

## **Guidelines for Worship Planning Assembly Mennonite Church For 2018-19**

Thank you for your willingness to serve and share your gifts by leading worship. Whether you are working alone or with your small group, we are grateful that you said “Yes!” This document is a collection of suggestions and resources. Feel free to delve deeply into the ideas and suggestions, or to look more quickly through the key points below. Anna Yoder Schlabach is available for questions about planning: 574-312-5319 or [annays@assemblymennonite.org](mailto:annays@assemblymennonite.org)

### **Summary of Key Points**

- **Recruiting worship helpers:** some of the responsibilities for first hour worship will have already been assigned by the worship committee (see the chart sent when you agreed to lead). You may still need to recruit children's time leaders, scripture reader(s) or dramatists that you would like to work with.
- **Setting the stage:** as always, one of your main roles as worship leader is to introduce the morning and provide enough explanation of the context for worshipers to see how the pieces link together. **Communicating with the week's preacher and early in the week is crucial for building these connections.** Being aware of the second hour happenings that week is also helpful, but not as central.
- **Peace lamp:** this year the worship committee will generally have a specific simple liturgy for each season that we would like to have read as you light the main candle on the front table. You can light the candle yourself or invite someone else to lead that piece if you'd prefer. See the **“peace lamp” section on the website for specific wording** for each season.
- **Announcements:** for this year we'd like to have the worship reader read any announcements during the final, “Sending” section of worship. Invite people early on to write out any important announcements and bring them up to the front table during offering. If their announcement requests that people contact them for more info, ask them to stand when you read their note.
- **Offering:** note that there is no longer a collection basket at the rear of the sanctuary, so please don't refer to that. In addition, on the first Sunday of the month put out a secondary basket to collect the 2% offerings. (see suggested words below)
- **Children's Time:** please continue to invite children 2 and under to head to the classroom across the hall for their story time at the same time as you invite older children to the front. **Children's time should not be more than five minutes and one idea.**
- **Sharing Time:** each week one member of the pastoral team will offer a pastoral prayer at the end of sharing time. They will generally also lead the entire sharing time.

More details... Helpers: We value involving many people in worship -- consider asking newer attenders, MYFers, college students, etc. The “worship gifts compilation” lists people willing to help in a variety of ways (this can be found on the AMC website at [assemblymennonite.org](http://assemblymennonite.org),

under the “worship” tab).

**Visuals:** Worship committee will provide the main visual elements for each season of weeks, while worship leaders are **welcome to bring fresh flowers** or other items for the table to highlight the week’s theme or texts.

**Time tips:** We continually face the tension of time for worship. We have all the time we need for the Spirit to move among us, and yet we must pay attention to the clock, especially for the sake of the saints we call Sunday school teachers! **Please begin at 9:30am sharp, even if people are still finding their way in. First hour should end at 10:45am.**

## **Order of Worship**

### ***1. Gathering (7-10 minutes)***

Usually includes: chimes, Christ candle (peace lamp), call to worship, gathering hymn(s), welcome, introducing children with birthdays

### ***2. Praising and adoring God; confessing and reconciling (7-10 minutes)***

Usually includes: hymns of praise/thanksgiving, scripture, spoken, sung or silent prayers

***3. Offering ourselves and our gifts (5 minutes)*** *Usually includes:* offering and prayer May also include: covenanting or commissioning, baptism

***4. Hearing God's word (25 minutes)*** Usually includes: Scripture, children's time, sermon. May also include: parent-child dedication.

### ***5. Responding to the Word (15 minutes)***

Usually includes: silent, sung or verbal response to the sermon, sharing of joys and concerns, and prayer. May also include: Communion or other corporate rituals

***6. Sending (15 minutes)*** Usually includes: introduction of guests, announcements, sung or spoken benediction. May also include: farewells, commissioning, instructions for unusual second hours

## **Additional information for selected items above**

The text in green is available to copy and paste into your worship leading notes, if helpful.

Welcome/intro to morning: It can be helpful to briefly orient people to the shape and theme of the morning. Including a comment about what is planned for second hour is a good practice, as well as noting special events of the day such as fellowship meals, parent-child dedications or guest speakers. **It may also be helpful to note where empty seats are still available in the worship space.**

**Birthday candles:** The children among us are important to our worship. We acknowledge and bless our children by recognizing their birthdays (birthdays to be celebrated can be found in the current AssemblyLine)... “The candle on the piano this morning reminds us that we are

celebrating \_\_\_\_\_'s \_\_\_th birthday. (To the child) Would you stand? We want you to know we are so glad you are part of Assembly. (To the congregation) The Assembly Line today tells us more about \_\_\_\_\_," and there is a picture on the bulletin board by the coffee pots. If the child has not yet arrived, please check again for the child just before children's time.

**Children's time:** Since childcare begins after children's time, please put children's time after the offering, so that children can participate in the offering time. Before children's time begins, announce the availability of childcare for children 3 & under (up to preschool age) following children's time. Call children ages 3 and up to the front for children's time, and dismiss children age 2 and younger to the childcare room for Little Children's Time.

**Offering:** Assembly's pattern of bringing the offering forward invites us to think of all that we offer and do as a joyful response to God's generosity. If you are leading the first Sunday of the month, please also announce the 2% offering. "On the first Sunday of the month we have two baskets for offerings -- one for our regular offerings; and the other for our 2 % offering -- 2 % of our income which is disbursed to impoverished people locally and in the 2/3rds world. We do this as an act of restitution for injustices in economic distribution. May our offerings reflect the generosity and the justice that God wills in our lives."

Here is the offering prayer that we have been using for a number of years. You do not need to use this prayer, but it is available and you may feel free to adapt it to the current worship theme: "Great and loving God: You have given us Your first and Your best. We wish to follow in Your way, and we know that these gifts are one way to start. Deepen our love. Grow in us grace and generosity so that these gifts become more of our first and more of our best. Make us also good stewards of the rest we have kept for ourselves. Some of this money we are giving today will go to (name a local budget item) and some will go to (name a global budget item). Receive these gifts and use them to speed the coming of Your Reign. Amen."

**Introducing guests:** Guests may be introduced toward the beginning of the service, or just before fellowship time. Please convey our warm welcome.

Finally, please remember that this document is meant to be a resource, not a script. Your creativity is encouraged! **A final note: Naomi Roots is available to copy the order of service for you. Please send her a formatted, ready-to-copy order of service by Friday at 9am. Please send the file as a Word document, not as a PDF. If it is not in by this time, you will need to do the copying yourself (140 half-sheet copies). In the case that you make your own copies, please have finished, and up put *printed copies in the worship space by 8:30 Sunday morning, so that the set up crew can distribute them and know which hymnals to put out.***

### **Other helpful tidbits**

- \_If the song leader wants to use instrumentalists, the instrumentalists must know before Sunday morning. The worship gifts and interests survey lists people willing to play piano, guitar, drums and other instruments.

- Note the topical index and the index of scriptural allusions in the back of the Hymnal and the

Assembly Songbook. The preacher may request a particular hymn. Try to keep a balance between new and familiar songs; try also to balance the gender language in the hymns and songs you choose. If possible, please try to limit your selections from only two songbooks.

- If you are interested in a dance, contact Linda Schlabach Miller as far ahead as possible. Creating a dance is time consuming, but sometimes an established one can be polished with short notice. Interplay-style interpretation may also be a possibility.

### ***Scripture***

- Proclamation of the word is one of the central acts of Christian worship. Find ways to help the congregation to hear the Story so that it can form and shape us.

- Determine how the scripture will be read and who will read it. Children can read if they have an opportunity to practice or find someone who is living out what the text is about (e.g., a pregnant woman for a text about a child of promise, someone with a serious illness for a psalm of deliverance) or if you are working several weeks in advance, ask someone to memorize the text

- Scripture readers should read from the front lectern with amplification unless there a particular reason not to do so. The reader should announce the reference. We suggest the NRSV, but other translations are welcome. Encourage readers to pay attention to gender language and make adjustments as needed. A copy of The Inclusive Bible is available at the meetinghouse.

### ***Sermon/teaching/homily***

- Contact the preacher one week ahead to confirm plans or answer questions. Ask if the speaker has a suggested way for the congregation to respond to the message, such as a particular hymn.

### ***Space for reflection***

- Intentional and/or guided silence is valued in AMC;
- Make sure you have included prayer at a number of points. As you lead out, make an effort to use inclusive language. Include all people present and be aware of the various facets of God. Books of prayers can be quite helpful. See especially All the Seasons of Mercy and Words for Worship on the resource shelf. The Wee Worship Book is also an outstanding resource. Outlining or writing prayers may help you to be more global and inclusive.

### ***Transitions (also known as glue)***

- Transitions are particularly important. Avoid merely announcing what's next ("Now it's time for the offering"); rather, help the congregation know where they are going and why.

- At the end of first hour, dismiss Sunday school teachers first, then the children. Encourage people to greet visitors around them as they take a break, with or without coffee, and announce the starting time for second hour. The second part of the morning should end around 11:50 when children are done with Sunday School. We want to respect the needs of our Sunday School teachers and children.

### ***Resources***

- The most recent list of volunteers is on the website. DO make use of these folks.
- The Christian Education (copier) room and the library have a variety of book resources including dramatic readings and calls to worship.
- The backs of our song books have a variety of prayers, calls to worship, and other resources.
- Assembly has marvelous people resources. Don't hesitate to ask for advice from someone whose worship leading you have appreciated.

