

Madison Mennonite Church  
Koinonia Worship

June 13, 2021

**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 \_\_\_\_\_**

One: If you are delighted to be here, and if you are tired or troubled,

Many: you are welcome.

One: If your faith is strong, and if your faith is battered or frail,

Many: you are welcome.

One: If you are eager to praise God, and if you need to be quiet,

Many: you are welcome.

All: *God welcomes us all to worship today and promises to meet us here.*

*You are invited to either sing together **VT 801 I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table** OR listen to the [recording](#) of "The Welcome Table" by Dan & Claudia Zanes - (NOTE: the recording's lyrics differ from those in the hymnal.)*

**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 as well as all people of God's creation. We pray that we are all united in love and peace. Amen.

*Optional tactile engagement: Invite all ages, but children especially, to draw a space that feels welcoming for themselves and others. What goes into this space? What would make you feel happy to be there? If your group is meeting outside, consider constructing a small welcoming space for the smallest creatures near you.*

**HEARING the WORD: Reader 1 \_\_\_\_\_; Reader 2 \_\_\_\_\_**

*"Scripture can become so familiar that we are no longer challenged or surprised by the word of God. In order to help your Scripture Reading be new and fresh, encourage a younger reader or a person newer to the congregation to read today's scripture passage."*

Reader 1: A reading from Romans 14:1-8

Do not refuse to accept into your group someone who is weak in faith. And do not argue with them about opinions. One person believes that they can eat all kinds of food. But if another person's faith is weak, then they believe they can eat only vegetables. The one who knows that they can eat any kind of food must not feel that they are better than the one who eats only vegetables. And the person who eats only vegetables must not think that the one who eats all foods is wrong. God has accepted them. You cannot judge another person's servant. Their own master decides if they are doing well or not. And the Lord's servant will do well because the Lord helps them do well.

Reader 2: One person thinks that one day is more important than another. And someone else thinks that every day is the same. Each one should be sure in their own mind. The person who thinks one day is more important than other days is doing that for the Lord. And the one who eats all kinds of food is doing that for the Lord. Yes, they give thanks to God for that food. And the person who refuses to eat some foods does that for the Lord, and they give thanks to God. For we do not live or die for ourselves. If we live, we are living for the Lord. And if we die, we are dying for the Lord. So living or dying, we belong to the Lord.

You are invited to either sing together **VT 162 The Love of God** OR listen to the [recording](#) by the St. Thomas English Church.

**Guiding Reflection: Reader:** \_\_\_\_\_

The church, as intended by Jesus, was never meant to be a space of exclusivity, deciding who could and could not belong based on their appearance, social standing, or gender identity. And yet many folks find churches to be unwelcoming spaces. Sometimes the unwelcoming nature of church isn't about whether or not someone chooses to eat only vegetables but tied to how a church sees whole people as worthy of redemption or sinful by nature.

God loves all people; not just those that show their faith in a certain way or look a certain way. Throughout history, the church has often been too hesitant to accept *everyone*. This is not a reflection of God's unbridled love, which welcomes *everyone*. As Paul says in his letter to the Romans, it is not our place to judge, to decide what God makes of other people and how they live their lives. As Rachel Held Evans put it, "I don't know exactly how God will judge in eternity and I don't presume to know where other people stand in relation to their creator."

So we might accept that we are not meant to judge others, opening our hearts to all people, welcoming them into shared worship, but does that make for a truly welcoming space? Is the implicit, internal belief to love and include others enough? When we believe or say to others that we are welcoming, that we want to include them, it must be coupled with action. We can look forward to a time again where we may have our in-person potlucks, with dishes for those who only eat vegetables and those who eat all kinds of food. Christ's church should reflect God's expansive and overwhelming love, so we must consider how to create a welcoming space. For, living or dying, we belong to God. What practices make this space as radically inclusive as Jesus intended?

**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. Think of a space where you have felt welcomed. What made that space welcoming to you? Think of a space where you have not felt welcomed, perhaps excluded. What made that space unwelcoming? Why did these spaces make you feel that way? [Those that have done something with the tactile engagement piece can share at this time]
2. What are things we do as a congregation that help us or others feel welcome? What are things we do as a congregation that might make others feel unwelcome, or excluded, even if we do it unconsciously?



3. How can we make the church, our worship space, a more welcoming place? What are inclusive practices we're already doing that we can make explicit to others?

*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; to know, more and more each day, that all are welcome at your table. 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 those delighted or those who are troubled. *(a moment for silent prayer)*  
 We pray for those with a faith that is strong or frail. *(a moment for silent prayer)*  
 We pray for those eager to share or those who are quiet. *(a moment for silent prayer)*  
 Loving God,

Many: hear our prayers. Amen.

### **Sharing the Peace of Christ: Leader** \_\_\_\_\_

One: Clear our clouded eyes so that we may see in the faces of strangers the neighbors we have always longed for. Open our ears so that we may hear unexpected hymns of praise sung by foreign voices. Free our hearts so that we may know the grace, and the beauty, and the kindness that dwell in the hearts of those who do not resemble us. As we venture forth, help us learn that we are all your children, worthy of your love.

Many: Amen.

### **Continued Fellowship**

*Koinonia Groups are encouraged to review together the guide (right) for adapting KGs this summer. While there will be opportunity for more formal input, **groups are invited to start a conversation** on which level members are at, and which level members may be comfortable with in the next month or two. Remember: this image is just a guide and conversation starter!*

**Guide for Koinonia Group Levels**

	1	2	3	4
<b>Format:</b>	<b>Virtual Only</b>	<b>-- In-Person Groups --</b>		
<b>Size:</b>	Unlimited	~15-20	~15-20	~15-20
<b>Recommended Risk Mitigations:</b>	N/A - All virtual	Outdoors Masking Distancing No sharing food No singing	Outdoors Distancing Sharing food No singing	Outdoors/Indoors Distancing Sharing food Singing (masked)
<b>Other:</b>	As-needed option for members of in-person groups			



Sources used:

Bible reading from the International Children's Bible

"The Welcome Table" performed by Dan and Claudia Zanes

"The Love of God" performed by the St. Thomas English Church Choir

Call to worship and sharing of peace from Voices Together

Quote from Rachel Held Evans' [Blog](#)

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Announcements:

\*A reminder of the upcoming

**Congregational Conversation this**

**Wednesday** at 7pm. To watch a video version of the proposal, [click here](#). To read the full document, [click here](#).

\*Next Sunday is the **final Sunday for CE** this school year. CE takes a break in July and August, but be on the lookout for special opportunities for learning new songs from Voices Together from 4:30pm on all-church Sundays.

\*Next Sunday in Worship, we will be **recognizing MMC's graduates!** We'll celebrate Ellie K., Henry V-H., Eliana B-D., and Sammy P. And, in the spirit of Pride Month, the service's overall theme will be on becoming a more **welcoming community to LGBTQIA+** folx.

This Week's Calendar:

Mon., Jun 14 - Women's Group 7pm

Tues., Jun 15 - Next Phase Working Group  
6:30pm

Wed, Jun 16 - Congregational  
Conversations on Next  
Phase 7pm

Wed, Jun 16 - Community Care Call  
8:15pm

*For links to these virtual gatherings, please see the weekly e-calendar. To add an event, please email Deni - [deni@madison-mennonite.org](mailto:deni@madison-mennonite.org).*

