



Encountering,  
Embracing,  
Embodying Christ  
in the world

## E3: Year 3 Worship Resources

*In this document you will find a variety of resources your church could use in preparing a worship service for Year 3 of MCA's **Encounter, Embrace and Embody Christ in Life, Community and the World** (or to use in a refresher service mid-year). By no means are these resources exhaustive or prescriptive, they are suggestions only. You'll find many more resources in Voices Together, <https://togetherinworship.net>, etc.*

*While encouraging each congregation to create a service that is uniquely their own, we hope that providing these resources will act as a starting point for engaging in Year 3 while connecting us in joint purpose and vision. We have prepared two options already, followed by additional resources for your consideration.*

*While the E3 reference group has supplied these suggestions and resources, it is your responsibility to follow all copyright restrictions and give credit to authors where needed. In this document, any litany and/or prayers provided (other than the listed song suggestions) will indicate where they were found. The items which have been composed by the group do not have credits listed and are free for you to use without any concerns.*

*Please, take the time to access all the resources available at:  
<https://mcab.ca/mcab.ca/e3yearthreeresources>.*

*They include a bulletin insert, commitment cards, graphics, bucket lists and much more.*

## **Introduction:**

We enter into a year of deliberately focusing on Encountering, Embracing, Embodying Christ in the world. All of God's creation is good; we are connected and designed to live in shalom with each other. As we continue to seek God in all things and all people, experiencing God's presence and peace, we desire to become ambassadors of God's love, mercy, healing and hope to all around us. We seek to offer God in answer to the world's deep longing for meaning, purpose and belonging. It is a sacred calling that is lived out daily in small acts and words, and sometimes in grand and expansive choices.

**Focus Statement:** Encountering, Embracing, Embodying Christ in the World, striving to bring God's healing and hope to a world in need. [Read More](#)

**Background:** see more in the [Bucket List](#) document

## **Our Year 3 focus scripture verses:**

- Matthew 5:14-16 You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

# Worship outline sample: Option #1

Substitute any elements, as desired.

Welcome

Gathering Songs:

Voices Together #1 Summoned by the God Who Made us  
Voices Together #36 Let us Build a House

Call to worship:

Come now to Encounter Christ,  
In the words, music, and silences of worship  
And in the faces of those around you.  
Come now to Embrace your identity as God's beloved child,  
Called to open your eyes to God's presence,  
your ears to God's message,  
and your heart to God's work within you.  
Come now to Embody Christ's message of healing and hope,  
Within your community of faith,  
And to the world.  
Come now to worship.

Prayer of Invocation

Children's Feature:

Read one of the children's stories from the list provide by Common Word (see list of options under Children's Feature in the provided resources below.)

Introduction to Year 3:

*(use any of the background materials provided in this document or bulletin insert or bucket list)*

Prayer of Commitment:

Loving God,  
the more we experience You, learn about You, encounter and know You,  
the more we rest in the confidence that we are indeed beloved of You,  
We flourish knowing that You will go to all lengths to reconcile us back to your loving arms.  
We understand that your love is life-giving and empowering;  
it is never conditional or limited, but true and generous.  
As we have embarked on this E3 journey, this vision, this adventure,  
we continue to commit to encounter you in daily life and practices,  
embrace who You are and who we are meant to be in You.  
We desire to embody the love and goodness Christ exemplified and shared with us

as we partner with all people and creation.

This year, we commit to live into our calling to be Christ's ambassadors in a hurting world.

We commit to seeking You out in all the world, in both the obvious places and in the hidden spaces.

We commit to faithful acts and attitudes both large and small, radiating light, hope, flavour and vibrancy.

We pray for the Spirit's power and peace.

Song:

Voices Together #298 What is the World Like

Offering Prayer:

God, You are generous and gracious.

We want to also be generous and gracious.

Help us see and be aware of your goodness and holistic healing in ourselves and the world around us.

Let this certainty permeate our beings and overflow naturally in all we do and say.

As we bring our monetary gifts this week, we pray a deep deep blessing on ourselves, our church and the world You love.

May what we give be multiplied by the mystery of your ways,

and may the Holy Spirit channel our thoughts and giving in the most powerful of ways.

Amen.

Scripture Reading

*(to be decided by pastor/worship team)*

Sermon

*(to be decided by pastor/worship team)*

Communion, *if you so choose*

Sending Song:

Voices Together #797 We are people of God's Peace

Benediction:

Ever present God,

Open our eyes to see you wherever we go,

Open our ears to hear your voice,

Open our hearts to love and care for all your creation

Open our minds to contemplate views other than our own

Open our hands to show your love to others by the things we do.

Use us Oh God, to be your body on earth.

Amen.

## **Worship suggestion: Option #2.**

Centre your worship service around the 3 Es, and find (or use provided) songs, scriptures, liturgies, personal sharing and/or prayers to exemplify each segment:

- Encounter Christ in the world with a posture of curiosity and listening through:
  - creation
  - the arts
  - people
  - the church
  - scriptures
  - new ideas
- Embrace Christ in the world through:
  - Christ-like thinking and attitudes
  - Christ-like behaviours and spiritual disciplines
  - Valuing, seeking and living Kingdom-ways
  - Being receptive to the Holy Spirit (Christ in us)
- Embody Christ in the world through:
  - Creation care
  - Relationships
  - Conversations and daily actions
  - Peace and justice issues
  - Sharing the good news

## Words for Worship:

### 1. Call to Worship/Invitational Gathering:

- i. We come to Encounter God,  
Through the words, music, and silences of worship,  
Through the faces of those around us,  
Through the beauty of God's creation outside these walls  
We come to Embrace God's loving presence and our identity as God's children  
For God is always near  
For God is always gracious and loving  
For God has claimed us as God's own  
We come to take up the challenge to Embody Christ in the world,  
To sew love where there is hatred  
To show compassion to those in need  
To share the good news of God's abundant love  
We come to worship and to learn.

(can be used as a litany or just one reader)

- ii. Isaiah 52:7-10 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

- iii. Leader: We give you thanks, O Lord.  
People: Your steadfast love endures forever!  
Leader: You open the gates of righteousness:  
People: we enter them with thanksgiving.  
Leader: You have made this glorious day—  
People: we rejoice and are glad in it!  
Leader: With all your people, we proclaim:  
All: Christ the Lord is risen today! Amen.  
*From Leader, Spring 2011. ©2011 MennoMedia. Together in Worship*

- iv. Leader: Through Sarah, we met a God who heals.  
People: God's healing comes in many ways.  
Leader: Through Moses, we heard a God who stutters.  
People: God works despite our mortal bodies.  
Leader: Through Paul, we felt Christ in our weaknesses.

People: In tender places, Christ is often most present.

Leader: In Christ, God's body ached, wept, sweat blood, and was crucified.

People: Now this God carries our abilities and our limitations.

Leader: The image of God shines through and all around us.

People: Each of our bodies reflects the image of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

*From Leader, Summer 2017. ©2017 MennoMedia. Together in Worship*

## **2. Offering:**

- i. God, we recognize you as giver of all gifts and thank you for the way you provide for our needs. Bless others through the talents and resources you have so graciously given to us. May we always give you praise and glory. In the precious name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

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## **3. Closing prayer/Benediction/ Sending:**

- i. All-loving God, we thank you for your incredible love and the creation it brought forth, for Christ's revelation of who You are and who we are, for the power of your Holy Spirit in the lives of your people and the church. Truly, we are inspired and empowered to be your ambassadors in this world. Give us peace, give us strength, give us joy in the journey.

- ii. Salt and Light Blessing (inspired by Matthew 5:13-16)

In a world that is always asking us to become something, someone, some success story,

In this place we say:  
don't become, be who we already are.

Don't become light - be the light you already are -  
this is what God anciently placed in you.

Don't become salt - be the salt you already are -  
it is in this way you are known to God.

For from these elements:  
Salt and Light, God uniquely crafted you.

Don't become anything – be who you are,  
and discover the one who loves you in your be-ing.

~ written by Roddy Hamilton, and posted on Mucky Paws. [http://  
www.nkchurch.org.uk/index.php/mucky-paws](http://www.nkchurch.org.uk/index.php/mucky-paws)

### Children's Feature:

- i. Something along the lines of WWJD? (What would Jesus do?)
  - 1-Practise the Pause
  - 2-ask what would Jesus do
  - 3-pray for the Holy Spirit's power and words.
- ii. Any children's books that refer to taking on the character of Jesus, gifts of the Spirit, God in all people (diversity) and/or working toward reconciliation
  - Some easily accessible books:
    - [Runaway Bunny](#) by Margaret Wise Brown fits well with Psalm 139
    - [Papa do you love me?](#) By Barbara M. Joesse (an African Masai story of a Father's love)
    - [Picturing God](#) by Ruth Goring (More on who God is – including God is the Vine and God's love flows through us to make good things)
    - [Children's Story Year B, Epiphany 6 - Mark 1:40-45: Helping a Scary Neighbour](#)
    - [Children's Story Year A, Epiphany 5 - Matthew 5: 13-20: Salty Thoughts](#)
    - [Children's Story - You Are God's Treasure](#)
    - [Head, Body, Legs - a story from Liberia](#) (by Won-Ldy Paye and Margaret H. Lippert)
  - Some books curated by Common Word (or choose some from year 1 and 2 as they may continue to be relevant):
    - A Child's Garden: a story of Hope <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/22000>
    - In God's Name <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/15617>
    - Is God Nice? <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/20105>
    - Maybe I Can Love My Neighbour Too <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/24132>
    - Extra Yarn <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/25026>
    - Who is My Neighbor? <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/20389>
    - ColourFull <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/24917>



## Sermon starters:

Matthew 5:14-16: We are light – but not the source of the light. We are like the moon – only able to reflect the light we have been given. So we need to put ourselves in a place to receive the light. If we let the earth, or earthly values, get in the way we may only have a sliver of light to reflect. Sometimes a cloud gets in the way and others can't see our light – but we need to shine anyway.

We are like a lamp – that needs to be lit and needs the air of the open chimney to provide light. We need to allow ourselves to be open to God's lighting. We also need to shine wherever we are placed.

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 : Christ brought a new creation, shining new light on the story of Israel. His light brought a new aspect to the law – not as something that had to be done to be accepted by God, but as something that helps us respond to God's love. Jesus brought the ministry of reconciliation – bringing us into God's family – loved even when we make mistakes or don't always follow the rules. And this is good news. We are charged with bringing that news into a world that is bogged down by people who think you have to do things their way in order to belong, but that is not God's way. God calls us to be ambassadors, "official representatives to a foreign country", people who act as "representatives or promoters of a specified activity" (According to [Oxford Languages website](#)). So how do we represent God in an authentic way? How do we promote reconciliation? How do we "succeed" at being *Ambassadors for Christ*?

## Song options:

The following songs are from the Voices Together Hymnal and represent just a small selection of possible songs. They have been curated along the themes of encountering Christ in nature, other people and new ideas, recognizing God-with-us, embracing the new Kingdom ways Jesus revealed to us, and embodying/ambassador-ing God's all-encompassing love through daily living, creation care, peace and justice issues and proclaiming the good news. Amazingly, many songs in our hymnal carry these themes and would be more than suitable for this year's focus.

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|--|--|
| 1 Summoned by the God Who Made us                | 373 As the Wind Song                     |
| 6 Let's Walk Together                            | 387 We are One in the Spirit             |
| 7 Come Let us All Unite                          | 390 In Christ there is no East or West   |
| 36 Let us Build a House                          | 392 The Church of Christ Cannot Be Bound |
| 30 Jesus Calls Us                                | 393 Build Your Kingdom Here              |
| 38 Life Giver, Maker, God of All                 | 394 God Calls Us                         |
| 42 Could it be that God is Singing               | 405 Listen to the Word                   |
| 43 God Be the Love                               | 409 For We are Strangers no More         |
| 50 Spirit Working in Creation                    | 439 True Evangelical Faith               |
| 63 Like a Rock                                   | 462 We Place Upon Your Table (communion) |
| 80 We Sing to You Oh God                         | 483 Word and Sign (communion)            |
| 92 Build my Life                                 | 540 Will You Come and Follow Me          |
| 120 For the Beauty of the Earth                  | 542 Christ Calls to Me                   |
| 145 Touch the Earth Lightly                      | 550 God Who Touches Earth                |
| 152 God, whose Purpose is to Kindle (confession) | 556 I Bind my Heart this Tide            |
| 156 There's a Wideness in God's Mercy            | 568 Christ has no Body here but Ours     |
| 161 I Sought the Lord                            | 573 Strong Peaceful Man of Galilee       |
| 162 The Love of God                              | 581 Lord Jesus, You Shall be my Song     |
| 171 Nothing Can Separate Us                      | 582 My Love Colors Outside the Lines     |
| 174 Christ Has Broken Down the Wall              | 584 Jesus Be the Center                  |
| 175 Planets Humming                              | 715 Longing for Light                    |
| 177 All Things Bright and Beautiful              | 740 Spirit of the Living God             |
| 178 God of Wonders                               | 751 There is in Every Person             |
| 205 Light Dawns on a Weary World                 | 765 Listen God is Calling                |
| 207 What Does the Lord Require of You            | 775 I Will Follow                        |
| 287 Jesus Christ is Waiting                      | 790 How can we be Silent                 |
| 288 Love the Lord Your God                       | 797 We are people of God's Peace         |
| 290 Blessed are You                              | 802 Draw the Circle                      |
| 297 You are Salt for the Earth                   | 809 Sing a New World into Being          |
| 299 God Lights a Lamp                            | 813 Heart with Loving Heart United       |
| 298 What is the World Like                       | 838 The Peace of the Earth (benediction) |
|  | 841 As you Go (benediction)              |

## Additional supporting scriptures:

- John 13:34-35: "I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. *This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other.*" (CEB)
- Romans 8:19-21 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
- Ephesians 4:32-5:2 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
- 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
- Galatians 5:22-25 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.
- Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- Ephesians 4:32-5:2 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
- Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
- Isaiah 52:7-10 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together,

you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

- Psalm 139:7-9 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea...
- John 10:10b I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
- Romans 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[a] faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. *Or* 1 Cor. 12:4-11, There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.