

Resources for Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference Sunday

PURPOSES

- Engage the story of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC), a story that contributes to our identity as a community of congregations
- Celebrate and give thanks for God's faithfulness to IMMC throughout our history
- Increase awareness of and appreciation for the congregations – people, pastors, locations – that make up IMMC
- Deepen a sense of connection to other congregations in one's own region
- Broaden our sense of identity as Mennonite follower of Jesus beyond the local congregation

One of the core principles of the church for us as Mennonites is that the community is the center of life. We commit ourselves to following Christ, and we commit ourselves to each other in the community of faith. We invite you to help your congregation live into its commitment to the larger community of faith and to begin that by getting better acquainted with IMMC.

We believe a service of worship is the best place to hear stories of God's faithfulness. We are all called to respond to the love, forgiveness and grace we have received. We respond by loving and being in relationship with God, neighbor and enemy. An "Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference Sunday" is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen our relationship with God and each other in the church and to deepen our resolve to love even those who are hard to love—our enemy.

Please note that this packet contains resources for you to use in your worship time and your adult education hour. These are meant to assist you. There are more resources here than you can use, therefore they are offered as a variety of options from which you may choose. We encourage you to make necessary adaptations to suit the needs of your congregation.

The Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC) Missional Leadership Team and staff believe your congregation will be inspired and blessed by stories of the larger church family to which your congregation belongs. IMMC has a long, interesting story of the faithfulness and struggle of congregations working together to follow Jesus as his faithful followers and "disciple-makers." Our story is a story of seeking to be faithful. It is a grace-filled story of our years of following Jesus and engaging in mission together through good times and hard. We are working together to provide resources to contribute to healthy congregations and healthy pastors, changed by our involvement in God's mission to reconcile the world. You and your congregation are part of the story!

(This packet has been adapted from materials created by Central District Conference. We are grateful for their generosity in sharing it with us.)

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Order of Worship (see below for resources corresponding to each of the lettered items in the following outline)

Gathering Songs (A)*

Welcome and Intro to Conference Sunday (B)

Renewing a Vision Video (C)

Call to Worship/Opening Prayers (D)

Song of Praise (A)**

Offering

Lighting Peace Lamp (if that is your practice) and Prayer for IMMC Congregations

Delegate Story (E)

Children's Time (F)

Scripture Reading (G)

Sermon (H)

Song of Response (A)**

Congregational Prayer

Benediction

Sending Song (A)**

RECOMMENDED LIST OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

1. An IMMC Delegate: During the service, this person will share a story about her/his experiences being a part of Conference activities.
 2. An individual to lead the Children's Time
 3. Delegate, Ministry team member, or Conference staff member to share a story of an experience being a part of IMMC.
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WORSHIP RESOURCES

A. Song Suggestions (SJ=Sing the Journey, SS=Sing the Story, HWB=Hymnal: A Worship Book)

***Gathering Songs**

SJ #3 *Jesus calls us here to meet him*

SJ #4 *You've got a place*

HWB #12 *Come, let us all unite to sing*

HWB #397 *God loves all his many people*

SS #31 *Jesus, be the center*

HWB #407 *We are people of God's peace (text by Menno Simons)*

****Praise, Response or Sending Songs**

SJ #16 *Praise with joy the world's Creator*

HWB #304 *There are many gifts but the same Spirit*

SJ #64 *Somos el cuerpo de Cristo (We are the body of Christ)*

HWB #307 *Will you let me be your servant*

HWB #322 *For we are strangers no more*

HWB #420 *Heart with loving heart united*

SS #39 *Will you come and follow me*

SS #40 *Som'landela (We will follow)*

SS #94 *Sithi bonga (We sing praise)*

SS #113 *I will stand in the congregation*

SS # 120 *Somebody prayed for me*

B. Introduction to Conference Sunday

One of the core principles of the church for us as Mennonites is that the community is the center of life. We commit ourselves to following Christ, and we commit ourselves to each other in the community of faith. We invite you to live into our commitment to the larger community of faith and to begin that by getting better acquainted with our conference, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC).

We believe a service of worship is a great place to hear stories of God's faithfulness. We are all called to live into the love, forgiveness and grace we have received. We respond to this call by loving and being in relationship with God, our neighbors and enemies. An "Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference Sunday" is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen our relationship with God and each other in the church and together we'll deepen our resolve to love even those who are hard to love—our enemy.

The IMMC Missional Leadership Team and staff believe we will be inspired and blessed by stories of the larger church family to which (*name your congregation*) belongs. IMMC has a long, interesting story of the faithfulness and struggle of congregations working together to follow Jesus as his faithful followers and "disciple-makers." It is a grace-filled story of our years together following Jesus and engaging in mission through good times and hard. And finally, our story here at (*name your congregation*) is part of the IMMC story because together with other congregations, WE ARE IMMC. IMMC's story is your story!

C. Renewing a Vision video

A new video, highlighting some of the work of IMMC. Found at im.mennonite.net

D. Call to Worship/Opening Prayer

Leader: We are the body of Christ!

Baptized in one Spirit, we are members of one body.

All: *Many and varied in gender, color, age, class, and ability, we are members of Christ's beautiful body.*

Leader: None of us can say to another, "I have no need of you."

All: *For only together can we find wholeness.*

Leader: None of us can say to another, "I will not care for you."

All: *For we are connected like muscle and bone. If one suffers, we all suffer. If one rejoices, we all rejoice!*

Leader: Thanks be to God who, in Christ, has made us one.

All: *Let us worship God!*

Opening Prayer

O God,

we welcome you

in our midst.

Bring to our lives

the oil of justice,

the lamp of truth.

Strengthen us as we meet

in fellowship and doubt.

Guard us with your cherishing embrace.

Inspire us on the journey

with the vision of Christ's passion

to bring light to the world. Amen.

E. Delegate Story

We suggest asking a delegate or a member of one of the IMMC leadership teams from your congregation to talk about what being a part of Conference means to them. This is a time to share memories or stories of experiences of interacting with other congregations within IMMC, from Annual Sessions, Regional Meetings, etc.

F. Children's Time

See "Spiritual Disciplines" resources on Conference Sunday webpage.

G. Scripture Reading

Philippians 1:3-11

Philippians 2:1-11

Philippians 2:19-30

Acts 16:11-40

Mark 9:2-10 (*if using Dan's prerecorded sermon*)

H. Scripture and Sermon focus suggestion for IMMC Sunday

**a video sermon by conference pastor, Dan Miller is available on the 2020 Conference Sunday webpage.

Other possible sermon ideas include....

Philippians 1:3-11

Philippians 2:1-11

Philippians 2:19-30

Acts 16:11-40

Sermon title: *"We need each other"*

Sermon focus:

For IMMC Sunday we are suggesting that congregations look at the relationship that Paul had with the believers in Philippi. This was a mutually beneficial relationship in which Paul both received and gave, and the believers in Philippi also both received and gave. This story of Paul's first encounter at Philippi and the letter at a later time help understand how this mutuality happens. Paul shares the good news with Lydia's household, and they are baptized, but Lydia invites Paul and his entourage to stay at her house (Acts 16:14-15; 16:40). This is a wonderful account of generosity, hospitality, compassion, and responsiveness.

Years later we pick up the story when Paul (now in prison in Rome) sends a letter to the believers in Philippi. This is a letter of thankfulness, of encouragement, of challenge and of exhortation, but it is also a letter that acknowledges the more recent ways that the Philippian believers had supported and encouraged Paul. Paul is sending back Epaphroditus, whom the Philippians had sent to support and attend to Paul's needs while in prison (Philippians 2:19-30). The encouragement that Paul gives in this letter grows out of the very "mind of Christ"—we look out for the interest and well-being of others.

We suggest that these passages become the foundation for us to look at the ways the IMMC congregations can function with the same relationships that existed between Paul (and his friends) and Lydia (and the believers in Philippi.)

We hope that we can use this Sunday to consider the ways in which we can encourage, support, challenge and respond to each other as we work in a common ministry. *We really do need each other!* May each of our congregations be a place that would also be a recipient of this wonderful letter from Paul and Timothy.

Other possible sermon foci, scriptures and metaphors of church

A body - I Cor 12; Eph 1:22-23

A family - II Cor 6:18

Vine and branches - John 15:1-11

Transformed/Many gifts but one body - Rom 12