



## September 27, 2020: E3 Celebration and Commitment Service

Mennonite Church Alberta's **Vision 2020** process of discernment and renewal has resulted in a 3-year action plan called,

***"Encountering, Embracing Embodying Christ...In Life, in Community, in the World."***

**On September 27** we as MCA would like each congregation to devote its worship service to a time of mutual commitment and celebration of Year 1 of this action plan: How might we as individuals and congregations open ourselves to more fully **Encounter, Embrace, Embody Christ...in Life?** How might we celebrate Christ's presence and our mutual calling to connect more closely to Christ as individuals, as congregations, and as a broader church family?

**E3** is a call for each of us to actively pursue a deeper relationship with God and with each other. It is an opportunity to grow our faith and discipleship. It is also an organic process: The more we open ourselves to opportunities to "encounter" Jesus, and come to recognize him in our daily lives, the more we learn to "embrace" God's love and kingdom ways; and the more we embrace God's love and Jesus' teaching, the more we are empowered and inspired to "embody" Christ's love as it flows to, in, and through us.

To find out more about the E3 process, the 3-year plan, and the many resources available—including PowerPoint slides and notes from the sessions of **Vision 2020**—take some time to explore the MCAB website: <https://mcab.ca/e3-mca>

The **accompanying Worship Service Outline** outlines various aspects of the September 27 Worship service, including:

1. **A Common Action of Commitment and Celebration.** We invite each church to provide an opportunity for people to **reflect on a commitment** they would like to make toward incorporating a new spiritual practice into their life. We will also **celebrate ways people have already experienced** "encountering, embracing, embodying Christ in life".
2. **A Common Visual.** We invite each congregation to use the accompanying tree image to represent our MCA family. As the larger church, we are connected in Christ to each other for support and nourishment like the **trunk and branches of a tree. The leaves represent individuals** within our congregations across Alberta. Spiritual disciplines and prayer practices **help grow the roots of** encountering, embracing, and embodying Christ that nourish an ever-growing, enlarging, flourishing tree of the kingdom.

- **During the Service on Sept 27**

- **The tree visual provides a focus of the connection we share together.** It can be shown electronically for electronic service options, printed as a handout, or displayed on a wall for in-person worship.
- **Each person is encouraged to use the leaf graphic** to record a commitment, reflection, or experience of encountering, embracing, embodying Christ. Leaves can be printed by individuals at home or by the church office. These can either be kept as a reminder or **contribute to a larger congregational display.**

- **We suggest each congregation set up a display of this tree image in their church building.**

- **Prepare a wall or bulletin board in the church with a physical image of the tree image.** Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic we have been largely disconnected from each other. Having a physical focus in our church buildings provides a tangible point of connection.
- **People could bring their leaves to** their church buildings during the week following the Sept 27 service, and add them to the leaves of the physical display of the tree. Many people have not entered their church buildings since March. Providing a safe way to do so would give people a chance to feel physically connected. **Safety measures, including** ensuring people arrive at different times, masks, providing hand

sanitizer upon entry, etc. would need to be taken. Guidance on church gatherings, including provincial requirements, can be found through <https://mcab.ca/>

- Congregations **may decide utilize this tree and leaf image in other ways**, such as compiling people's reflections and having one person write them on leaves to be placed on the tree display.
- Share your congregation's experience with the rest of MCA.
  - If possible, **please provide MCA with short video clips or pictures** of people adding their leaves and the growing tree visual. These will be compiled into a video to share with each other.
  - Encourage **people can to share their thoughts in person or online, including through the MCA online form.** <https://mcab.ca/e3-mca>

To do before September 27<sup>th</sup>:

- Right away:
  - **Look through the accompanying *Worship Service Outline*** for the September 27 worship service. See which of the resources will fit your congregation. Including the common celebration, commitment, and prayer items from this outline will enhance the common connection we share with each other.
  - Provide your congregation with background information about our E3 theme:
    - **Use resources from the MCA E3 Webpage** <https://mcab.ca/e3-mca> such as:
      - A [bulletin insert](#) giving background information on Vision 2020 and E3
      - A [brochure summarizing](#) Vision 2020, E3, and "where we go from here"
      - [A letter from the past spring](#) about the E3 process.
      - Videos of reflections from Caleb Kowalko, Tany Warkentin, and Tim Wiebe-Neufeld
      - Written thoughts by the E3 Reference Group
      - [A letter inviting MCA Congregations](#) to dedicate September 27 to **E3**
    - **Encourage everyone to explore the E3 Webpage themselves,** <https://mcab.ca/e3-mca>.
- September 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>:
  - **Watch for an MCA bulletin insert** to use during these two Sundays.
  - **Promote the Sept 27 E3 Worship Service**
  - **Ask congregants to prepare by considering one action they could incorporate into their life** to open themselves to encounter, embrace, and embody Christ. Some ideas can be found on the [bulletin insert](#) or [bucket lists](#) on the MCA site (<https://mcab.ca/e3-mca>). Encourage your congregants to consider expressing their commitment as part of the Sept 27 service.
  - Share with congregants that **there will also be the opportunity to celebrate** experiences we have had of encountering, embracing, and embodying Christ in life.

We thank you for your role in helping your congregation explore "encountering, embracing, and embodying Christ" in our lives. We trust this will be a meaningful time of commitment and celebration as we join with our Faith Family from across Alberta in going deeper into our relationship with Christ and seeing how we will change because of it!

**The E3 Reference Group:**

Debbie Baergen, First Mennonite Edmonton  
Laura Wiebe, Trinity Mennonite

Werner DeJong, Holyrood Mennonite  
Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, MCA Executive Minister