

Madison Mennonite Church
Koinonia Worship

2/14/2021

PRELUDE *If you wish to, you may open your time together with [THIS SONG](#) as a prelude.*

GATHERING

Greet one another and add names to the liturgy of those who would like to lead, read, or facilitate. Each blank can be filled by a different person, and all ages are encouraged to participate in leadership! Help non-readers with their lines. Everyone reads the "Many" parts, unmuted for groups reading virtually. Re-mute afterward.

Call to Worship: Leader _____

Leader: Together, in this safe circle, we take a moment to feel into our bodies (moment of silence),
to notice our breath (moment of silence),
and to feel that the Sacred holds us beloved, just as we are.

Many: We breathe in our intentions,
we exhale our worries,
we open to the wisdom of the Sacred in our midst.

Lighting our Candles: Leader _____

Leader: Each week, we light a candle to symbolize Christ's presence with us and the unity we have with our beloved siblings at Madison Mennonite.

Light candles

Leader: Christ, our light, bless our fellowship with your Spirit's presence. We remember other MMC Koinonia Groups and pray that we are all united in love and peace. Amen.

HEARING the WORD:

Reader 1 _____

You, darkness, of who I am born—
I love you more than the flame
that limits the world
to the circles it illuminates
and excludes the rest.

But the dark embraces everything;
shapes and shadows, creatures and me,
people, nations—just as they are.

It lets me imagine
a great presence stirring beside me.

I believe in the night.
—Rainer Maria Rilke from *Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*

Reader 2 _____

A reading from 1 Corinthians 13:12: For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face, Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.

Optional tactile activity for all ages: Cut a paper into the shape of a heart. Using whatever drawing implements you have on hand, create a valentine for yourself from God, using your imagination and the Spirit's grace.

Guiding Reflection: Reader: _____

In her book *all about love*, bell hooks writes:

"I have given and heard testimony about the mounting lovelessness in our culture and the fear it strikes in everyone's heart. This despair about love is coupled with a callous cynicism that frowns upon any suggestion that love is as important as work, as crucial to our survival as a nation as the drive to succeed. Our nation is a culture driven by the quest to love (it's the theme of our movies, music, literature) even as it offers so little opportunity for us to understand love's meaning or to know how to realize love in word and deed.

Our nation is equally driven by sexual obsession. There is no aspect of sexuality that is not studied, talked about, or demonstrated. Yet schools for love do not exist. Everyone assumes that we will know how to love instinctively. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, we still accept that the family is the primary school for love. Those of us who do not learn how to love among family are expected to experience love in romantic relationships. However, this love often eludes us. And we spend a lifetime undoing the damage caused by cruelty, neglect, and all manner of lovelessness experienced in our families of origin and in relationships where we simply did not know what to do."

Song: Listen and/or sing along to this Taizé version of [Ubi Caritas](#).

Lyrics: Ubi caritas et amor. Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est (*Where charity and love are, God is there.*)

Questions for Group Reflection: Facilitator _____

(At its best, worship enables us to strengthen the connections we have to our faith community, to Creation, and to the Divine. Use this time to reflect together, using some or all of the questions below, or spend time in silence or draft your own questions if that is best for your group today.)

1. How does it feel to be loved? How does it feel to love others? *(Begin by asking the youngest members of your group this question first.)*
2. How did you learn to love? What did love look like growing up? What does it look like now?
3. Although our culture is "equally driven by sexual obsession" do you feel you were supported in developing safe & satisfying expressions of love with regards to your sexuality?
4. Self-love is a term that is used a lot right now—what does self-love mean to you? What are your self-love practices? Is self-love important?
5. What does it mean to be 'loved by God' or 'loved by the Divine' or 'to know that the Sacred holds us as beloved'?

At the closing of this time of sharing, pray together:

Facilitator: Loving Spirit, we give you thanks for this time of discovery in scripture and discernment with one another. May we continue to grow in wisdom and understanding as persons and as a church. Amen.



RESPONDING in PRAYER and FELLOWSHIP

Sharing Joys and Concerns: Leader

The Leader invites each person (children included!) to share any joys or concerns they bring to the group. Remind your group that if anyone does not wish to share, they may simply say "pass." After all, including the Leader, have been invited to share, and if no one has something to add after a first round, join in a spirit of prayer (below).

Level 1B adaptation: *If the group is 15 people or larger, invite people to type their name in the chat if they would like to share, as we do on All-Church Sundays. Call on people in that order. If the group is smaller than 15 people, follow the instructions above.*

Praying Together

Leader: Holy God, we offer these prayers to you this day, trusting in your faithfulness.
We pray for ourselves, for our loved ones near and far. *(a moment for silent prayer)*
We pray for our community, our nation, and our world. *(a moment for silent prayer)*
Loving God,

Many: hear our prayers. Amen.

Sharing the Peace of Christ: Leader

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Continued Fellowship (as time allows)

Invite children to share anything they've created or worked on during this worship time.

*Koinonia Worship 2.14.21
curated by Ashley Hartman Annis & Annali Smucker-Bryan*

Sources used:
all about love by bell hooks
"Facilitating the Practice of Body Grounding and Prayer" handout by Nancy Linton
Book of Hours: Love Poems to God by Rainer Maria Rilke

Announcements:

*MMC and ORUCC will hold a joint Ash Wednesday Service on Wednesday, Feb. 17 at 7pm via Zoom.

*Next Sunday in All-Church Worship, we will enter into the season of Lent.

*Retreat activities continue next week with the Jigsaw Jubilee and Craft Activity!

This Week's Calendar:

Mon., Feb. 15 - Core CLC, 6:30

Tues., Feb. 16 - Adult CE Committee, 7pm

Wed., Feb. 17 - Ash Wednesday Service, 7pm

Sun., Feb. 21 - All-Church Adult CE 4pm,

Worship 5pm, and Fellowship Time

For links to these virtual gatherings, please see the weekly e-calendar. To add an event, please email Erica Boehr.



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