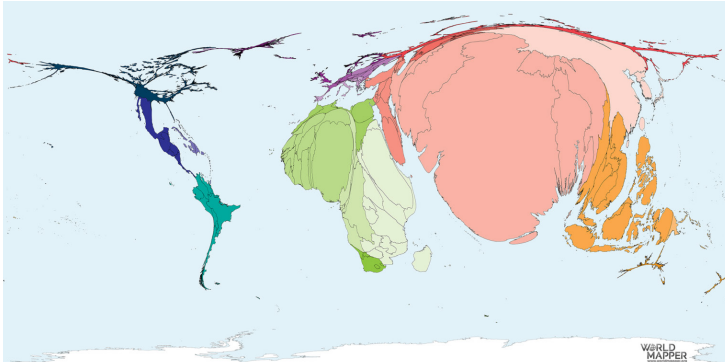
But the world's resources are finite.

What some consume for food production, per capita living space, mineral extraction, etc., others do not have. That is why they have shrunk.



In this map, Africa, India and Pakistan are blown up. This is the map of child malnutrition. There are many more malnourished children in the blown-up continents, while in Europe and America there are almost none. The unequal distribution of resources is a fact.

World Mapper: Children Malnourishment



Mani Matter, the Swiss songwriter, summed up this knowledge in his ingeniously apt way in a short poem or song.

“Those who are well off
Would be better off
Were those better off
Who are less well off
But that is not possible
Without those
Being less well off
Who are well off...”

We in Switzerland are really very well off. Switzerland is one of the richest countries in the world. Most of us have very few deprivations. On the other side of the globe, people work hard and in precarious conditions to guarantee our material prosperity. Our prosperity comes at a price, but it is not necessarily us who pay for it.

If goods were distributed more evenly around the world, everyone would be better off. But how can we bring ourselves to share what we have?

According to happiness research and the United Nations World Happiness Report, it should be quite simple: Sharing makes us happy.

You increase your own happiness by increasing the happiness of others. So if we ensured that malnutrition in the Global South declined and that people had access to more resources, more food, more educational opportunities, etc., we would be happier.

In this sense, you have more when you share.

Back to the strawberry field

When I share the strawberries I've picked myself and bring them to someone, I make that person happy. There's the moment of enjoyment for the recipient and the joy of receiving a gift. And because I get to witness that, I'm happier myself. Then there is more.

Somehow, it still doesn't quite satisfy.

There is certainly a lot of truth in it, but it is actually a virtuous insight in the sense of the ancient Greeks. But we are talking about a Mennonite women's weekend.

Here is Micah 6:8 once again:

*“He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you but to
do justice and to love kindness and to walk
humbly with your God?”*

According to Micah, the following is important:

- a) to abide by the law (some translations speak of practicing justice, doing what is right, not allowing injustice);
- b) to be humane toward our fellow human beings (some translations speak of solidarity, of giving care);
- c) to live in constant communion with God (some translations say “walking attentively with God, being understanding and mindful, living in reverence with God”).

God will show mercy to those who live this way.



This is a text that focuses on practical, lived faith. Let's take a closer look:

Justice and righteousness

The theme of justice runs like a thread through the Bible. When we think of justice, we may initially think that everyone gets what they deserve, that everyone should receive their just punishment for their wrongdoing.

But God's justice is not primarily about judgment. God's justice is the creation of life-affirming conditions, of balanced relationships between people, between God and created beings. Since we are fallible, God's justice has a lot to do with mercy.

And this is a justice that does not only concern the individual, but has the whole of social coexistence in view: We think of the example of the jubilee year, when every seven times seven years all debts are forgiven (Leviticus 25).

Being human, showing solidarity and giving affection

Many of us know how it feels to experience hospitality from people who, by our standards, have nothing, yet want to share the little they can muster at that moment with their guests. This is deeply impressive, sometimes even embarrassing, because you cannot give anything back at that moment.

But perhaps you resolve to emulate this example. Through the example of the poorest, we learn to share and a domino effect is created.

Living in constant connection with God, walking attentively with God

This means that God leads the way and we follow him.

It is not we who decide where to go and then God follows, but rather God sets out on the path that we are to walk attentively with God.

If we are not careful and allow ourselves to be distracted, we may miss a turn along the way and suddenly find ourselves in the undergrowth. "Living in constant communion with God" means, ideally, taking God's hand like a small child and holding on to it as tightly as possible.

So that's what Micah was concerned with in 700 BC. Is that still what it's about today, even in life with Jesus?

In my search for a verse that sums up what matters in life with God as succinctly as Micah 6:8, and also addresses the question of sacrifice and sharing, I came across a verse in Hebrews. The Letter to the Hebrews is addressed to a congregation whose initial enthusiasm seems to be waning. Therefore, it needs to be reminded of what is important. In the concluding exhortations in chapter 13, we read (13:15):

"Through [Jesus], then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name."

And then comes the verse that sums it up so beautifully (13:16):

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."



Photo supplied

A potluck lunch after the service at the Mennonite church in Regensburg, Germany.



God is pleased when we do good and share. This is how we want to understand the motto, “Those who share have more.”

The “more” is the close connection to our Lord Jesus, the undivided attention, the grateful questioning, the listening to what and how we should and may share.

And when we pray and sing and listen, we feel that sharing is a need that comes from deep within

us. It is the need to walk attentively with God and to share our strengths, our resources, our experiences of faith, everything that makes us who we are, with other people.

—*Mathild Gyger is a member of Evangelical Mennonite Congregation Schanzli, Switzerland. Adapted from a sermon she delivered on 1 October 2023*

The Samaritan in me

Luke 10: 25-37

We all know the story of the Good Samaritan. The moral of the whole thing is quite simple. Jesus summarizes it aptly after the parable: “Then go and do likewise” (10:37).



Dale Gehman

A tour group learns about Mennonite history from a scholar in Zurich on the 500th anniversary.

However, I can think of a story that could somehow fit in with the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Last fall, Alfred from Ghana lived with my parents for five months during a semester abroad at the University of Basel as part of his theology studies.

During his time in Switzerland, he came home twice very upset because he had witnessed people falling on the escalator at Basel station. What particularly bothered him was not the injuries sustained by the people who had fallen, but the fact that there were hardly any or no people next to him to help the victims.

It shows that civil courage is not quite so simple after all. Even if the situation, as in this case, doesn't actually pose any danger, it takes a lot of effort to decide to love. Many apparently fail to “Go and do likewise!”

So perhaps it is worth taking a closer look at this Bible text.

In this parable, almost everything is turned on its head. The hero of the story is not the priest, not the Levite and not the ordinary Jew.

No, the hero is the Samaritan, someone who, from the Jewish perspective at the time, lost his way and followed a misguided belief.

You can almost hear the scholar's gnashing of teeth as he answers Jesus' question after the story: “Which of the three acted as a fellow human being (or neighbour) to the man who was attacked?” (10:36). He cannot bring himself to say: “The Samaritan!” Instead, he says: “The one who helped him” (10:37).



With whom in the role of hero would we feel challenged today if Jesus were to tell us the story personally? We also have groups of people who are more or less widely rejected in our society. Even if we don't want to, we too have our reservations and prejudices, which are often not easy to overcome.

Jesus deliberately tells the story in such a way that it makes his listeners uncomfortable. I therefore invite you to take a brief moment and recast the role of the Samaritan with someone who would make you uncomfortable.

Try to keep this person or group of people in mind for the rest of the sermon.

When the story of the Good Samaritan is told, compassion for humanity is usually highlighted.

However, Kenneth E. Bailey, an expert on Middle Eastern culture, showed me during my preparation how lack of courage to love plays a role in this story.

Starting with the priest, who was probably on his way home to Jericho after his two-week ministry in Jerusalem. If he had approached the wounded man, of whom he did not know whether he was dead or still alive, he would have run the risk of becoming ritually defiled, which would have entailed a lengthy purification process during which he, his servants and his family would have had to live with unpleasant consequences. If he had defiled himself and later evaded the purification process, this would have meant that he was serving at the altar as unclean, which could have led to an accusation with even worse consequences.

For the priest, therefore, certain dangers or inconveniences lurked in this situation. He obviously lacked the necessary courage and it was easier for him to walk past the situation.

In the story of Alfred at the train station in Basel, many of those who did not help probably also

had reasons. "If I stop now, I'll be late for my meeting and the boss is already angry with me anyway." "What if I can't help at all, I know so little about first aid. Everyone would see it, how embarrassing!"

After the priest comes the Levite, a priest's assistant in the temple. Kenneth Bailey believes that the Levite must have known that a priest had walked this route shortly before him. The Levite was subordinate to the priest. Should he have exposed the priest as someone who had not acted as he should have? That would also have taken a lot of courage.

Moreover, since the priest who had already passed by actually knew better about right and wrong, the Levite could go on almost without remorse.

In Alfred's case, too, some may have asked themselves: "Why should I help? There are so many others. They could probably do it even better than me."

And now comes the Samaritan.

What he does is unimaginable: he has the courage to act in love.

As the enemy of the Jews of the time, he cares for the injured man and takes him to a nearby inn, presumably in a Jewish town.

People listening to this story at the time would probably have expected the Samaritan to leave the wounded man on the outskirts of town and run away. Even as the rescuer of this Jew, a Samaritan would not have been safe from possible revenge.

Furthermore, by bringing the injured man to the inn and providing money for his care, the Samaritan not only saved the Jew's life, but probably also his freedom. Considering the man had nothing left after the robbery, he could have been sold into slavery to pay his debts.

The Samaritan's courage to act shows how love can change the lives of others.



Back to Jesus' question: "Which of the three acted as a neighbour to the robbed man?"

Jesus formulates the question differently. Apparently, the question should not be "Who is my neighbour?", but "To whom shall I be neighbour?"

Not: "Who is this that I am supposed to love in order to gain my eternal life?" Rather: "Who can I reach out to? Who can I support? Who should be able to count on me?"

The focus is more on "togetherness" than on "I have to provide for my eternal life". And the answer to the question of the neighbour in the parable is almost revolutionary. It breaks down religious, linguistic and ethnic boundaries and throws the scholar out of his comfort zone. It shows God's vision of a new world.

Jesus tells the scholar: "Then go and do likewise" (10:37).

By our very nature, we are not in a position to love both God and our fellow human beings in the way God demands. And yet I want to orient myself toward this divine vision of a new world in which we sacrificially help people in need: we provide first aid when people are injured; we give poor people some of what we have too much of; we stand up against racism; we reach out to marginalized people; we stand on the side of the oppressed.

Unfortunately, the world is not black and white.

Do I have all the information I need to know who I should stand up for? Situations are often nuanced and you can't just say what the right thing to do is.

Jesus doesn't expect us to always do everything right. And yet I don't want to stop at grace. The Samaritan from our story can and should be a role



Irma Sulistyorini

Members of the General Council gather to pray for Roman Rakhuba, General Council delegate from Ukraine, before his departure.

model for me. It should teach me humility, push me off my high horse, help me to see beyond boundaries and encourage me to find the courage to love all my fellow human beings, even if it seems impossible at first glance.

Sometimes it is easy to love. And sometimes it takes courage.

But if we manage to love honestly, then we can change the lives of our neighbours and become a fellow human being to them.

To sum it up in the words of a song by Unsopken: "If we're gonna be known for something let it be love."

Amen.

—Hanna Sagesser is a member at Evangelische Mennonitengemeinde Schänzli, MuttENZ, Switzerland. This sermon is adapted from what she preached to international guests alongside the congregation on 1 June 2025.



Testimonies from Europe

Solidarity on Lesbos

“And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.” —
1 Corinthians 13:13)

What do these three things look like when we put them into practice? They look like loyalty, anticipation and solidarity. And the greatest of these is solidarity.

And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

Faith is sometimes understood as a thing you can simply believe. But what Paul means by faith is a relationship that goes much deeper. It means that people trust each other and remain loyal. It is a relation of trust between people, or between people and God.

Faith really means loyalty.

Hope is directed to something we don't possess, but which we try to grasp. Sadly, some people lose it, because they don't know what to hope for. Or they are disappointed because the thing they hope for seems to evade their grasp.

But anticipation is hope that has a strategy.

We have a plan for where we can go with our hope. It's not grasping at straws, but reaching towards a ready-made plan whose fulfillment we are anticipating.

And love?

Love outlasts everything else. When we dream our most outrageous dreams – the healing of all relationships, the renewal of trust in society, the presence of God among us in joy – when all these dreams have been accomplished, we will no longer need faith/trust or hope/anticipation. But love will endure.

Even in a perfect society, if ever there were one, we would still need love.

And the practical side of love is solidarity.

Standing together with those who are both near and far from us. Yes, even those who believe differently, who act and look and sound and eat differently, will receive our solidarity. And we receive theirs, because love also means mutual aid.

The greatest of these is solidarity.

On the Greek island of Lesbos German and Dutch Mennonites have developed a deep solidarity with migrants and Greeks who are searching for a better world. A world that overcomes barriers and walls. Where people care for each other and respect each other's dignity. In cooperation with Community Peacemaker Teams, the German Mennonite Peace Committee (DMFK) has been sending volunteers and delegations to Lesbos for more than 10 years now. We now help to fund a team of four Greek “*solidarians*”.

The work has gotten harder. Although it is no longer in the news, the work of these *solidarians* is so important. Migrants who were forced to steer a boat arrive in Europe with the label “human smuggler” and are regularly given prison sentences of more than 100 years. Our team visits them, connects them to their families, provides lawyers, organizes demonstrations, documents abuses. Our team shows love and solidarity.

—J. Jakob Fehr is a member of the *Deutsches Mennonitisches Friedenskomitee (DMFK)*, the German Mennonite Peace Committee.



Karla Braun

Max Wiedmer (third from right in back row) with the Francophone Network, a group of French speaking organizations within MWC.

Solidarity in local community

In June 2023, I was diagnosed with an aneurysm near my spleen. I had surgery, but six months later, I woke up with almost unbearable abdominal pain. Astrid (my wife) and I are very grateful to live in a house where solidarity is a reality.

Our neighbors were there.

Benny, a former firefighter, slapped me to keep me from falling into a coma.

Josiane helped Astrid call the urgency.

I spent two and a half days between life and death as internal bleeding and infections spread throughout my abdomen.

The situation was heard by friends, members of our church, those in our church body, and beyond. A chain of prayer and solidarity was formed without my even knowing it!

Astrid, for her part, was well aware of the seriousness of the situation. She testifies: "What strength and power these prayers had! They enabled our family to endure this ordeal and keep hope alive. Every word, every breath, every plea was heard by our almighty Lord, and by God's grace, God responded positively. Our prayer is that this ordeal will not end with one name, Max, but that the almighty power of the Lord will be revealed."

Looking back, I can say how precious it is to have a community and friends who lovingly committed themselves to my recovery. The surgeons call it a miracle, and we agree! Josiane left Astrid with the words of Lamentations 3:22-23: "*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*"

God's solidarity is the greatest.

—Max Wiedmer, *Église Mennonite d'Altkirch, France*



Tithes and offering ideas



Alexander Neufeld

Evangelisch-mennonitische Freikirche, Dresden, Germany, shares a meal outside with refugees from Venezuela as part of their Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday celebration in 2024.

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”** (the value within one’s own country) **per person, once a year**, is something that most MWC members can do, except in times of famine or violence. People who have more resources can give much more than this, and could be encouraged to do so. Others with more scarce resources could consider giving the monetary value of one item that they would normally include in a meal.

Here are some ideas on how to plan for a special MWC offering in your congregation.

1. Plan for One Lunch offerings to be put into a special basket at the front or in culturally appropriate lunch bags/containers during the worship service as a separate offering from the normal offering.
2. Plan for a shared congregational meal together before or after worship on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday.
 - This could be “potluck”, with each family bringing dishes of food to share, with an offering basket for MWC to “pay” for the meal.
 - This could be auctioning off or selling a prepared packed lunch brought by families to the church. These packed lunches are then available for auction or for purchase or donation by anyone to take home, or to eat together after worship.
3. Plan for a time of shared fasting and prayer for the global church during a mealtime before or after worship on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday. Include an offering for MWC during that time. This offering would approximate the value of the meal that is not being eaten by the participants in the fast.

Funds that are gathered through this special offering in each congregation can be sent directly to Mennonite World Conference using the various mechanisms shown on our website (mwc-cmm.org/donate).

Or, these funds can be sent to your national church office with a request to pass the funds on to MWC. Clearly mark the offering as designated for Mennonite World Conference and indicate it is an Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday offering.



Celebration ideas

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Here are some of the ways the churches in Europe worship together, with symbolic actions to demonstrate solidarity.



Henk Stenvers shares about MWC and the global church at Doopsgezind Gemeente Bussum-Naarden, Netherlands, on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday.

In the service

In *doopsgezinde* (Mennonite) congregations in the Netherlands, the worship leader lights a candle on a table at the front at the beginning of the service and blows it out as part of the closing of the service.

With those actions, the worship leader speaks a version of these words:

We light the candle as a reminder of the light that carries and comforts us. Let us live in the light of eternity

OR

We light the candle as a sign of our bond with each other, with God, with ourselves and with the world.

We blow out the candle but we take the light with us in hearts into the world.

After the service Potlucks

Once a month, we celebrate *Gemeinschaftssonntag* (fellowship Sunday). Everyone brings something to eat (e.g., a salad, cake, dessert, or stew), and we put together a large buffet. After the service, we move the chairs out of the worship hall and set up tables.

Everyone is invited to eat, including guests, and so far, everyone has always had enough to eat! There are usually plenty of leftovers, and many people take some home with them.

After the meal, some people spend the whole afternoon at the church. Children and adults play outside on the lawn or sit together.

Sometimes we also open a café in the afternoon for people who live around our church building or who are hiking in the area. This creates a colourful community of strangers, families, locals, and churchgoers. There are many opportunities for conversations and encounters in which God's Spirit can work.

—Joel Driedger, Mennonitengemeinde Karlsruhe-Thomashof e.V., Karlsruhe, Germany



For several years now, we have been meeting for a potluck lunch after the service at the Mennonite church in Regensburg. Anyone who fancies a delicious meal in great company is welcome to join us.

The lunch is organized very informally via a WhatsApp group.

The group consists of people who regularly attend the lunch and are happy to contribute something. Three to four days before the service, we decide together what we want to eat. There might be a soup Sunday, for example, or pasta/rice with various sauces, or simply hot dogs with salads. Of course, dessert is a must.

Anyone can join us for lunch, even on the spur of the moment. We especially like to invite new visitors to the service.

Although this means that the number of people eating together varies, everyone has always been satisfied so far.

We find these communal lunches very valuable for our congregation. They provide an opportunity to get to know each other better and have good conversations. The exchange between the generations is particularly nice. Delicious food brings people together – from kindergarteners to senior citizens.

—Lena Schmutz, Mennonitengemeinde
Regensburg, Germany

Recipes

Germany

Sunken apple cake

1. Mix 125 g margarine and 125 g sugar, add 3 eggs and continue mixing.
2. Mix 200 g flour and 2 teaspoons baking powder and fold into the batter.
3. Stir in 2 tablespoons milk.

4. Peel and halve 5 apples, remove the cores and carve them with a fork.
5. Grease a round baking pan and pour in the batter, place apple halves on the dough.
6. Bake 40 to 50 min at 200C or 390F.

Portugal

Lavadas (gazpacho)

Ingredients

- 3 tomatoes
- 3 bell peppers – green and red (no spicy ones)
- 3 garlic cloves
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil (preferably either from Portugal, Spain, Italy or Greece)
- 200 grams of prosciutto
- 1 loaf of hard bread (the older the better...)
- Water
- ice cubes

Instructions

1. Start in a large salad bowl. Smash the 3 garlic cloves, then add olive oil. (I would use 2 or 3 Tbsp.)
2. Cut the tomatoes in small pieces. Cut the bell peppers in strips (remove the seeds). Cut the prosciutto in cubes. Put it all in the bowl.
3. Cut the bread in medium-sized cubes.
4. Before adding the bread, pour cold water into the bowl and mix all together with a large spoon.
5. When everything is well mixed, add the bread to soak.
6. Add some ice cubes to keep it fresh.

This is an excellent and fresh summer meal. I learned this recipe from my beloved mother. She was from the interior of Alentejo, Portugal. There they didn't call it gazpacho but "Lavadas." In those days, ingredients were sparse, so people ate what was available.

—José Arrais, MWC regional representative, Europe



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World Conference**
A Community of Anabaptist
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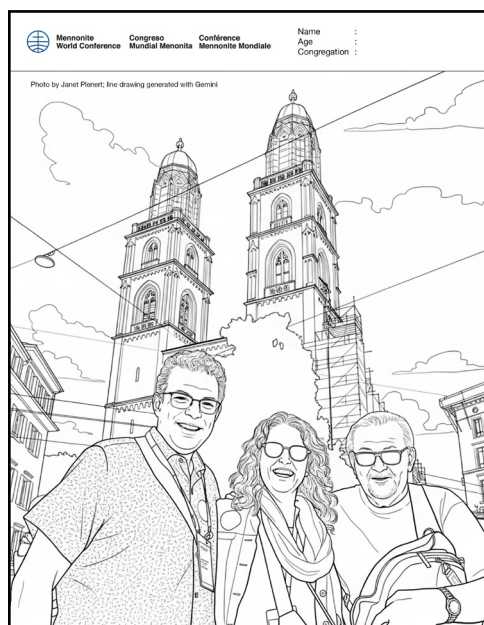


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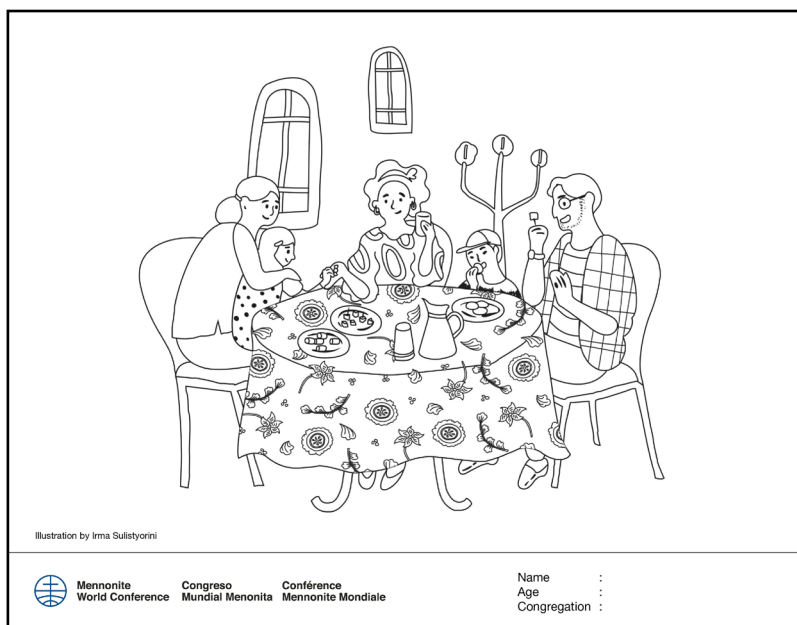
Children's activity

Colouring pages A



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Additional resources

Poster A



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