



Voices Together Hymnal Dedication

Wildwood Mennonite Church // January 24, 2021

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Welcome to Wildwood!

Good morning and welcome to the Wildwood Mennonite Church circle! We're glad you can join in. It is good to be together.

This morning we are celebrating our new worship book, *Voices Together*. We give thanks to God for the wonderful people who laboured to bring this new liturgical gift to birth, and we commit ourselves to receive this gift in ways that honour God, one another, and our neighbours. We look forward to learning new words and melodies, and we rejoice to also find some of our comfortable favourites. This morning we celebrate the role of the arts in our worship gathering. We celebrate music and we celebrate poetry. We give thanks for these doorways into our relationship with God and each other. Come, let us worship!

Music For Meditation // [Still My Soul](#) // Voices Together #603 // Audrey MB

Call to Worship // *Christ Is Like A Single Body* // Voices Together #856

Leader: Christ is like a single body
that has many parts.

**All: It is still one body
though every part is different.**

Leader: Therefore the foot cannot say,

Part 1: I am not part of the body;

Leader: nor can the ear say,

Part 2: I am not part of the body.

Leader: The eye cannot say to the hand,

Part 1: I don't need you;

Leader: nor can the head say to the feet,

Part 2: I don't need you.

Leader: If one part suffers,

All: all parts share the pain;

Leader: if one part is praised,

All: all parts share the joy.

Leader: Together, we are Christ's body:

All: each one of us is a part of it.

Gathering Prayer // You Who Open Doors and Dismantle Barriers // Voices Together #862



You who open doors and dismantle barriers,
open our hearts to praise you,
that we might live the full truth of who we are,
that we might live as neighbours and friends,
no longer strangers and enemies;
open our hearts to the transforming power of your love,
that we might forgive and reconcile,
making peace and learning war no more,
that we might be your people,
one body in one Spirit,
to tell your grace to all the world.
We pray in the name of the One
who walked among us
as brother and friend. Amen.

Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday // Eileen Klaassen

Today, as you likely know, is the *Voices Together* Hymnal Dedication Sunday for WMC. It is also Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday, which is celebrated today because on this date in 1525, the first baptism took place in Zurich, Switzerland.

As such, the resources for this day remind us that this is an opportunity to remind our communities of faith that we are all part of one body made up of many tribes, languages and nations (Revelation 7:9). It is proclamation that now there is no discrimination among us on the basis of race, social status or gender (Galatians 3:28). And it is a demonstration that we are living a new life in a new society where we mutually support one another, carry those who suffer, serve the world and interdependently learn from one another what it means to follow Jesus.

The theme for Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday 2021 is “Following Jesus together across barriers” because on this day, we celebrate that the cultural and national boundaries that separate us have been overcome by the cross.

I will also mention that the date for the Mennonite World Conference, which was to be held in Indonesia this year, has needed to be moved ahead to July 5 -10, 2022. This means you have more time to save your pennies and learn more words in Indonesian! And we live in hope that the summer of 2022 is a time when people can again travel and again gather!

For this day, we would like to share with you one Indonesian song which is included in the resources for today – a song also found in our new hymnal: *Sing to God a New Song* (#93).

Song // [Nyanyikanlah nyanyian baru/Sing to God a New Song](#) // Voices Together #93

Peace Candle

What's your favourite peace song or poem? If you think this isn't a big deal, think about the impact that Amanda Gorman's poem had on the Inauguration Celebration on Wednesday in Washington, DC. If you look in the worship index of Voices Together, there are dozens and dozens of songs for peace, many of which we know well - O Healing River, We Are People of God's Peace, Put Peace into Each Other's Hands, Go Now in Peace. Or maybe the first peace songs that come to your mind are more like - John Lennon's "Imagine" or Black Eyed Peas, "Where is the Love" or ... what are your favourites? Music and poetry can calm us and they can get us excited. Music and poetry can shift our perspective, open our heart, inspire us to action. Today, we give thanks to God for the melodies and poems that inspire us to justice and to peace.

Song // [Summoned by the God Who Made Us](#) // Voices Together #1

Scripture // Voices Together #20

Psalm 100

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord,
all you lands!
Serve the Lord with gladness;
come into God's presence
with a song
Know that the Lord is God,
our maker to whom we belong;
we are God's people
and the sheep of God's pasture.
Enter the gates of the Lord
with thanksgiving
and the courts with praise;
give thanks and bless
God's holy name.
Good indeed is the Lord,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures
from age to age.*

Song // [Come, Christians, Join to Sing](#) // Voices Together #28



Children's Story // [Click here for video storytime with Brenda M!](#)

This week's Brenda has some stories about different kinds of teachers, including two stories from the book [Wild Symphony](#) by Dan Brown.

Story Sharing

Choose a song from *Voices Together* and share a story about how it is an example of how you have received a gift from another part of the body of Christ.

Audrey MB // [Touch The Earth Lightly](#) // Voices Together #145

As a pianist I look forward to the possibility of new hymns, with melodies, harmonies and words that will draw me to them. As someone singing in the congregation, I love songs with harmony to accommodate my voice range which isn't very high. So it is little wonder that the song I chose to introduce today has a lovely melody and harmony, and is very singable.

Touch the Earth Lightly is found on #145 in VT in the Reconciling: Confession of Sin section. The words are about creation care, something that many of us care about. It begins with these words, "Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently, nourish the life of the world in our care." These words call us to be good stewards of God's great creation. The second verse leads us into confession, acknowledging that as humanity we have engaged in practices that have harmed many parts of creation. The song continues by calling us to take responsibility for bringing new life and hope to our world, and concludes with the reminder that God is the source of all that is good. The movement of the words remind me of Psalm 23, moving from wholeness through darkness to new Life.

I think this hymn could become a new favorite at Wildwood.

Brenda M // [En medio de la vida/You Are the God within Life](#) // Voices Together #526

This song is old and new, from *Hymnal Worship Book* and *Voices Together*!

Which comes first, lyrics or music? Who can say when in this song they make such a perfect pairing! The music was written by Bolivian, Antonio Auza. I like to think of the tango when I hear this music. There is so much emotion and passion underlying it but what comes to the surface is contained and dignified, barely keeping a lid on the emotions that want to erupt.

The first verse of the lyrics is original to the first edition (to us) of the song, Verses 2-4 were added more recently by Adam Tice from the United States. These words resonate so deeply with me. Here is God, in the middle of everything, even in our "very body, pumping

the blood of life”, “rhythm in every heartbeat”. Verses 2-4 tell more examples of God with us, in all our life struggles, in the ordinary, where we can find the sacred in the mundane.

Jenny B // [My Life Flows On](#) // Voices Together #605

I was pleased to see that the hymn “*My Life Flows On*”, or as it is often called “*How Can I keep from Singing*” was in the new *Voices Together* Hymnal. This prompted me to do some research about its history.

I learned that it was originally composed in 1868 by Robert Lowry, an American Baptist minister, who is well known for other hymns such as *Marching to Zion* and *Shall we Gather at the River*. This hymn was not widely used until it became more popular in the latter decades of the 20 th century. Pete Seeger performed this song, with some modifications, in the 1960’s as part of the folk music revival of that period and even Martin Sheen performed the song on *A Prairie Home Companion* in 2007. Who knew he could even sing?

I became familiar with this hymn in the 1990’s where we sang it at Zoar Mennonite Church in Langham – the church where we, as well as my parents attended. My parents both loved music, but it was my mother who lived and breathed it. When I was a child, I loved hearing her strong and clear soprano voice while our church sang familiar songs in 4-part harmony. She sang in a ladies’ sextet which frequently performed at local events and even cut a record in the early 1960’s. During the 1990’s she dealt with significant health issues that included chronic pain, significant weakness and eventually the amputation of both of her legs. During the last few years of her life, her lung capacity was limited but she would mouth all of the words to the songs being sung and especially to this song, which was also sung at her funeral in April 2001.

I particularly enjoy this rendition of “*My Life Flows On*”. The words that were penned 150 years ago are clearly still relevant today and I expect that its appeal will continue for years to come.

Lois M // [All Will Be Well](#) // Voices Together #586

Several years ago, after we made the decision to look for a new church community, the chorus of the song “All will be well, and all will be well, all manner of things will be well” got stuck in my head during some particularly difficult days. Most times, a song gets stuck in my head if I’ve heard it sung, but that wasn’t the case with this song—it appeared out of nowhere. I’m sure this wasn’t a coincidence; it was a gift sent to me by the Spirit, the Comforter.

I didn’t look at the rest of the words of the song until several days later. They are powerful, hopeful words, written by Julian of Norwich, a mystic and an anchoress who was born in 1342. It is believed she is the author of the first English book written by a woman, to have



survived. Her writing, *The Revelation of Divine Love*, is considered to be a spiritual classic. It is about the 16 visions she saw on her deathbed, from which she miraculously recovered.

And so things really have been well, many times in ways I least expected. This song is one of my favorites, truly one of my heart songs...most times singing or listening to it leaves me in tears. It continues to give me hope, even during these pandemic times, that all will be well—eventually – no matter what we face.

Words of Introduction to the *Voices Together* Hymnal // Eileen Klaassen

“My words of introduction to the *Voices Together* Hymnal are drawn largely from the resources we received, but they include some of my own thoughts.

Receiving a new hymnal and worship book is a significant moment in the lives of worshipers and worshipping communities. In the weeks and years ahead, the songs and worship resources in *Voices Together* will accompany us through times of suffering and joy. They will shape how we enter into God’s story through Scripture and the Christian year, how we share our stories with one another week by week and on occasions like baptisms and funerals, and how we live into God’s story every day by joining God’s mission of peace and justice.

I am excited about the arrival of our new hymnal, which to me feels so inclusive, and also includes a diversity of theology. And while I was pleased to see so many familiar hymns still in this new book, in many ways it feels like a new hymnal for a new era. Some of you may also be excited to receive *Voices Together*, eager to engage the challenge of learning new songs and ways of worship and to discover new connections through these pages. Others may be concerned or uncertain, anxious about learning new songs and apprehensive about the unknown. Many will experience a complex mixture of emotions when facing a change so closely connected to our faith and life as individuals and communities.

This morning we will join together to dedicate *Voices Together* - an opportunity to give thanks to God for the gift of worship and song and to commit ourselves to receive this gift in ways that honor God, one another, and our neighbors.”

Prayer of Dedication // Ben B

Leader: As we dedicate *Voices Together*,

All: we join our voices

Leader: with the voices of those who taught us to sing and pray:
friends, family, church communities,
those who stand beside us, and those we have never met.

All: We join our voices

Leader: with the voices of those who go before us in faith:
16th-century Anabaptists and medieval mystics,



20th-century activists and early communities of Jesus-followers.

All: We join our voices

Leader: with the voices of those
who speak, and sing, and sign in many languages,
in communities large and small,
urban and rural, emerging and established,
in many expressions of worship and music.

Leader: And when we struggle to join our voices, we pray:

**All: for patience as we learn new ways of worship and song,
for understanding when we encounter the unexpected,
for forgiveness when we rush to judgment,
for wisdom in choosing what and how much to attempt,
for courage to take risks and to fail,
for faith that we are held in God's grace,
for hope that we can grow together as the body of Christ,
for love of God and neighbor strengthened
and expressed through worship & song.**

Leader: With gratitude:

All: We give thanks to God

Leader: for poets, composers, and visual artists
who help us sing and pray in ways that are both familiar and new
about changing realities and eternal truths.

All: We give thanks to God

Leader: for committees, denominations, and publishers,
volunteers, supporters, and donors,
for the hundreds of people and the tens of thousands of decisions
that create a hymnal and worship book.

All: We give thanks to God

Leader: for the communities of worship and song that surround us,
filling our hearts, stretching our minds, moving our bodies, and stirring our spirits.

All: We give thanks to God for Voices Together

Leader: and dedicate these books and the worship they support
to the glory of God, in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Song // [Together](#) // Voices Together #389 // Joe Heikman and Family

Offering Prayer // *What Will You Offer the Body of Christ Today?* // Voices Together #1023

Leader: What will you offer the body of Christ today?

All: Bring all that you have. Bring all that you are.

Part 1: The gifts of silence and the gifts of words are welcome.



Part 2: The gifts of leading and the gifts of following are welcome.
Part 1: The gifts of doubt and the gifts of faith are welcome.
Part 2: The gifts of the head and the gifts of the heart are welcome.
Part 1: The gifts of planning and the gifts of spontaneity are welcome.
**All: May all that we are as individuals Come together
to strengthen the body of the church, Christ Incarnate.**

Sharing Time

Not hearing from one another in person through the Sharing Time is a significant loss for many of us. Sharing items can be emailed to the church office or the pastors to be shared with the congregation. If you're able, join us for our Sunday Morning Zoom gatherings, or check your email for the sharing items from last Sunday. Or maybe now would be a good time to pause your reading to call someone from church or elsewhere that you haven't heard from this week.

Congregational Prayer // Adapted from Voices Together #997 // Eileen KH

Our good God, we give you thanks for this good day and for our gathering time together. We give thanks for music and poetry that enriches our worship and our lives.

We pray, Creator God, for the well-being of creation
for the will and wisdom to care for the earth,
for the South Saskatchewan River that quenches our thirst and for the snow that waters our lands.

We pray, righteous God, for peace and justice in the world
for the new government of the United States
and for our own city and neighbourhoods.

We pray, gentle God, for those of us separated from family by the coronavirus
and for those of us who are struggling with the constancy of family demands in the midst of restrictions.

We pray for ...

We give thanks, delightful God, for the joy which refuses to leave us
and for the unexpected moments of beauty and inspiration
We pray for ...

Accompany us, dear God, into this week. Walk beside us, steady our steps, open our hearts.
Grant us peace and courage.
Amen.



Song // [We, Your People, Sing Your Praises](#) // Voices Together #849

Benediction // *God of Power, May the Boldness of Your Spirit* // Voices Together #849

God of power,
May the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
May the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
May the gifts of your Spirit be our goal and our strength,
Now and always. Amen.

Sending Song // [You Shall Go Out with Joy](#) // Voices Together #847

