

VOICES *Together*



VOICES TOGETHER CURRICULUM

by Anneli Loepp Thiessen

Introduction

This curriculum is designed to introduce your congregation to the contents of *Voices Together*. Participants will explore the who, what, where, when, and why of the new hymnal through hands-on engagement. They will also be encouraged to engage a variety of styles of music and prayer, broadening their understanding of Mennonite worship. The curriculum is designed for an adult audience, although it is accessible for youth as well.

Online use: All of our churches have needed to adapt to take care of each other during the Covid-19 pandemic. This has affected how we can sing and worship together. The most effective way to share music together on a virtual platform (such as Zoom) is by having one leader share their screen and playing a prerecorded video of the song. Participants can then mute their microphones and sing along. Most churches have found that sharing live music virtually is not effective.

FORMAT

Gather

- **Activity:** Individuals will explore the hymnal on their own as participants gather. Prompts are provided for each week. You can share these orally, in print, or projected on screen.
- **Opening prayer:** Participants will gather in God's presence using suggested prayers from the worship resources section in *Voices Together*. The text for prayers is not included in the materials, to encourage leaders and participants to engage directly with the hymnal.

Explore

- **About *Voices Together*:** Participants will have the opportunity to receive information about the hymnal and insight into its creation. They will also consider broader themes of communal worship. We have interspersed questions that you can use for individual reflection or large group engagement as time allows. Content can be shared by one or more readers. You might also choose to show content or questions on digital slides for another layer of accessibility.
- **Activity:** Participants will have time for hands-on exploration of the collection as a group. Weeks 1, 3, 4, and 5 include an additional resource or handout that can be printed or shared digitally with participants. Decide how you want to share these materials in advance.

Respond

- **Reflect:** The songs we love can be deeply personal for us. They may represent major moments in our lives, offering us comfort in times of need. Because of this, the adoption of a new hymnal is a personal experience for people. The purpose of the reflection section is to draw participants out of their own experience, and into a time of blessing for the other congregations who will use this hymnal.
- **Discuss:** Small groups are given space to process, listen, and reflect. Several discussion prompts are provided, but don't be afraid to develop the conversation in ways that expand beyond the discussion prompts. Small groups can be formed in person, or online using breakout rooms.



Bless

- Song: One piece is suggested for each week so participants can worship together through song. However, feel free to sing more than one if others stand out to you. Take time to prepare so that you, or another leader, can lead the songs effectively.

If meeting in person, pay careful attention to Covid-19 social distancing recommendations for singing. If meeting online, have a confident musician share a video or recording of the piece from their home as others engage as they feel led in their own spaces.

- Closing prayer: Participants are blessed and sent out with a prayer from the worship resources section of *Voices Together*. The text for prayers is not included in the materials, to encourage leaders and participants to engage directly with the hymnal.

Materials

- Each participant needs a copy of the *Voices Together* Pew Edition and a copy of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* for the session. Paying attention to Covid-19 recommendations, if meeting in person you may want to designate certain hymnals to be used by the same participants each week and stored appropriately. If meeting online, ensure that each participant household has access to both hymnals in their home.
- Because you will be singing together at the end of each session, you may want a keyboard or other instrument to assist with leading.
- Weeks 1, 3, 4, and 5 have an accompanying handout or set of notecards that should be prepared in advance. If meeting online, decide in advance how you plan to share these materials.

Note: WR – refers to Worship Resources throughout the materials. Note that Worship Resources have their own index, separate from hymns.



Week 1: What Is *Voices Together*?

GATHER

Activity

Hold a copy of *Voices Together* in your hands. Feel the texture of the binding, the stamped dove, and the smooth pages. Breathe in the scent of a new book. Flip through the pages and listen to the sound of the thin paper turning. Run your eyes over the thousands upon thousands of words and images. Take a few minutes to explore the book you hold in your hands. This is our new denominational hymnal.

Opening prayer *Voices Together* 877

EXPLORE

About *Voices Together*

One or more readers can share the following content and reflection questions with the group. Content or questions might also be shown on digital slides for another layer of accessibility.

The pages of *Voices Together* contain texts that are thousands of years old, and anthems written in 2020. They offer prayers reflected on the pages of Scripture, and those written for current events. They house contributors who are well-known, and those who are being published for the first time. These pages give voice to writers from around the world, composing in traditions well-known to us, and those that are new. Gathered together, these pages represent round after round of committee screening, discussion, and editing.

What were your first impressions as you flipped through the hymnal? What stood out to you?

While you may have just become aware of this new hymnal over the course of the past several years, weeks—or even minutes!— the book you hold in your hand has been in the making for over a decade. Mennonite denominations and agencies began exploring the need for a new hymnal in spring 2008. In late 2014, the Joint Executive Committee of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA commissioned MennoMedia to develop this new worship and song collection with the understanding that it should do so in close partnership with both denominations.

In 2016, MennoMedia hired a project director and appointed a 12-member committee: the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee. The committee met for the first time in September 2016, and continued to meet three times a year in person with countless virtual meetings in between, until the publication of the collection in fall 2020. Committee members were formed into a variety of subcommittees, such as Tune and Accompaniment, Text, Worship Resources, Popular Idioms, Intercultural Worship, and App and Projection Edition. They drew on outside consultants, contributors, scholars, and songwriters in their pursuit to make informed decisions.

When did you first learn about *Voices Together*? Perhaps you read the earliest press releases or maybe you only became aware of it today.

The *Voices Together* suite includes a pew edition, accompaniment edition, worship leader edition, projection edition, and app edition. MennoMedia took advantage of many technological advances that weren't accessible even 10 years ago in the creation of these pieces. Some churches will experience *Voices Together* as notes and words on a page, others on



a screen or wall, and still others through a digital app for use on phones or other mobile devices.

Voices Together is arranged according to its Table of Contents, which you can find on pages v and vi. Notice how the overarching layout follows a typical order of service. The structure is generally as follows:

- **gathering** with praise and reconciling ourselves to God and one another;
- **telling** God's story through Scripture;
- **responding** to God's story by confessing faith, giving, and prayer; and
- **being sent** out to live God's story in witness and service with God's blessing.

Activity

Working with a partner, take a closer look at *Voices Together* next to *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. Flip through the pages of both books. Pay attention to the size, paper, and color. Take note of the indexes, table of contents, the number of songs, the number of worship resources, the kinds of songs you see represented on the pages. Using the worksheet provided in hard copy or online, name some of the similarities and differences that you notice between the two hymnals.

RESPOND

Reflect

While there are 775 songs in *Voices Together*, most congregations will only sing about 200 of those in their corporate worship. The 200 songs that your congregation chooses will be different from the ones chosen by another congregation. The committee that assembled this new collection anticipates that congregations will find ample material compatible with their core—as well as plenty of new material to explore and share. As you continue to familiarize yourself with *Voices Together*, allow yourself to be freed from the expectation that you will like everything in the collection. Imagine the hundreds of congregations who will worship wholeheartedly with songs and prayers different from the ones you may choose.

Together, offer God's blessing, silently or aloud, over the many congregations who will worship using *Voices Together*.

Discuss

Choose some of the following questions to discuss in small groups, either in person or using online break-out rooms.

1. What similarities and differences do you notice between *Voices Together* and *Hymnal: A Worship Book*?
2. What surprises you as you hold *Voices Together*? What is different than you expected?
3. As you scan the Table of Contents, which sections are keenly important to your congregation? Is sharing your stories a priority? Are you particularly attuned to the Christian year, as reflected in Telling God's Story? Perhaps you have experimented with different ways of praying?
4. Notice the visual art throughout the collection. How do these pieces connect to the Table of Contents?
5. Notice how you feel and what you think as you hold this new collection. What emotions are rising to the surface for you? Do you feel anticipation, loss, confusion, joy, or some of each? Take turns sharing how it feels to hold this new collection.



BLESS**Song** *Voices Together* 1 Summoned By the God Who Made Us

The first piece in *Voices Together* is a call for us as disciples of Christ to bring our different gifts as we transform the church. The text was written by Sister Delores Dufner in 1993, and the tune is NETTLETON, well known with the song “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.” Delores Dufner is an American composer, librettist, and organist, and is a nun in the Order of Saint Benedict. Her works are featured in many hymnals and she has multiple texts in *Voices Together*. Sing this hymn together now as a blessing for the ways that *Voices Together* will shape your community and strengthen you as disciples.

Closing prayer *Voices Together* 1062

The closing prayer for today’s session comes from Clare of Assisi, who lived in the 13th century and founded the monastic order the Poor Clares in 1212. Receive her words as a blessing.



Week 2: Whose Songs Do We Sing in *Voices Together*?

GATHER

Activity

Explore the indexes of *Voices Together*, noticing how many people contributed to this collection. Find the index titled Contributors Index: *Authors, Composers, Artists, Arrangers, and Translators*. Are there names here that you recognize? Note that dots beside individual names indicate individuals connected with Anabaptism, past and present. Are there names among these that you recognize?

Opening prayer *Voices Together* 879

EXPLORE

About *Voices Together*

One or more readers can share the following content and reflection questions with the group. Content or questions might also be shown on digital slides for another layer of accessibility.

The pages of *Voices Together* contain content from thousands of contributors, who wrote material over thousands of years of church history: from J.S. Bach to John Bell, Hildegard von Bingen to Chris Tomlin, and Mother Teresa to Marty Haugen. While some contributors were famous in their time, others have remained relatively unknown throughout history. Some are living today while others died long before the inception of hymnals. Some wrote music that was passed down orally while others worked with printing presses and publishing companies. Some wrote based on Scripture while others penned prophecy.

When the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee was compiling this collection, they attended closely to the diversity of contributors. They worked with external consultants and focus groups, read literature, went through printed collections, and listened to albums by a variety of artists. The list of contributors that you see is intended to represent beloved songs and new material from the breadth of the church.

What types of diversity do you hope to see in *Voices Together*?

Some of you may remember that as the committee was preparing *Voices Together* they released surveys for individuals to share their “heart songs,” the songs that have been meaningful to them throughout their lives. These surveys indicated that our heart songs are wide-ranging: they come from early Mennonite hymnals, publications from other denominations, material written in local congregations, and contemporary worship songs that emerged only recently.

Along with a variety of songwriters, text writers, and composers, *Voices Together* represents the songs of a variety of congregations and peoples. It includes traditional hymns, contemporary hymnody, contemporary worship music, short songs, music from around the world, Taizé music, and much more.

Careful attention was given to the inclusion of Anabaptist writers, as their voices have been shaping our theology and music since the Reformation in the 16th century. (*Anabaptist* here includes the Reformation group and their spiritual descendants, Mennonite and other.) Their music can be found within all of the styles, eras, and categories of *Voices Together*. Some of the hymns, like “The Word of God is Solid Ground,” 399, were published in the



first Mennonite hymnal, the *Ausbund*, in 1583. Some Mennonite hymnody was passed down orally by communities such as Russian Mennonites, as seen in “So lange Jesus bleibt der Herr (As Long as Jesus’ Reign Goes On),” 64. Anabaptist hymn writers were featured in previous Mennonite collections with songs such as “Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth,” 426. Inspired by the contemporary worship movement, Anabaptist songwriters wrote songs that have become loved in camp settings, such as “Jesus Help Us Live In Peace,” 719. Anabaptists around the world have contributed to our Anabaptist song canon, with global songs such as “Dhuh Pangeran (O Prince of Peace),” 26.

Do you have a favorite song that represents your Anabaptist beliefs?

This collection reminds us that Mennonite worship is wide-ranging and diverse. When we sing with our Mennonite neighbors we are singing a variety of kinds of songs.

Activity

Consider your own heart songs—the songs that have been meaningful to you throughout your life or in a specific moment. Perhaps it was sung at a significant event such as a wedding, funeral, or baptism. Or maybe it is a song that stirs something within you and draws you into connection with God. These songs need not be found in *Voices Together*. As a group, create a list of your heart songs. Notice how many different people’s songs you are singing.

RESPOND

Reflect

Our Mennonite identity is shaped by music from many different genres and worship styles, and *Voices Together* includes Anabaptist contributors who write in different ways. While many people and congregations invest their identity in just one form of worship, we reflect the wholeness of the church when we embrace all of the ways that we worship. Take time now to open your heart to learning new ways of worship from your Anabaptist siblings in your region and around the world. In this silence, thank God for all of the ways that their worship enhances your own.

Discuss

Choose some of the following questions to discuss in small groups, either in person or using online break-out rooms.

1. If you recognized names of contributors in *Voices Together*, share those names with one another.
2. Are there names of specifically Anabaptist contributors to *Voices Together* that you recognize?
3. Share some of your heart songs with one another, and why they are important to you. Do the heart songs named by your group generally come from one style or era, or are they more diverse?
4. Think of another community that you are familiar with, whose songs sound different from your own. When you sing songs that are new to you, you may be singing with this community. Share examples of these communities with each other.



BLESS**Song***Voices Together 389 Together*

"Together" is by Anabaptist songwriter Nathan Grieser, written in 2014. It calls us to unity with our neighbors, to join a collective song. The song highlights the beauty found in our diversity: "Difference is a place where God is found. In seeking peace we're walking onto holy ground." Share this song together as a celebration of the various ways that Mennonite worship is collaborative and evolving.

Closing prayer*Voices Together 882*

The closing prayer for today's session comes from American scholar and theologian Walter Brueggemann. It calls us to celebrate the ways that our song pushes us and connects us to our life beyond a church service. It thanks God for the generations of disciples who have gone before, writing our church's song.



Week 3: Where Do the Contents of *Voices Together* Come From?

GATHER

Activity

Scan the Non-English Languages Index for *Voices Together*. Notice the many different languages from all over the world. What languages are you familiar with? Are any of the languages in *Voices Together* spoken in your community or by Mennonite congregations nearby?

Opening prayer *Voices Together* 866

If someone in your gathering is able to speak French, have them lead or teach the French translation.

EXPLORE

About *Voices Together*

One or more readers can share the following content and reflection questions with the group. Content or questions might also be shown on digital slides for another layer of accessibility.

Voices Together includes material in 42 different languages, with contributors coming from 6 continents. The collection is a celebration of our global Anabaptist church. Our siblings in faith come from all corners of the world, and together we make up the diverse body of Christ. When we sing in other languages, we are reminded that God is bigger than our particular culture and language. By trying new languages and musical sounds, we are engaging the fullness of God and God's creation.

Mennonites have been singing songs from cultures that are not their own for decades, especially in the context of Mennonite World Conference. The songbooks produced for these conferences since 1978 have shared music that has become commonplace in churches around the world. These songbooks, which include new and historical material from six continents, were explored by the Intercultural Worship committee alongside other denominational hymnals and world music publications. Committee members also visited congregations in their areas that worship in languages other than or in addition to English.

The Intercultural Worship committee consulted focus groups and individuals for the languages and genres included in the collection. Consultants included native speakers, culture bearers, and allies who advised the committee on what to include and how to present it. In addition to consulting on the more than 20 languages used in worship in Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, focus groups were held to discuss and suggest African American worship resources and music, as well as music and worship resources with connections to Indigenous communities.

Bring to mind churches in your neighborhood or city that worship in languages other than English.

Voices Together represents a variety of intercultural styles. These include historical styles from around the world, and traditional styles used in congregations today. When a fusion of Western harmonies and another musical tradition is included in the hymnal, it aims to represent its use in the community of origin, and not an arrangement by an outsider.



In 2017, the *Voices Together* committee received a grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship to visit 11 congregations across North America that worship in languages other than or in addition to English. The congregations were all Mennonite, some recently formed and others established for a generation or more.

Optional: View the following video from the *Voices Together* team, which features meaningful worship shared in languages other than English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STXQRProfYg>.

The chair of the Intercultural Worship Committee for *Voices Together*, Katie Graber, describes the tension of singing songs from other cultures well: We can't and we must. We *can't* sing the songs well if they are not our own. However, we *must* sing the songs of other cultures. We must move beyond barriers and into an engagement of other cultures and other expressions of worship. To be respectful of cultures of origin, congregations should learn the story of each song, how it would be led in its original context, and how they can be authentic to the origin of the material.

Do you agree that we can't sing the songs of other cultures well? If so, why can't we? Why is it important that we do sing the songs of other cultures?

Here are a few reasons that we participate in intercultural worship.

- To resource congregations that are diverse.
- To represent the diverse North American and worldwide church.
- So that all Mennonites who open *Voices Together* will see themselves represented on the pages.
- To provide resources for events where differently worshipping congregations come together.

Activity

On individual maps (p. 19) or a large group map use colored pencils or push-pins to indicate the countries of origin for the songs found on page 20. If you are gathering online use a shared screen function to mark the map together.

Use indexes and the ascriptions beneath the songs in *Voices Together* to find the locations. A list including locations can be found on p. 21.

RESPOND

Reflect

Singing songs in other languages can require us to go outside our comfort zones and humbly experience being in a new space. We likely feel safer when we stick to languages, rituals, and songs that are familiar to us. The experience of worshipping in a new language is most often familiar to those for whom English is a second language. God invites us into discomfort, and meets us there. Silently pray for an open heart to meet new cultures and experiences with joy.

Discuss

Choose some of the following questions to discuss in small groups, either in person or using online break-out rooms.

1. Have you had experiences of singing in a variety of languages? Perhaps at an interfaith gathering, Mennonite World Conference, or a joint service with another congregation?



2. Does your congregation have attendees from countries other than the one in which your church resides? What languages are represented in your congregation, community, or area conference?
3. Do you think it is important for congregations to sing songs from other parts of the world and in other languages? What are the challenges, and what are the rewards?

BLESS

Song

Voices Together 808 Between Darkness and Light

The tune for the song “Between Darkness and Light” was written by Daphna Rosenberg. Read her words about writing the song:

In May 2006, I was on my way to an Israeli-Palestinian gathering in Nazareth to commemorate the Israeli Day of Independence and the Palestinian Nakba. That morning I received a phone call from my friend Maureen Amelia Brodie who told me about a session of “The Journey” that she had with a Bedouin woman from Bir El Maksur in the Galilee named Manal Hreib. In that session Manal channeled very powerful words in Hebrew and Maureen asked me to write music for them. I was at my parents’ home in Haifa, I picked up my guitar and within minutes the melody “came down.” When I met Maureen in Nazareth, she heard the song, created a dance for it, Manal translated it to Arabic, I translated it into English and that same evening we were a big group of Israelis and Palestinians dancing and singing to the words and music of this song in three languages in the beautiful St. Gabriel church of Nazareth. Since that day I have been and am still singing the song in concerts, in Israeli-Palestinian gatherings, at Holocaust Day Memorial ceremonies, on Hanukah (the Festival of Lights), in hospitals and also just to be reminded of the great power that love has in the midst of great darkness!

Closing prayer

Voices Together 850

The first worship resource in *Voices Together* indicates ways to say “Peace be with you” in many different languages. As the closing prayer for today, learn how to say “Peace be with you” in three different languages. If there is anyone present who knows one of the languages represented, have them teach you.

Optional: View the following video of the Ontario Mennonite Music Camp staff and campers learning to say “Peace be with you” in many languages: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNdjbKolzFU&list=PL6CxEaC_uUQcuUZSyoDh9pY8sCQnGDNaW.



Week 4: When Were the Contents of *Voices Together* Written?

GATHER

Activity

Scan the index of contributors, noticing their life dates. Who are contributors who were born more recently? When did the oldest contributor live?

Opening prayer *Voices Together* 983

This opening prayer is based on the writings of Alcuin, an 8th century English scholar and church leader.

EXPLORE

About *Voices Together*

One or more readers can share the following content and reflection questions with the group. Content or questions might also be shown on digital slides for another layer of accessibility.

When assembling *Voices Together*, the committee made an intentional effort to represent the long history of the church by including material from thousands of years ago alongside material written in 2020. When we sing historical songs, we are singing with early people of faith.

The Psalms, the songbook of the Bible, was likely written as early as the 5th century BC. These ancient words have comforted, encouraged, fueled, and inspired Christians from generation to generation. When we sing or speak the words of the Psalms, we are praying with the psalmists and sharing in an enduring expression of faith. Psalms show up in a variety of ways in *Voices Together*. “Be Still and Know,” 37, is a contemplative contemporary setting of Psalm 46.

Do you have a favorite Psalm? What about a favorite Psalm setting to music?

Voices Together also contains material from early Christians. The Kyrie Eleison from the Greek Liturgy (147, 678, 692, or 795) dates back to the 4th century AD. The ancient liturgies of the early church have been foundational in worship throughout the history of Christianity. When we sing or speak ancient liturgies, we are joining with the early Christians that birthed and established our churches. The Nicene Creed, 924, is an example of a worship resource from the early church.

The *Voices Together* committee made an effort to bring the voices of women from the middle ages into the collection as well. These women were visionaries in their time, although their voices have at times been lost. Two examples of these pieces are “God, Grant Us Mercy,” 142, by Kassia (8th century) and “I Am That Great and Fiery Force,” 663, by Hildegard von Bingen (12th century). When we sing with these women, we are reclaiming their voices, and sharing in the unique and empowering ways they experienced their faith.



Take a moment to locate a hymn written by a historic woman. Give thanks for the gift of their voice.

The emergence of our Anabaptist faith is represented in many songs from the Reformation era. These pieces are an early articulation of our faith, born out of a time of oppression and danger. The bravery and robust faith carried by the early Anabaptists are reminders of the roots of our emphasis on justice, peace, and deep spiritual nourishment. When we sing with early Anabaptists, we are reaffirming our call to true evangelical faith. *Voices Together* includes the words of Menno Simons in “We Are People of God’s Peace,” 797, and Michael Sattler in “O Christ Impart Your Teaching True,” 583. The words of early Anabaptist martyr Annalein of Freiburg can be found in “Everlasting God, On You I Call,” 630.

Folk tunes, four-part hymns, and other styles of song from the 18th century through present day make up a large portion of *Voices Together*. We continue to sing with those siblings in Christ who have gone before us, and their voices make up the majority of the collection. Examples of songs from the 18th and 19th centuries include the words of renowned hymn writer Charles Wesley in “Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing,” 764, and “Blessed Assurance,” 435, by Fanny Crosby. Movements such as traditional hymnody, contemporary hymnody, gospel music, contemporary worship music, and folk music find their roots in recent centuries.

Activity

Using the Timeline Cards on pp. 22–23, create a timeline for 47 pieces in *Voices Together*. Each card includes the name of the song, its location in the hymnal, and a space for you to fill in the date. Divide the cards among the group and when everyone has completed their cards, create your timeline.

If you are working online, divide the songs between the break-out groups and then create a timeline using a shared screen or chat function.

The complete timeline can be found on page 24.

RESPOND

Reflect

Our faith has been formed by the bravery, intellect, spirituality, and creativity of people of faith who have gone before us. Their journeys have not always been easy: they have been questioned, punished, and martyred for their spiritual expressions. Take some time in silence to consider the contributors of *Voices Together* and the unique role they played in church history. Thank God for their influence.

Discuss

Choose some of the following questions to discuss in small groups, either in-person or using online break-out rooms.

1. Is there a song that was written a long time ago that you really appreciate? What about one written very recently?
2. Why is it important to sing with the historical church through historic material?
3. Why is it important to sing with today’s church through new material?
4. What are some of the challenges and rewards of singing historical material?
5. Does your congregation tend to engage material that is older, or newer?



BLESS**Song***Voices Together* 663 I Am That Great and Fiery Force

Hildegard von Bingen was a 12th century composer, poet, and visionary. She lived most of her life in a secluded monastery in Rhineland, where she wrote manuscripts, scholarly writings, and songs. She is regarded as one of the earliest composers of Western music, her influence spanning centuries. The song “O Holy Spirit” in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* was based on her writings, and she is represented through several pieces in *Voices Together*. “I Am That Great and Fiery Force” is from her *Book of Divine Works* from the 12th century, and was translated in *Singing the Living Tradition* in 1993. The tune was also written by Hildegard von Bingen, arranged for congregational use in *Voices Together* by Benjamin Bergey.

Closing prayer*Voices Together* 921

The closing prayer is an arrangement of the words of Menno Simons, one of the founders of Anabaptism. These words are a description of faith and a call to action. They rang true when they were written in 1539, and they still hold meaning today.



Week 5: Why Is It Important to Have a New Hymnal?

GATHER

Activity

Think back on how the church has changed throughout your lifetime. Perhaps you were alive when the 1969 or 1992 Mennonite hymnals came out, or perhaps those were released before your time. Maybe you grew up in another denomination where different hymnals were used or no hymnals at all. What new challenges does the world face today that we weren't facing 100, 50, 10, or even two years ago? Flip through the hymnal and see if you can identify any songs or prayers that speak to today's challenges.

Opening prayer *Voices Together 882*

EXPLORE

About Voices Together

One or more readers can share the following content and reflection questions with the group. Content or questions might also be shown on digital slides for another layer of accessibility.

"Why a new hymnal?" Because the church is not stagnant: it grows, changes, and evolves. While it relies on traditions and wisdom from the past, it also responds to its surroundings. It listens to new calls for justice. It learns new expressions to describe and worship God.

A little more than 50 percent of the songs in *Voices Together* were published in previous Mennonite collections. The remainder includes old and newly written songs, many of which will be new to Mennonite congregations. We believe in a God who makes all things new, who places new songs in our hearts. There are new words to speak, new songs to hear, and new voices to elevate.

Voices Together includes tools to engage a broader church, such as resources in a diversity of languages, engagement of new musical styles, a variety of theological lenses and uses of language, and chord symbols for more accessible instrumentation by keyboard, guitar, and other instruments. No hymnal is meant to last forever. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* served the church effectively for almost 30 years. Today, Mennonite congregations need new resources and new formats such as the projection and app editions of *Voices Together*, which will serve congregations in their worship in this time and space.

What are new resources that your congregation needs that previous collections don't provide?

Just as our churches, communities, and world change, so too does our use of language. Language used 30 years ago doesn't always reflect our values today. New musical styles have been waiting to be introduced to the song of the Mennonite church. People will always need new, expansive images of God to help our faith grow.

Voices Together is entering into churches at an interesting moment in history. Globally, we are in the midst of a pandemic; climate change requires large-scale action; racial injustice continues to cause deep harm, and we need world leaders to seek justice. In this context, we need a hymnal that provides resources for congregations to consider how worship and justice must go hand in hand. Just as Jesus upset the status quo, lifting up those whom society pressed down and cast out, so our churches have been called to follow Christ's example.



Activity

Voices Together engages contemporary issues of injustice and sensitive pastoral issues. Divide into small groups based on interest to focus on the particular issues presented on the Discussion cards on p. 25. Cards can be printed and cut apart for in-person discussion or shared digitally as a handout.

Read the texts of the hymns and worship resources for your topic and discuss the following together:

- Do you see conversations on this topic emerging outside the church, within it, or both?
- How could this resource be used in your congregation?
- Not all of these resources are meant for a corporate worship service, and many of them are appropriate for use beyond Sunday. Can you think of contexts outside of a church service where this resource could be helpful?

RESPOND**Reflect**

Encourage people to take a deep breath and settle into silence. Pray God's blessing over those who will need the resources in this collection. Pray for courage for congregations working through community crisis. Pray for strength for congregations working to dismantle oppression. Thank God for the collection that will accompany the good work of singing a new world into being.

Discuss

Choose some of the following questions to discuss in small groups, either in person or using online break-out rooms.

1. How has the world changed since the publication of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* in 1992?
2. How has the church changed?
3. How can a hymnal help to resource congregations to better engage with global and community issues and conversations?
4. Looking forward to the next 30 years, which topics in or beyond *Voices Together* do you think will be particularly relevant?

BLESS**Song**

Voices Together 809 Sing a New World Into Being

"Sing a New World Into Being" was written by Mary Louise Bringle, and is set to the familiar tune "Ode to Joy" by Ludwig van Beethoven. The words enliven us to imagine a bold future, and the soaring melody helps us lift our voices in bright hope.

Closing prayer

Voices Together 1068

This closing prayer was written by Eric Milner-White, a British Anglican priest, academic, and chaplain who lived from 1884–1963. It calls us to trust God as we don't know God's plan for the future. As we live into our future with *Voices Together*, let us trust God's plan for how we will be transformed.



WEEK 1

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
Color		
Size		
Number of songs		
Number of worship resources		
Visual art		
Scripture		
Table of contents headings		
Layout of a page		
Indexes		
Chord symbols		
Other symbols on the page (see the bottom corner of some hymns)		

WEEK 3

MAP



SONG LIST WITHOUT LOCATIONS

Australia

- Shout to the Lord (Cante al Señor)
- Touch The Earth Lightly (text)

South America

- Somos pueblo que camina (We Are People on a Journey)
- Noche anunciada (Night Long Awaited)
- Gracias, Señor (Thank You, O God)
- En medio de la vida (You Are the God within Life)

Asia

- Prabhoo Lay lay (Savior Jesus, Enfold Me)
- 圣夜清 Sheng ye qing (Holy Night, Blessed Night)
- Haneul naneun saeleul bora (See the Birds That Fly)
- 山路こえて Yamaji koete (In Lonely Mountain Ways)
- Between Darkness and Light
- Ey lou nis (Now I Know)
- Segala puji syukur (All Our Praise)

North America

- Prepare Ye The Way of the Lord
- Holy Lord
- Total Praise
- Like A Rock
- Let's Walk Together
- Jesus A, Nahetotaetanome (Jesus Lord, How Joyful)

Africa

- Siyahamba (We Are Marching)
- Abana alathi (Abana in Heaven)
- Akekho ofana / Hakuna wakaita (There's No One in This World like Jesus)
- Bwana awabariki (May God Grant You a Blessing)
- Na nzela na lola (As Long As We Follow)

Europe

- My Lighthouse
- Comme un souffle fragile (As a Sigh Great with Yearning)
- Lobe den Herren (Praise to the Lord, the Almighty)
- We Praise Thee, O God
- Amen (Threefold)
- Beauty for Brokenness



SONG LIST WITH LOCATIONS

Australia

- Shout to the Lord (Cante al Señor) (Australia)
- Touch The Earth Lightly (text) (New Zealand)

South America

- Somos pueblo que camina (We Are People on a Journey) (Nicaragua)
- Noche anunciada (Night Long Awaited) (Argentina)
- Gracias, Señor (Thank You, O God) (Argentina)
- En medio de la vida (You Are the God within Life) (Bolivia)

Asia

- Prabhoo Lay lay (Savior Jesus, Enfold Me) (Pakistan)
- 圣夜清 Sheng ye qing (Holy Night, Blessed Night) (China)
- Haneul naneun saeleul bora (See the Birds That Fly) (Korea)
- 山路こえて Yamaji koete (In Lonely Mountain Ways) (Japan)
- Between Darkness and Light (Palestine/Israel)
- Ey lou nis (Now I Know) (Cambodia)
- Segala puji syukur (All Our Praise) (Indonesia)

North America

- Prepare Ye The Way of the Lord (USA)
- Holy Lord (Canada)
- Total Praise (USA)
- Like A Rock (Canada)
- Let's Walk Together (USA)
- Jesus A, Nahetotaetanome (Jesus Lord, How Joyful) (USA)

Africa

- Siyahamba (We Are Marching) (South Africa)
- Abana alathi (Abana in Heaven) (Egypt)
- Akekho ofana / Hakuna wakaita (There's No One in This World like Jesus) (Zimbabwe)
- Bwana awabariki (May God Grant You a Blessing) (Kenya)
- Na nzela na lola (As Long As We Follow) (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Europe

- My Lighthouse (Ireland)
- Comme un souffle fragile (As a Sigh Great with Yearning) (France)
- Lobe den Herren (Praise to the Lord, the Almighty) (Germany)
- We Praise Thee, O God (Scotland)
- Amen (Threefold) (Denmark)
- Beauty for Brokenness (England)



<p>If there is to be peace in the world (WR) 1046</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>Grow Us Slowly (WR) 1030</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>Kyrie eleison (Russian Orthodox) 147</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>
<p>I Sing the Mighty Power of God 182</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>O Splendor of God's Glory Bright 500</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty (WR) 924</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>
<p>This home is yours, my God (WR) 958</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>Sing, My Tongue, the Song of Triump 331</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>God, Grant Us Mercy 142</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>
<p>Sing We Triumphant Hymns 363</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>Almighty God, To You All Hearts are Open (WR) 860</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>O Holy Spirit, by Whose Breath 53</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>
<p>Ubi caritas 492</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>Christ Is Arisen 358</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>I Am That Great and Fiery Force 663</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>
<p>God, make me an instrument of your peace (WR) 991</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>Come, come, whoever you are (WR) 1047</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>True evangelical faith (WR) 921</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>
<p>O Love, How Deep, How Broad 303</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>Loving God, you have baptized us (WR) 1001</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>No one can truly know Christ (WR) 928</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>
<p>Christ has no body now on earth but yours (WR) 1035</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>Gardener God, you have planted (WR) 1002</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>	<p>Nada te turbe (text) 604</p> <p>DATE: _____</p>

I Sing the Mighty Power of God (text) 182 DATE: _____	O Sacred Head Now Wounded (music) 325 DATE: _____	Hark! the Herald Angels Sing 247 DATE: _____
Thine Is the Glory (music) 355 DATE: _____	Come, Thou Fount (text) 563 DATE: _____	Praise God (Dedication Anthem) (music) 70 DATE: _____
For the Beauty of the Earth (text) 120 DATE: _____	What Child Is This (text) 267 DATE: _____	Were You There 329 DATE: _____
Lift Every Voice and Sing (text) 611 DATE: _____	God Who Touches Earth with Beauty (text) 550 DATE: _____	God, give me grace to accept (WR) 1007 DATE: _____
O Beautiful Star of Bethlehem (text) 275 DATE: _____	We Are One in the Spirit 387 DATE: _____	Lord, Listen to Your Children 682 DATE: _____
Come and See 282 DATE: _____	How silently (WR) 1021 DATE: _____	Santo, santo, santo 102 DATE: _____
Nada te turbe (music) 604 DATE: _____	Longing for Light 715 DATE: _____	Open the Eyes of My Heart 401 DATE: _____
Come To The Table of Grace 461 DATE: _____	God of every place 859 DATE: _____	Build My Life 92 DATE: _____

SONG LIST WITH DATES

(WR) indicates Worship Resources.

1046	If there is to be peace in the world (WR)	4th–6th century BCE
1030	Grow us slowly (WR)	3rd–4th century
147	Kyrie eleison (Russian Orthodox)	4th century
500	O Splendor of God's Glory Bright	4th century
924	We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty (WR)	4th century.
958	This home is yours, my God (WR)	5th–6th century
331	Sing, My Tongue, the Song of Triumph	569
142	God, Grant Us Mercy	8th century
363	Sing We Triumphant Hymns	8th century
860	Almighty God, To You All Hearts are Open (WR)	9th century
53	O Holy Spirit, by Whose Breath	9th century
492	Ubi caritas	8th–9th century
358	Christ Is Arisen	11th century
663	I Am That Great and Fiery Force	12th century
991	God, make me an instrument of your peace (WR)	12th–13th century
1047	Come, come, whoever you are (WR)	13th century
921	True evangelical faith (WR)	15th century
303	O Love, How Deep, How Broad	15th century
1001	Loving God, you have baptized us (WR)	1569
928	No one can truly know Christ (WR)	16th century
1035	Christ has no body now on earth but yours (WR)	16th century
1002	Gardener God, you have planted (WR)	16th century
604	Nada te turbe (text)	16th century
182	I Sing the Mighty Power of God (text)	1715
325	O Sacred Head Now Wounded (music)	1729
247	Hark! the Herald Angels Sing	1739
355	Thine Is the Glory (music)	1746
563	Come, Thou Fount (text)	1758
70	Praise God (Dedication Anthem) (music)	1830
120	For the Beauty of the Earth (text)	1864
267	What Child Is This (text)	1871
329	Were You There	1897
611	Lift Every Voice and Sing (text)	1900
550	God Who Touches Earth with Beauty (text)	1925
1007	God, give me grace to accept (WR)	1937
275	O Beautiful Star of Bethlehem (text)	1940
387	We Are One in the Spirit	1966
682	Lord, Listen to Your Children	1970
282	Come and See	1974
1021	How silently (WR)	1981
102	Santo, santo, santo	1986
604	Nada te turbe (music)	1986
715	Longing for Light	1993
401	Open the Eyes of My Heart	1997
461	Come To The Table of Grace	2008
859	God of every place (WR)	2015
92	Build My Life	2020



WEEK 5

DISCUSSION CARDS

(WR) indicates Worship Resources.

<p>AGING/MEMORY LOSS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When Memory Fades 649 • Prayer when Aging (WR) 979 • When Aging Takes Its Toll 520 	<p>CREATION CARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touch the Earth Lightly 145 • The Garden Needs Our Tending Now 788 • Source and Sustainer of Life (WR) 1009 • As the Waters Rise around Us 708
<p>COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to Community Crisis (WR) 1044 • If the War Goes On 794 • O phi nong oei (Dear Friends, We're One) 525 • In Defiance of Corruption and Falsehood, (WR) 1040 	<p>LOSS AND DEATH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everlasting God (WR) 981 • In Our Doubt and Fear (WR) 1044 • Nothing is Lost on the Breath of God 653 • God Weeps With Us 656
<p>ILLNESS AND HEALTHCARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O God, to You I Cry in Pain 646 • Prayer in a Healthcare Facility (WR) 977 • When We Must Bear Persistent Pain 735 	<p>BODY IMAGE AND MENTAL HEALTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still My Soul 603 • God Calls You Good 172 • When Pain or Sorrow / Hold On 612 • Prayer for Mental Health (WR) 978

