

College Mennonite Church

We believe that all individuals are created in God's image, and all people, regardless of age, gender, race, citizenship status, abilities, or sexual orientation, are welcome as full participants in the life of our congregation.

Creemos que todas las personas son creadas a la imagen de Dios, y todas las personas, independiente-mente de su edad, género, raza, ciudadanía, capacidades u orientación sexual, son bienvenidas como participantes de pleno derecho en la vida de nuestra congregación.

A Welcoming Congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

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*The peace of the earth be with you,
The peace of the heavens too;
The peace of the rivers be with you,
The peace of the oceans too.
Deep peace falling over you.
God's peace growing in you.*

La Paz de la Tierra, trans. Christine Carson, VT 838

Sunday, July 5, 2026 – *Domingo, 5 de julio, 2026*

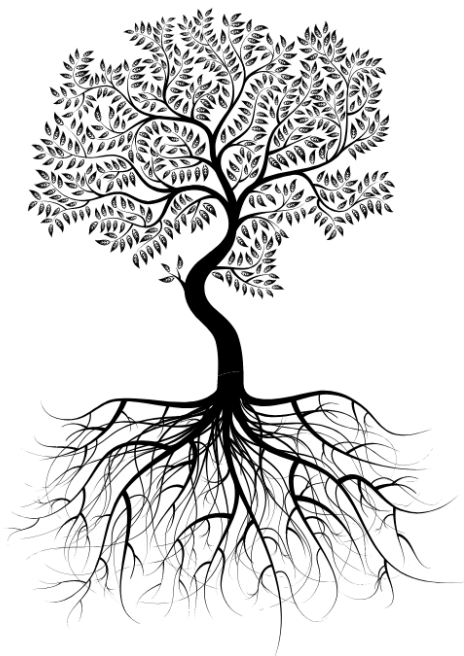
Peace Sunday in the Woods

Welcome to worship! We gather in a different sanctuary this morning, a church without walls, decorated with all the beauty of God's creation. But we are still the same people of God, and we hope that this morning in the woods can help us broaden our understanding of God's will for peace in this world.

This booklet contains a variety of worship resources, including a variety of prompts for prayer and reflection, structured a little like a "regular" worship service, as well as several songs located near the back. Use it however you would like: sitting in solitude, wandering through the woods alone or in a group, in conversation at the College Cabin, or praying wherever the Spirit finds you.

If you would like to join in a more structured communal time of prayer and worship, come to the porch of the college cabin at 10:30 am. Our **MennoAction prayer group** that meets monthly to pray for peace in our world has planned this service: you can also find the order of worship in this booklet. This year, as our nation celebrates 250 years, we will give thanks for our country while also asking how we as pacifists can best respond to present-day situations.

If you encounter God through **music**, you may enjoy participating in the informal music-making that is happening in the pavilion. An **offering** basket is located near the greeters, but we also hope you will offer us some of your **reflections**: the middle page of this booklet contains blank space and several prompts for written or drawn reflections. As you leave, we invite you to leave that middle page with the greeters, and your thoughts and drawings can provide "food for thought" for others in the future!



We Gather



Centering Call to Worship

Invigorated, exhausted, refreshed, weary,
we come here to drink the Water of Life.

And we remember the ancient words of the prophet:

**Let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

(Take a deep breath)

Our culture separates us from nature,
tells us to commodify the earth,
but we come here to remember
that justice for the earth is justice for all.

**Let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

(Take a deep breath)

We live in a society that wants to tear us apart from each other,
but we come here to be part of the Kin-dom that holds us together.

**Let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

(Take a deep breath)

God, help us rest in this peace that is all around us.
Slow us down and renew us in your everflowing stream.

Amen.

If you wish, you may sing or hum "Be still and know" (later in this booklet)



Breathe deeply. As you breathe in, open your arms wide to welcome the Holy Spirit. As you breathe out, hug yourself—or your friend—as you feel God's love moving through your body.

We Pray

Often, our prayers are centered around our words to God. But prayer is conversation. Find a spot to sit, get comfortable, imagine Jesus sitting beside you, and have a chat. Make sure you pause to listen!

Use the loose half-sheet to give focus to your prayers if you desire. Journal or draw in the space provided and leave your reflection in the basket near the greeters. We will create a bulletin board in the church building inspired by these “Peace in the woods” notes.

If you wish to remember specific prayer concerns, scan this QR code to find our current CMC page of prayer requests.



Pick up a leaf, and let your finger trace its veins, like a labyrinth. For every vein, name one person, place, or thing for which you are praying.

At CMC we traditionally observe Peace Sunday on or near July 4. We are choosing to include this responsive reading by Mennonite pastor Isaac Villegas as written in *Voices Together* (VT 1043): you can read it individually, or alternate reading sections with a friend.

Some trust in governments
and some in borders,
***but we trust in God,
who invites all people to live in peace.***

For the earth belongs to God,
and all creation is in God’s care:
**Land and waters,
plants and animals, sky and soil
declare the hospitality of God.**

The world belongs to God,
and all who live in it.
**We belong to one another as siblings,
All of us children of God.**

With gratitude for the home God has
made for us on this planet, we pray:

Send your Holy Spirit
to strengthen our resolve
to strive for communities
where foreigners become neighbors
and strangers become friends.

**Revive our desire for the reign of
Christ,
who releases prisoners
and liberates the oppressed,
who frees the world from greed
and proclaims God’s peace.**

***Make justice roll down like a river
And righteousness flow like an
everlasting stream.***

Amen.



God, we sometimes forget that we, and our world, belong to you. Help us work to create a world of kindness, justice, and peace for all your children.

To close your time of prayers, read these words silently or aloud.

From the problems and injustices of this past week, we come, Spirit, seeking rest and renewed hope. Hear the cries of our hearts, our prayers, our needs. Heal and restore us. We wait for you. AMEN.

Breathe deeply, feeling God's peace around you, supporting you with roots that go deep into the ground. If you used a leaf or other natural item in your prayers, release it into God's keeping and return it to the ecosystem of the forest floor.



We Listen

On most Sundays in church, we **listen** as someone reads a Bible story. But today, we can also **listen** to the woods around us. Be very **quiet** for several minutes. How many different things do you **hear**? How does God speak to you through those sounds?

Read the following three scripture passages silently or aloud, and ponder what they means to you, today, in July 2026.

Our theme scripture for this series:

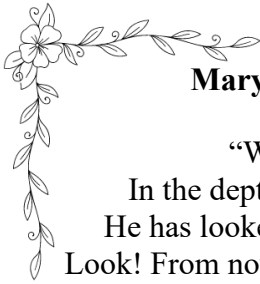


“But let justice roll on like waters, and righteousness like a never-failing stream.” –Amos 5:24 (CEB)



Read this verse aloud while standing near the water. The water in this text rolls and flows. Sometimes water crashes, sometimes it is still and calm. Imagine water in its many forms. When have you noticed justice flowing, crashing, rolling, streaming, or otherwise acting fluid?

Be the water! Imagine that you are the water in this passage, and let your body “roll down like a waterfall,” “flow like a stream,” “crash like waves,” or move in other “watery” ways.



Mary's Magnificat –Luke 1:46-55 (CEB)

“With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.

He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored
because the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name.

He shows mercy to everyone, from one generation to the next,
who honors him as God.

He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty-handed.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
remembering his mercy, just as he promised to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever.”



In her song, Mary sees the world as God sees it. Mary is glimpsing the Kingdom of God. Remember, she is singing this song while she is a subject in the Roman Empire, living under occupation by an unjust world power! And yet, she sees a world in which God's justice reigns. Write or contemplate your own Magnificat, in these troubled times.

Sometimes in the Bible, when people have really big feelings of deep joy, they break out into song and/or dance. This is the song of Mary's big feelings after she learns she is going to be the mother of the Messiah. Join Mary's song and dance! Grab some dance scarves, instruments or bubbles if you want to and let all your big feelings come out in your body. If you're inspired, make up your own song to sing!

The Parable of the Lilies of the Field –Matthew 6:25-34 (CEB)

²⁵ “Therefore, I say to you, don’t worry about your life, what you’ll eat or what you’ll drink, or about your body, what you’ll wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds in the sky. They don’t sow seed or harvest grain or gather crops into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth much more than they are? ²⁷ Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life?

²⁸ And why do you worry about clothes? Notice how the lilies in the field grow. They don’t wear themselves out with work, and they don’t spin cloth. ²⁹ But I say to you that even Solomon in all of his splendor wasn’t dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If God dresses grass in the field so beautifully, even though it’s alive today and tomorrow it’s thrown into the furnace, won’t God do much more for you, you people of weak faith?

³¹ Therefore, don’t worry and say, ‘What are we going to eat?’ or ‘What are we going to drink?’ or ‘What are we going to wear?’ ³² Gentiles long for all these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ Instead, desire first and foremost God’s kingdom and God’s righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore, stop worrying about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.



Imagine Jesus looking around, noticing the lilies, and coming up with this metaphor. Look around - what wisdom might creation be whispering to you?

Jesus says we are to “seek first” God’s kingdom (relationships with others and the earth) and righteousness (relationship with God). Sometimes we read this passage as, “If we are kingdom-minded, then God will take care of us.” But it’s not transactionary. It’s mutual care. God is tending to the balance of the earth, including us - and we are tending to the earth, each other, and God. Mutual shalom. How are you participating in this mutual care? How do you notice God tending to you in the context of your community?

In this scripture, Jesus is noticing nature. Notice with him! Choose a small area (like a 2'x2' area) to observe. How many different kinds of life can you find there? How many different colors and shades of colors do you see? Are there any creatures? Listen carefully. What sounds do you hear? Use your nose - what does this little spot smell like?



We Respond

What is moving in your soul through this worship experience today? Spend some time prayerfully writing or drawing your reflections on the inserted half-sheet. If you're willing to share your response with others, put it in the basket near the greeters.

We believe that **offering our tithes** is an essential act of worship. A basket for cash or checks is located near the greeters, and you can also follow this QR code to donate securely on our website.

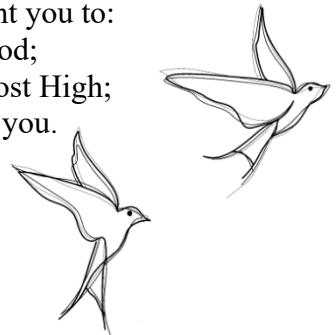


Look around you, wherever you are. Recognize that the land you are worshipping on was created by God and has had a complex human history: here in Witmer Woods, we are on the traditional, ancestral territories of the Potawatomi and Miami peoples, land which white people took from them and have used in various ways, for good and for ill, for generations. As you look at the lake created by an 1860s dam, and walk under trees planted by GC professor Samuel Witmer and his students in the 1940s, contemplate your place in this marvelous and complicated world. How can you help bring about justice that flows like a river?

Take one more deep breath. Start with your arms stretched wide. As you breathe in, draw your arms close in and imagine the peace that fills these woods rushing into your body with the air. As you breathe out, stretch your arms and release that peace into the world.

Benediction (by Joanna Harader, VT 1065)

Whatever wilderness the Spirit has brought you to:
Walk in boldness, as a beloved child of God;
Walk in peace, under the shelter of the Most High;
Walk in faith, knowing Christ walks with you.





Breathe deeply.
Go in Peace.

Be Still and Know

Text: Psalm 46:10,
tr. by Maria Eugenia Cornou,
(c) 2019, GIA Publications, Inc.

VT 37

Music: anon.; arr. Jack Schrader,
(c) 1989 Hope Publishing Co.

C F C G C C7 F

Be still_ and know that I_ am God. Be still_ and know that
Ten cal - may ve que yo_ soy Dios. Ten cal - may ve que

D7 G C F C F C G7 C

I_ am God. Be still_ and know that I_ am God.
yo_ soy Dios. Ten cal - may ve_ que yo_ soy Dios.

La paz de la tierra 838

(The Peace of the Earth Be with You)

LA PAZ DE LA TIERRA 8.7.9.7.6

La paz de la tierra es - té con - ti - go, la
 The peace of the earth _____ be with you, the _____

paz de los cie - los tam - bién. La paz de los rí - os es -
 peace of the heav - ens too; the peace of the riv - ers

té con - ti - go, la paz de los ma - res tam - bién. La
 be with you, the _____ peace of the o - ceans too.

paz pro - fun - da ca - yen - do so - bre ti. La
 Deep _____ peace _____ fall - ing o - ver you.

paz pro - fun - da cre - cien - do en ti.
 God's _____ peace _____ grow - ing in you.

Text: Spanish; Guatemalan traditional; trans. Christine Carson (Scotland), © 1998 Christine Carson and WGRG, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

Music: Guatemalan traditional



Peace Sunday: Love and Justice for All



A Service of Prayer and Song

10:30 am, College Cabin

Welcome

Gratitude

Psalm 24:1

*The earth is the LORD's and everything in it,
The world and its inhabitants too.*

#878 Land Acknowledgement

#710 This is My Song

Prayers of the People

Children's Time: Christian Pledge of Allegiance

VT 929

*I pledge allegiance to Jesus Christ, and to God's reign for which he died—
One Spirit-led people the world over, indivisible, with love and justice for all.*

Lament

Psalm 13:1-2a

*How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I bear pain in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?*

#794 If the War Goes On

Silence

Spoken prayers and comments from the congregation

Call for Peace

Luke 4:18

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim
good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the
prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."*

"Reflections on Prophetic Witness for Peace: Michiana Voices for Peace and Mennonite Action"

#706 O Healing River

Silence

Spoken prayers and comments from the congregation

Hope

Romans 8:38-39

*I am convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus
our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future
things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created.*

#1043 Some trust in governments . . .

#838 The Peace of the Earth Be with You / La Paz de la Tierra

Benediction

Worship leader: Rachel Nafziger Hartzler | **Musicians:** Diane Schrock Hertzler, Pete Miller, Weldon Friesen | **Prayers:** Pamela Yoder | **Reflections:** David Janzen | **Readers:** Mark Rosenbury, Janet Rosenbury | **Children's time:** Becky Horst, June A. Yoder | **Translation:** Cristian Alemán

Consider engaging with one or more of these groups that promote prophetic witness for peace:

Mennonite Action: A national movement of Mennonites and friends following in the example of Jesus Christ, who called us to live as active peacemakers, standing firmly on the side of the downtrodden and the oppressed. It takes public action against the occupation of Palestine and for a world where all God's children are free. Mennonite Action Michiana is a local chapter that organizes and supports actions in the Goshen and Elkhart communities.

<https://www.mennoniteaction.org>

Michiana Voices for Middle East Peace formed to re[story] our world by connecting with voices crowded out by dominant narratives that threaten the existence of lives, communities, and our shared future. It offers educational events and concrete ways to support peacemaking efforts in the Middle East region. To paraphrase Nelson Mandela, "nobody's free until everybody's free."

<https://michianavoices.org>

Menno PIN (Palestine-Israeli Network) was formed by Mennonite Church USA to encourage relationships between US congregations and Gaza churches and social service agencies. It includes periodic communication and financial support to Christians, Muslims and others suffering from violence and lack of food and supplies in Gaza.

<http://mennopin.org>

Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery: An initiative to acknowledge and lament the complicity of Christians in the colonization of the United States, and to take action (in various ways) to dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery.

www.dismantleddiscovery.org