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INTRODUCTION TO REUNION 2021

LET PEACE DWELL HERE

The 2021 Reunion Sharing Services and Worship Services are planned to complement and provide opportunities for reflection, new understanding, and practices throughout the day.

While we try to provide a variety of worship styles, practices, and opportunities for multiple ages, the focus of these services is to create a continuation of the Sharing Services experience and continue to grow into the themes, ideas, and questions posed and practiced throughout the day. Read the Letters to Facilitators for Sharing and Worship | Community Formation experiences to gain a deeper vision of these experiences.

Amazing community formation can happen when we worship together. There is no one size that fits all. As we experienced in 2020, formation experiences may be online or in person. Be prayerful for the group that assembles at your reunion. Be mindful of the needs, the questions, the opportunity for growth and service. Intentionally going deeper connects us with the Spirit who guides us into discovery, growth, practice, discernment, and creation of peace where we dwell.
LET PEACE DWELL HERE

Authors: Nina Warriner, Dustin Davis, Katie Harmon-McLaughlin

Dear Sharing Service Facilitators,

Sharing our testimonies in sacred community is an important part of our personal and communal faith formation. These services primarily encourage sharing among participants of any age. We are grateful for your willingness to facilitate this significant part of the reunion experience.

The planning team for this resource was thrilled with the opportunity to continue to explore the church’s response to nonviolence, yet we soon discovered what a daunting task that can be in diverse, settings for many age groups! Therefore, we have created a simple format that we hope can be applied whether in person or online. The simplicity of each service is meant to ground the community in a pattern of formation throughout the week. We have chosen to use “Spirit of the Living God” to imagine the formational process that occurs through each service. You will see the notes for each section that invite the Holy Spirit to melt, mold, fill, and use us. We also recognize as parents, teachers, and youth ministers that simple, repetitive rhythms can be helpful for even the youngest among us to catch a sense of what we are doing together and why it matters.

We primarily address nonviolence through story-sharing, trying to humanize alternative responses that have had powerful effect. We also hope these stories can stir our own stories and help illuminate the sources of violence and nonviolence within us. We do want to provide a warning label: We will be covering challenging issues that might seem more mature than what would typically be addressed in a worship environment. We encourage adults to have conversations with children if there are questions or concerns. We also recognize that most of the media consumed at any age is so thoroughly saturated with redemptive violence that when we weighed the appropriateness of these stories it felt important to offer them as powerful alternatives grounded in real experiences.

It is hard to write a formational experience that can match the context of each community and follow the flow of where the Holy Spirit is most naturally leading in the moment. While these are written more universally, we hope you will discern ways to make them more relevant to your situation. These notes are shared in that spirit.

PREPARING A SPACE

Consider creating a simple worship center for each service that includes a candle or other symbols to draw the congregation’s attention to the theme of the day. As the worship leader it is important to prepare a space within yourself as well to be the grounding, calming presence for the community as you enter this sacred time. If your gatherings are online, consider an image or music as people log on to set the tone.
CREATING COMMUNITY FOR ALL AGES

We are blessed to have the opportunity to share in intergenerational community and we know that also brings its specific challenges. These services were designed in that sacred tension, providing depth and substance to mature disciples while also creating room for new disciples just beginning to learn and grow. We invite you into that sacred tension with us as a worship leader. Be mindful of every opportunity to encourage children and youth to participate, letting them know that their voice matters to the community. Many practices and elements were designed to engage different ages, but the openness of the community and the willingness of adults to invite the voices of children will have the most effect in creating a genuine community that includes all ages.

We often think that to engage in spiritual practice, we need to have complete silence. With many ages present, this is an unrealistic expectation! We are invited to seek interior silence where our minds and hearts are open and receptive to the Spirit even if our external circumstances contain a few giggles or shrieks. This is a practice in discovering God in all things and seeking the Spirit in the holiest of distractions. Whenever there is an opportunity, gently remind the community of this invitation.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Even “mature” disciples may struggle with spiritual practice from time to time. Moments of silence or invitations for vulnerability may be uncomfortable or unfamiliar. As a spiritual leader, it is important to hold open safe and loving community for all spiritual types. Invitations to practice should be gentle and respectful of persons all along the journey of faith. Using “invitational” rather than “instructional” language can be helpful in creating this space of freedom and can reduce natural resistances. For example, “I invite you to find a comfortable position for prayer” allows more flexibility than “Now, everyone close your eyes.” May we be open to all the ways the Spirit may seek relationship with this community!

A FEW NOTES

These services follow a similar flow. In each worship we remember our intention for gathering and covenant together to create safe, relational space for sharing. We end each worship by paying attention to where the Spirit was at work and discerning God’s invitation for the day ahead. This intentional, repetitive beginning and ending is a model for forming spiritual community and is a communal spiritual practice. The hope is that we grow in awareness of the quality of our time together and become more attentive to the Spirit at work among us.

Let the community know that these services are designed to create spaciousness for sharing with one another. In small- and large-group formats, sharing will be the primary focus of the worship. Invite the congregation to gather in diverse groups, being especially mindful of those on the margins. Be inclusive of all ages.

It will be especially meaningful to include children and youth as much as possible. You will see alternative questions throughout this resource that indicate something has been worded for inclusion of younger voices.

- Each day there are questions for small- and large-group reflections. It will be helpful to print copies of these questions or project them.
• Throughout the worships are notes for the worship leader. Please feel free to adapt these notes to your own most natural speaking style while maintaining the essence needed to invite people into the practices and sharing.

• Time for sharing may depend on what is stirring in the community! Please be sensitive to timing and aware of natural beginnings and endings for the benefit of the gathered community.

• Sometimes when people are sharing, spaces of silence emerge. We are tempted to fill the silence quickly, but we invite you to consider holding open space in case other voices need to emerge. It may take a few moments for a person to gather the courage to share what is in their heart. It is appropriate to ask after a few moments, “Is there anyone else who would like to share?”

• Trust that the Spirit is present, working in each person, and may show up in surprising ways! “Be vulnerable to divine grace.” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:10b)
WORSHIP SERVICES | COMMUNITY FORMATION

Authors: Emma Pitt, Ryan Pitt, Susan Naylor

Dear Worship Facilitators,

Thank you for sharing your giftedness and ministry coordinating these community worship formation experiences during the 2021 reunion. Being sensitive to the Spirit’s leading, noticing the formation of your specific community, providing a safe space to praise God and to explore where peace can dwell, and trusting the Spirit of the One who calls us is a gift. Spiritual leaders are more invitational than instructional, trusting that the Spirit is the true facilitator of the experience, and we provide the opportunity to open a space where the Holy Spirit can move, speak, reveal, and transform.

The worship experiences provide a continuation of the sharing service stories, responses to discernment throughout the day, and provide a safe space to explore and contain the day’s understandings. Like the sharing services, the format keeps a pattern of praise, discernment responses, meditation, story, exploration of a daily focus, and a challenge to carry us onward.

PREPARING A SPACE

Consider continuing the simple worship center suggested in Sharing Services. A candle for Prayer for Peace would be good. Symbols for each day’s focus always help draw the congregation’s attention. As the worship leader, it is important to prepare a space within yourself to be the grounding, calming presence for the community as you enter this sacred time together. If you are online, consider an image or music as people log on.

CREATING INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY

We are blessed to share in a community of all ages, and we know that also brings its specific challenges. Be mindful of every opportunity to encourage children and youth, letting them know that their voice matters. Many of the worship elements were designed for different ages, but the openness of the community and the willingness of adults to invite voices of children will be most effective.

Consider worship elements. If elements seemingly focus on younger ages, but youth are not participating, continue consideration of using this element. It might be just as meaningful to the adults participating. There’s always a story.

We often think that to engage in spiritual practice and worship we need to have complete silence. With many ages present, this is an unrealistic expectation. We are invited to seek interior silence where our minds and hearts are open and receptive to the Spirit even if our external circumstances contain a few giggles or shrieks. This is a practice in discovering God in all things and seeking the Spirit in the holiest of distractions. Whenever there is an opportunity, gently remind the community of this invitation.
A FEW NOTES

These services follow a similar flow. In each worship we make a connection with the earlier sharing service. This intentional repetition connects our earlier experience with experiences throughout the day and into the later worship service.

These service outlines are designed to offer a variety of different worship options. There are more elements suggested than the time you likely have allocated. Be mindful of what will be most formative for your gathering. Be creative and provide for a variety of experiences. Be mindful of those on the margins and be inclusive of all ages.

It will be especially meaningful to include children and youth in the sharing as much as possible. You will see alternative questions throughout this resource that indicate something has been worded for inclusion of younger voices.

- Each day there are questions for small- and large-group reflections. It will be helpful to print copies of these questions or project them.
- Scripted notes for the worship leader are throughout the outlines. Feel free to adapt these notes to your most natural speaking style while maintaining the essence needed to invite people into the practice of worship.
- An opportunity for the Lord’s Supper (Communion) is provided in these resources. These outlines provide the flexibility to share this sacrament where it would be most appropriate.
- Suggested books for Focus moments can be found in most libraries or purchased in stores or online. These books also can be found in video format.
- Worship outlines also indicate hymns and songs that are a part of the children’s lessons. Consider inviting children to lead these hymns. This may provide an opportunity for a children’s choir or solo if appropriate.
- Campfire suggestions are included. Be sure to model inclusiveness and connection in the day’s experiences. Find additional ideas for online campfire opportunities.
- Stand firm in the name of the One you proclaim and create diverse communities of disciples and seekers, rejoicing in the continuing fulfillment of the call to this people to prophetically witness in the name of Jesus Christ. (Doctrine and Covenants 161:6)
THE LORD’S SUPPER (COMMUNION)

Every worship has the potential to be sacramental. Worship facilitators are invited to discern where the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper will most naturally fit into the flow of the reunion experience. The following guidelines provide options (whether in person or virtual) for meaningful integration of this significant part of our communal life.

It is important to remember worship elements are not “plug and play.” Each element should be inclusive and fit the overall experience. The action words in the 2021 daily themes (discover, grow, practice, discern, create) might be an excellent place to consider best placement for the sacrament experience.

Worship planners and leaders should make provisions to meet needs that otherwise could keep individuals from fully participating in Communion. This might include providing gluten-free bread or acknowledging that not all people can kneel, come forward, or easily hold the emblems.

COMMUNION ELEMENTS

Hymn suggestions from Community of Christ Sings:

- “As We Gather at Your Table” CCS 523
- “In the Singing” CCS 519
- “Coming Together for Wine and for Bread” CCS 516
- “In These Moments We Remember” CCS 515
- “Eat This Bread” CCS 528
  
  CCS 528 could be sung repeatedly before or during the sacrament.

- “We Meet as Friends at Table” CCS 532

The suggested hymns work well as congregational hymns, solo or small group, instrumental with words read during the music, or verses used as a reading.

It is highly recommended that two statements be read before the emblems are blessed and served. The first is a scripture reading that roots the sacrament in scripture and Christian history. Scriptures appropriate for this purpose are 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 or other similar passages (Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-39). The second statement is one of invitation. It describes how Community of Christ views and practices the Lord’s Supper. It is typically read just before the emblems are blessed.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

All are welcome at Christ’s table. The Lord’s Supper (Communion) is a sacrament in which we remember the life, death, resurrection, and continuing presence of Jesus Christ. In Community of Christ we also experience Communion as an opportunity to renew our baptismal covenant and to be formed as disciples who live Christ’s mission. Others may have different or added understandings within their faith traditions. We invite all who participate in the Lord’s Supper to do so in the love and peace of Jesus Christ.
ONLINE PARTICIPATION IN THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

From the 2019 words of counsel: “Technology presents opportunities for involvement in sacraments by priesthood members and participants in separate locations.” This may occur in many ways. These principles should be observed when planning and providing online participation in the Lord’s Supper:

- Real-time online participation in the Lord’s Supper is considered the same as being in the single physical location.
- The emblems should be physically present for all those wishing to partake.
- A priest or Melchisedec priesthood member should read the prayer(s) of blessing on the emblems so that those in all locations experience the blessing(s) through sight and sound, closed-captioning, or sound only. Also, participants in all locations should be encouraged to kneel, if possible.
- If priests or Melchisedec priesthood are not available to serve the emblems in some locations, participants may take the emblems for themselves from a designated plate or location.

Complete guidelines for the Lord’s Supper are at www.CofChrist.org.
OPENING WORSHIP | OPENING GATHERING

LET PEACE DWELL HERE

Introduction
This service can be used as an opening worship service, a welcome from reunion director(s), or orientation and get-to-know you event. This Service of Gathering provides an opportunity for the group to interact and get to know one another, in person or virtually.

Worship Center
A worship center could include elements particular to where your experience is happening. What contextual elements might represent “here” for your experience?

A virtual worship center could include each participant on the screen writing “here” on a piece of paper and holding it in view of the camera to emphasize that peace dwells in all the places we are located. Consider taking a picture of your community with their “here” signs to use throughout reunion.

Gathering Songs
Choose three or more.

Campfire songs:
“We’re All Together Again, We’re Here We’re Here”
“Make New Friends, But Keep the Old”
“Hello, Hello, Hello, Hello” (“We Are Glad to Meet You”)

Community of Christ Sings
“God’s Melody of Peace” CCS 319
“God, the Source of Light and Beauty” CCS 593
“Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather” CCS 335
“As We Gather” CCS 73

Welcome
Include remarks given by reunion director or reunion pastor, thanking all who intend to share in the community of reunion, in person or online, extending love, hope, and friendship. This should be a safe place for all participants to explore. All are welcome and all are loved.
Call to Worship
Leader: Listen to the Voice that echoes across the eons
People: and yet speaks anew in this moment.
Leader: Listen to the Voice, for it cannot be stilled,
People: and it calls you once again to the great and marvelous work
Leader: of building the peaceable kingdom,
Unison: even Zion, on behalf of the One whose name you claim.
—Doctrine and Covenants 162:1b

Singing Welcome  “All Are Welcome” CCS 276
Each worship suggests using one verse of this hymn of welcome. During the music portion of the Children’s Lessons, they will be learning one verse each day. This connects generations.

Prayer of Invitation

Scripture Reading
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.
—John 14:27

Prayer for Peace
Light the prayer candle in the worship service—in person or online.

O Lord, we have come into this experience seeking new understanding, new possibilities. And it isn’t without hesitation that we come together to discover, grow, practice, discern, and create pathways of peace in this life. We so often are comfortable the way things are. We don’t know any better until it is brought to our attention that maybe there’s another way.

God, at this time, we pray for peace. Peace in ourselves. Peace in our gathering here. Peace in our communities and our world. It is not always easy to hear the stories of violence. We are uncomfortable recognizing our innocent words and phrases may cause harm to others. Hold us in your steadfast love.

Give us courage in our conversations. Help us dare to question where we are, and where we are going. Prod us to listen, mindful of another’s opinion and understanding that could clash with our own. Push us to expect that peace dwells in us, in each other, in our gathering, and in our world. Throughout our experience together, may we be open and still enough to recognize your peace dwells here.

Let this be our collective prayer for peace today. Amen.
Meditation Moment

“Spirit of the Living God”  

Sing this twice.

“The Peace of Wild Things”
When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

—Wendell Berry, copyright 2012

Read/listen: https://onbeing.org/poetry/the-peace-of-wild-things/
Watch: www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ewB0WL3bNg

“Spirit of the Living God”  

Sing once.

Introductions
Guest minister
Offer the guest minister an opportunity to share briefly about the reunion experience theme and what “Let Peace Dwell Here” can mean to us throughout this experience.

Reunion coordinators and leaders
This time could include teachers for specific age groups, special event coordinators, dining hall coordinator, afternoon recreation, those who could offer evangelist ministry, ministry of sacrament of laying on hands, worship, and music coordinators, etc. If the reunion is online, this time provides opportunity to share technology information, reunion structure, and best online practices.

Disciples’ Generous Response
If you truly would be Community of Christ, then embody and live the concerns and passion of Christ.

—Doctrine and Covenants 164:9d
During this Opening Worship | Opening Gathering remind participants of blessings received in the reunion community and generosity shared. If this experience is online, explain how participants can share their generous response.

Let Peace Dwell Here
For this reunion experience, we will explore where peace dwells internally, relationally, in community, globally, and environmentally. We will spend our time together in discovery, growth, practice, discernment, and creation. We will explore our experience theme of “Let Peace Dwell Here” by exploring nonviolence, between and with ourselves and community, and where is “here?” Let’s spend a little time in discovery right now, not just about our theme but who is with us on this journey.

Use this suggested mixer with questions or use an activity that works for your ministry area. Mixers usually cause anxiety, but something happens when we start to share something about ourselves with one another. Be sensitive to your group, but also challenge the group to reach out of their comfort zone just a little.

Whether meeting in person or online, break into small groups of three or four, or stay in a large group. Use what works best for this experience. Groups can stay the same or change after each question.

Spend a little time with this list:
- Where is your favorite “here?”
- Where would you go that you’ve never been before, and exclaim, “I’m finally ‘here!’”?  
- Let Peace Dwell Here is our theme. Today, where or how would you define “here?”
- Who do you want to be a part of your “here?”

All Are Welcome Here
“God, We Gather as Your People”  
Sing verses 1 and 4.

Pastoral Prayer for Reunion

Sending Forth
This could be divided among several individuals, each reading a line, including adults, and children.

Lift up your eyes and fix them on the place beyond the horizon to which you are sent. Journey in trust, assured that the great and marvelous work is for this time and for all time. Claim your unique and sacred place within the circle of those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ. Be faithful to the spirit of the Restoration, mindful that it is a spirit of adventure, openness, and searching.

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:1a-1b
SHARING SERVICE DAY 1

DISCOVER PEACE HERE

Worship Center

Have “building” materials either displayed in one central location or situated around the common space where groups will eventually congregate.

Suggested

Building materials for each small group.
Examples: Legos, Lincoln Logs, blocks, magnetic building blocks, Play22, Squigz, marble runs, Dado Squares, pool noodles. Homemade or natural materials: sticks, rocks, pinecones, damp sand and forms, toothpicks and marshmallows, cheese balls (or other food to hold the toothpicks in structure), cardboard boxes, paper or cardboard and string.

Online: Use one computer/tablet per group. If the gathering is virtual utilize one share screen through a dry-erase board application (most teachers will be familiar with this). Use whatever materials you have available.

MELT

CONSENTING TO GOD’S INVITATION FOR OUR TIME TOGETHER

Prelude

Gathering Music

Choose one or more songs.

“Jesu, Tawa Pano” CCS 71
“As We Gather” CCS 73
“Come Away from Rush and Hurry” CCS 83

Welcome

Welcome to this time of sacred community, practice, and sharing. Today we invite you to explore together what it means to “Discover Peace Here.”

Throughout the week in these sharing services we will engage in reflection through stories of nonviolence. Stories shape us in powerful ways. As disciples we are invited to continually discern what stories we are hearing and sharing that lead us closer to or further away from Jesus, the peaceful One. As you reflect on the stories shared this week, consider the stories that are shaping you, shaping us. What stories does the world yearn to hear that open the way toward God’s vision of peace, shalom, wholeness for all creation?

We are also invited this week to focus on the “here” of wherever we are. When we tell stories of nonviolence and reflect on the peace of Christ, we invite you to consider what that means for your context within the realities of life and relationships, in the issues that are part of your community.
This might invite us to do some necessary wrestling, pondering, sifting, and discerning, which is good and holy work in the presence of sacred community. The guiding question—Are we moving toward Jesus, the peaceful One?—is meant to be asked precisely where you are, wherever you are, throughout this week and as you return to your home, work, and community.

*Suggestion:*

**Scripture Reading**  

Read this scripture twice, allowing a pause for silence between the readings. After the second time, invite the group to respond in a word or phrase aloud (or in online in the chat feature on zoom), *Why did Jesus tell stories?*

The disciples came up and asked, “Why do you tell stories?” [Jesus] replied, “You’ve been given insight into God’s kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn’t been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears. That’s why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight.

**Invocation**

*Invite someone to offer a prayer of invocation or read this blessing.*

**Blessing the Story**

You might think this blessing lives in the story that you can see, that it has curled up in a comfortable spot on the surface of the telling.

But this blessing lives in the story beneath the story. It lives in the story inside the story. In the spaces between. In the edges, the margins, the mysterious gaps, the enticing and fertile emptiness.

This blessing makes its home within the layers. This blessing is doorway and portal, passage and path. It is more ancient than imagining and makes itself ever new.

This blessing is where the story begins.

—©Jan Richardson, janrichardson.com
Community Covenant

Each day we will share a community covenant to remind us how we want to be together as we share and practice deeply in sacred community.

*Think of different ways to engage the covenant each day. Invite diverse voices to participate, including children and youth.*

**We will honor the worth of every person.** We want every person, of every age, to feel welcomed and loved in this community.

**We will listen deeply.** We trust that God is present in every person’s story. It is not our job to fix or give advice.

**We will practice curiosity.** There is more to every person than what we can see. If we start to judge or feel defensive, we will turn instead to wonder.

**We will share openly.** It takes courage to share our stories with each other. We support each other as we risk deeper sharing.

**We will be fully present.** God is already among us. We will be present to God and each other in this time of sacred community.

MOLD

BEING FORMED IN THE SPIRIT

Song

*Choose one to help the community center.*

“Spirit of the Living God”  
“Santo, Santo, Santo”  
“Spirit Fill Us”

CCS 567  
CCS 159  
CCS 160

Spiritual Practice

Story of nonviolence

Today’s story of nonviolence begins with a grounding in the sacred story of Community of Christ. Each moment we contemplate is shaped by our past, informed by our present, and inspired by our future. Let us reflect upon a piece of our collective past through the lens of our present circumstances in hopes of a clearer vision for our future.

As you listen to this story from the history of Community of Christ, consider:

- How might Joseph Smith III’s experience have affected the Community of Christ faith movement?
- What resonates with you in this story? Where is your attention drawn?
- What is the Spirit’s inviting you to consider as you hear this story?
For children

Write or draw to answer:

How would you feel if you were Joseph in this story? What do you think you would have done?

Have someone in your community “tell” this story or you can play the video of Lachlan Mackay telling the story, which you can find at www.CofChrist.org/reunion-resources-2021. After sharing the story, read the questions again and allow time for people to reflect or journal silently. Consider printing or projecting the questions for the community.

A Story of Nonviolent Response from the Foundational Years of Community of Christ


Young Joseph Smith III was confronted with a number of issues related to peacemaking soon after affiliating with the Reorganization in 1860. One incident had roots in an event that took place about 1853. Emma Smith Bidamon, innkeeper at the Nauvoo Mansion House, took exception to the conduct of two boarders, one male and one female, and ordered them to move out. Insisting the woman should stay, the man drew a revolver and threatened Emma with it. Now really angry, Emma “firmly stated that both should go, and go at once.”

Joseph was away from home when the incident occurred but, upon learning of it when he returned, immediately “conceived a strong and inveterate hatred for the man.” Emma’s husband, quick-tempered Lewis Bidamon, was also away, but hearing the news on his return, grabbed a gun and set out to find the offender. But when Joseph next saw his stepfather, the latter was in a saloon having a drink with the man who had threatened his mother. This did nothing to relieve the hatred Joseph felt for the former boarder, a hatred that only increased through the years as he interacted with the man in several unrelated legal proceedings.

This became a significant problem for Joseph, especially after becoming a minister.

I may say that when I began to preach the gospel I soon found I could not conscientiously use the words of the Lord’s prayer—“and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”—without a twinge of conscience. Whenever I repeated them or even read them or thought of them, this hatred, which I had nursed for so long in my heart against the man who had abused my mother, would come to mind and accuse me.

I finally saw that I must set myself to the task of overcoming this feeling, which I did humbly and earnestly. I am glad to say that, after a lapse of time, I was rewarded by the knowledge that the last vestige of my hate had disappeared and ill will was entirely banished. …The experience taught me a lesson. It forced upon my mind the necessity for many of the teachings of the Savior. I had a clearer understanding of what men were prone to feel of any unworthy nature and of the meaning of the prayer left for our example than I could have obtained had I not had this experience and learned to know what it was to hate a fellow-being.
The knowledge helped to make me humble, and to exercise sympathy and charity for others struggling under like feelings. …Hatred is a cruel, destructive, and unlovely thing, and wholly unbecoming a Christian.

—*The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, pages 126-27

Reread the questions from above. Allow time for personal reflection, journaling, or drawing. Choose to play some meditative music or maintain silence during this time.

FILL

**RECEIVE THE BLESSING OF SHARING AND HEARING ONE ANOTHER’S STORIES AND EXPERIENCES.**

**Group sharing**

*Offer “building” materials as a catalyst for conversation and inclusivity for all ages. Use materials that are readily available so that each group can build or create something through their sharing. (See examples previously suggested.)*

*Form small groups by gathering around a set of materials (or in a breakout room if the community is online). Invite people to share from their time of reflection. Make sure to draw attention to the Community Covenant and its role in creating safe space.*

*As each one shares in a group, encourage them to add a piece or two to whatever is being built in the group.*

*If online, lines or shapes can be added to the shared screen on a whiteboard view.*

[https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205677665-Sharing-a-whiteboard](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205677665-Sharing-a-whiteboard)

**Song**

*Draw the community together through singing.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>CCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Peace Salaam Shalom”</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My Peace”</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“One Common Prayer”</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**USE**

**DISCERNING RESPONSE THROUGHOUT THE DAY**

**Discernment Practice**

*“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Repeat these words throughout the day. As you do, listen to hear if a name is pressed upon your heart as someone you need to forgive or someone you need to ask for forgiveness.*

*Think about creative ways you can make this discernment practice visible throughout your day.*
Closing Song
Choose one. If short on time, consider singing one or two verses.

“We Thank You, O God, for Our Prophets”       CCS 180
“Lord, make us Instruments”                    CCS 364
“Christ Has Changed the World’s Direction”     CCS 356

Closing Prayer
 Invite someone to offer a closing prayer.
WORSHIP DAY 1

DISCOVER PEACE HERE

Focus: Melt Me
Luke 19:41-42

Worship Center

A worship center could include elements particular to where your experience is happening. What discovery elements might be represented as you discover peace in your experience?

A virtual worship center could invite each participant on the screen to share something that represents discovery to them. Consider taking a picture of your community to use throughout reunion.

WE GATHER

Gathering Songs Choose two or more.

“Gather Us In” CCS 72
“Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus We Are Here) CCS 71
“Great is Thy Faithfulness” CCS 11
“O God of Vision” CCS 78
“We Are Companions on the Journey” CCS 552
“Take My Gifts and Let Me Love You” CCS 609

WELCOME

Welcome to Worship

Sharing and Response

Discerning Response

Each day during the Sharing Service, a discerning question is posed. Ask one or two people to respond on their experience with the discerning question posed in the morning.

By repeating the discerning phrase, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” during the day, I experienced…

Together We Respond

“All Are Welcome” CCS 276

Verse 1

Used in today’s Children’s Lessons.
Scripture Reading

As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.”  

Meditation Moment

Take a few moments to imagine approaching the city, town, or community where you live with fresh eyes. Imagine the things that make for peace here. What do you discover that surprises you?

“What if instead of longing for ease, we were made for more—made to advocate, made to dig in, made to speak out, made for complexity, made for this moment? What if we believed so deeply in our own capacity to rise to this occasion that getting to work wasn’t a tiring chore, but a life-giving opportunity to invest in something larger than ourselves?”  
—Austin Channing Brown

Hymn  Choose one.

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”  
“We Are Companions on the Journey”  
“I Want Jesus to Walk with Me”  

Invocation

Meditation Reflection

“Spirit of the Living God”  

Sing twice.

A Blessing for Those Who Begin

You awake to discover  
The fragility of your treasures  
Held as precious by generations  
Of revered foremothers  
Who have nurtured you with their stories  
Broken in the night  
The shards of dead words scattered on the floor.

I bless you to sit  
In the wreckage of this moment  
Mourn the loss of this inheritance  

Bid farewell, when you are ready,  
To the heirlooms  
No longer in your possession.  
Sort through the remaining clutter  
Of ideas and beliefs you’ve been gathering  
Saving only that which is enduring  
The anchors of a new collection  
A fresh existence  
It is a grievous but blessed beginning.  

—Nancy Ross
FOCUS ON PEACE

What is peace? To each one of us it is something different. You might think of it as a bell that you can ring so all the world will hear it, or a special gift to open with care. Or is peace a candle that we light at night to keep the darkness away? Peace is all of these things and much more — a hand waved in friendship, a kind deed done without asking anything in return. After all, what matters most is that all of us on Earth find our own ways to love, protect, and care for each other.

— From If Peace Is...
by Jane Baskwill, illustrated by Stephanie Carter; Mondo publishing

Read this story aloud, show the pictures, or watch a video that can be found online.

For discussion:
- What does peace look like?
- What does peace feel like?
- What does peace sound like?
- What does peace smell like?
- How would you describe peace? Include answers from all ages.

Encourage children and adults to write or draw how they see peace today. Provide materials if needed or invite those online to have materials available to participate.

Hymn Choose one or two.
“Put Peace Into Each Other’s Hands” CCS 309
“Who Is This Jesus” CCS 38
“Come Away from Rush and Hurry” CCS 83

Videos Choose one.


Singularity (after Stephen Hawking), Marie Howe, https://vimeo.com/411239105

Our Stories of Discovery
Where have you discovered peace?

Prayer for Peace
Our God, and our Creator, one common prayer have we, one oft-repeated dream. To God we lift one plea: to see the world at peace. Amen.

Or, use today’s Prayer for Peace at www.CofChrist.org/daily-prayer-for-peace
GIVE GENEROUSLY

Disciples’ Generous Response

Free the full capacity of Christ’s mission through generosity that imitates God’s generosity. Listen to the testimonies of those responding generously. Follow your soul’s yearning to come home to God’s grace and generosity. Let gratitude show you the way.

—Doctrine and Covenants 165:2a-2b

Blessing and receiving of offerings.

CONTINUE TO DISCOVER

Transformed by Discovery Choose one.

“Let There Be Peace on Earth” 
*Used in today’s Children’s Lessons.*

“Christ Has Called Us to New Visions” 
“God’s Melody of Peace”

Benediction

Sending Forth

God is calling for a prophetic community to emerge, drawn from the nations of the world, that is characterized by uncommon devotion to the compassion and peace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Through divine grace and wisdom, this faith community has been given abundant gifts, resources, and opportunities to equip it to become such a people.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:11a
SHARING SERVICE DAY 2

GROW PEACE HERE

Worship Center

Create a worship center that includes soil spread on a table or in a container, and a vase of roses or flowers. If you are online, consider beginning the gathering with an image of a rose on the screen and meditative music in the background for the prelude. You can find free images at www.pexels.com/search/rose

MELT

CONSENTING TO GOD’S INVITATION FOR OUR TIME TOGETHER

Prelude

Gathering Music

“Come, Holy Spirit, Come” CCS 154
“Dios está aquí” CCS 150
“Gather Your Children” CCS 77

Welcome

Welcome to our time of sacred community and sharing as we continue to hear and tell stories of nonviolence and peace. Our hope is that today the story shared, and your stories of response, will help us consider how to grow peace here, here in this reunion experience, and in the “here” of our homes, neighborhoods, and communities. As we begin, we invite you to a simple, ancient practice of scripture rumination.

If you are meeting in person, give everyone a piece of paper with the scripture written or printed on it that they can hold in their hands. If online, share your screen or put the scripture in the chat.

Ancient desert monks often would use this practice to memorize a passage of scripture and let it shape their actions throughout the day as a way to grow closer to God. You are invited, for the next minute, to hold this scripture in the silence and repeat it silently in your heart over and over until it is memorized and sinks deeply into your soul as an invitation for your day and your living.

Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

Invocation

Choose to have someone share their own invocation or consider beginning and ending with this simple prayer.
Cultivate in us, O God, fertile soil to grow the wisdom of your love and peace in our daily lives. Help us compost the material of our tensions and challenges to be the source of beauty and new life. Awaken us to see beauty in surprising places and people as we continue to work and live for peace. In the name of Jesus, the peaceful One. Amen.

Community Covenant

Each day we will share together in a community covenant to remind us how we want to be together as we share and practice deeply in sacred community.

_You may think of different ways to engage the covenant each day. Invite diverse voices to participate, including children and youth._

**We will honor the worth of every person.** We want every person, of every age, to feel welcomed and loved in this community.

**We will listen deeply.** We trust that God is present in every person’s story. It is not our job to fix or give advice.

**We will practice curiosity.** There is more to every person than what we can see. If we start to judge or feel defensive, we will turn instead to wonder.

**We will share openly.** It takes courage to share our stories with each other. We support each other as we risk deeper sharing.

**We will be fully present.** God is already among us. We will be present to God and each other in this time of sacred community.

MOLD

BEING FORMED IN THE SPIRIT

**Song**

“Spirit of the Living God”  

_CCS 567_

**Spiritual Practice**


As you begin the story, some children present might not know what manure is. Explain that manure is animal poop. The children might think that is silly or even be surprised to hear someone say “poop” in church! Encourage them to listen closely to the story to hear what happens with the manure.
After reading or listening to the story, invite participants to sit in silence for a moment to let what they have just heard settle onto their hearts. After the silence, read the following questions out loud. Participants may either meditate on the questions or journal their responses. They might engage one or all questions. Allow for a few moments of silence after each question.

After sharing the story, read the questions below allowing time between each one for people to reflect or journal silently to themselves.

A Story of Nonviolent Response
Grow Peace Here

Today’s story of nonviolent response comes to us from the American Civil Rights activist and theologian Howard Thurman (1899-1981). Thurman was fond of telling a story about his grandmother and her hard-hearted neighbor.

His grandmother, a Black woman, owned her own land where she grew her own food and flowers. Her neighbor, a white woman, resented this.

At night, the neighbor would gather up all the manure from her chickens, sneak over into Thurman’s grandmother’s yard, and dump it all onto the flowers and vegetables hoping to destroy them. In the mornings, Thurman’s grandmother would notice the manure, but instead of complaining or trying to seek revenge on her racist neighbor, she would simply work it into the soil.

Over and over this happened until, one day, the neighbor became ill.

No one from the community went to visit her; she was mean to everyone. The neighbor, sick and frail in her bed, heard a knock on her door. She said, “Come in,” and was shocked to see Thurman’s grandmother standing there with a beautiful bunch of roses in her hands.

Why would someone she had been so cruel to come to visit her? The grandmother placed the roses beside the neighbor. She was very moved by this gesture of kindness. “Where did you get such beautiful roses?” the woman asked, astonished.

“You helped me grow them,” Thurman’s grandmother replied. “You see, after every night you dumped chicken droppings into my garden, I would mix them into the soil making it rich and fertile.” The manure had acted as fertilizer. Some people just allow the manure to fall on them, Thurman would say. Others mix it in to make something new. Thurman would tell this story and ask the question, “What can blossom from the manure?”

For reflection

What part of the story about Thurman’s grandmother and her neighbor stand out to you? What parts shimmer or catch your attention? What past experiences or memories does this story stir up for you? What feelings or emotions does it evoke?

What might be God’s invitation to you through this story to Grow Peace Here?
For children
What would you do if someone was putting manure on your pretty garden? How did the grandmother respond? When can gross or mean things be made beautiful and nice?

FILL
RECEIVING THE BLESSING OF SHARING AND HEARING STORIES AND EXPERIENCES

Large- and small-group sharing
Invite participants to form small intergenerational groups, no more than three or four people in each, or just stay in one larger group depending on what participants are comfortable with and your group size. Have each person in the group share their responses to the previous questions. Make sure each group is allowed enough time for everyone to share who wants to.

Before the sharing begins, be sure to stress that this activity is just as much about listening as it is sharing. This is a time to practice active listening skills, which include allowing others to speak fully without interruption.

Optional in-person activity
Have small clay pots available at tables around the room with materials for decorating. Invite participants to decorate their pots with messages of peace. At other tables, have potting soil and small flowers available to plant in the pots when they are done. Encourage them to place their planted flower somewhere in their home (or around the campgrounds) to remember the beauty that comes from peaceful acts.

Song  Choose one.
“Humble Yourself”  CCS 211
“He Came Singing Love”  CCS 226
“Lord Jesus Christ, Lover of All”  CCS 231

USE
DISCERNING RESPONSE THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Discernment Question
Each day we will offer a discernment question to pose to the large group.

How can you begin to incorporate the “manure” of life so that roses of peace may bloom?

Find a creative way to keep this discernment question visible throughout the day.
Closing song  Choose one.

“We Are One in the Spirit”  CCS 359
“We Are the Ones the World Awaits”  CCS 305

Closing prayer/Sending forth

Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, you will be children of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.


Cultivate in us, O God, fertile soil to grow the wisdom of your love and peace in our daily lives. Help us compost the material of our tensions and challenges to be the source of beauty and new life. Awaken us to see beauty in surprising places and people as we continue to work and live for peace. In the name of Jesus, the peaceful One, Amen.
FOCUS: We Lament and Move to Grow
Matthew 13:1-9

Lament is about creating space for our pain to breathe. We acknowledge it, we are honest about it, and we come before God with our feelings and frustrations. There is something strange in the way that we get a sense of healing by just being honest about our suffering even if the situation doesn’t change.

Worship Center
A worship center could include elements particular to where your experience is happening. What elements of growth might be represented in our experience here?

A virtual worship center could invite each participant to share something that represents growth to them. Consider taking a picture of your community to use throughout reunion.

WE GATHER

Gathering Songs
Choose two or more.

“God of Grace and God of Laughter” CCS 100
“Earth and All Stars” CCS 102
“For Beauty of Meadows” CCS 142
“Rain Down” CCS 260
“Put Peace into Each Other’s Hands” CCS 309
“Peace Salaam Shalom” CCS 310
Used in today’s Children’s Lessons.
“When the Darkness Overwhelms Us” CCS 314

WELCOME

Welcome to Worship

Sharing and Response

Discerning Response
Each day during the Sharing Service, a discerning question is posed for the day. Ask one or two people to respond on their experience with the discerning question posed in the morning.
As I’ve reflected today, I have decided to incorporate the “manure” of life so that roses of peace may bloom; I will…?

**Together We Respond**

“All Are Welcome”  
*Used in today’s Children’s Lessons. Sing verse 2.*

**Scripture Reading**

Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God’s shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life. Follow Christ in the way that leads to God’s peace and discover the blessings of all of the dimensions of salvation.

—*Doctrine and Covenants 163:2a*

**Invocation**

*Invite someone to offer a prayer of invocation or use this short prayer.*

Cultivate in us, O God, fertile soil to grow the wisdom of your love and peace in our daily lives. Help us compost the material of our tensions and challenges to be the source of beauty and new life. Awaken us to see beauty in surprising places and people as we continue to work and live for peace. In the name of Jesus, the peaceful One, Amen.

**OUR JOURNEY REFLECTION**

**Scripture**

Matthew 13:1-9

Reader 1: That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying:

Reader 2: Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed,

Reader 3: some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up.

Reader 1: Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil.

Reader 3: But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away.

Reader 1: Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.
Reader 3: Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Reader 2: Let anyone with ears listen!

Meditation
“Spirit of the Living God”  
Sing once or twice; could be a solo.

Read or Watch—both of these suggestions can be found online.

You’re here for a reason. If you think you’re not, I would just say that perhaps you forgot a piece of the world that is precious and dear would surely be missing if you weren’t here. Every person matters.

—from You’re Here for a Reason by Nancy Tillman  
Feiwel & Friends Publishing  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IlnanS4jxk&t=28s

AND/OR

“Ode to Dirt”
Dear dirt, I am sorry I slighted you,
I thought that you were only the background
for the leading characters—the plants
and animals and human animals.
It’s as if I had loved only the stars
—and not the sky which gave them space
in which to shine. Subtle, various,
sensitive, you are the skin of our terrain,
you’re our democracy. When I understood
I had never honored you as a living
equal, I was ashamed of myself,
as if I had not recognized
a character who looked so different from me,
but now I can see us all, made of the
same basic materials—
cousins of that first exploding from nothing—
in our intricate equation together. O dirt,
help us find ways to serve your life,
you who have brought us forth, and fed us,
and who at the end will take us in
and rotate with us, and wobble, and orbit.

—Sharon Olds  
www.youtube.com/watch?v=gW_sSwS9sUg
For discussion:

- Where do you live? What does it look like?
- But we all live here on Earth, right? Does everything that grows in the dirt look the same? Is all dirt the same (clay, rocky, dry, swamp)?
- It takes good grounding, but it doesn’t matter that we’re all different, and it’s important that we’re all different. Peace takes many different forms, and it needs each of us to do our part.

SHARING

Meditation

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, “Where is your God?”

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul:
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

—Psalm 42:1-4, 11

We never could have anticipated how this past year unfolded. There were so many losses, plans interrupted, changes we couldn’t foresee.

*Ask two or three individuals or open it to everyone if they’d like to respond to one of these questions of lament.*

- What are you lamenting?
- What or who are you missing?
- In what ways are you straining to see God?
- Even in our lament, where have you recognized growth?

Hymn of Confession

“As the Deer”

Sing or share as a reading of the verses.

We Pray for Peace

Great God, our sustainer, and our hope, we praise you and thank you for being mindful of your creation.

*The people pray in silence.*

We confess to you our shortcomings. In your compassion, forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. We pray for the needs of those here gathered. Guide and lift us through our times of lament.

*The people pray in silence.*
We pray for all people in their daily lives and work—our families, friends, and neighbors, and those who are alone. We pray for our continued growth in peace as we work for justice and freedom of all people.

The people pray in silence.

May we be instruments of that joy and peace in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

—Prayers and Readings for Worship,
   Peter Judd, editor

Or, use today’s Prayer for Peace at www.CofChrist.org/daily-prayer-for-peace

WE RESPOND GENEROUSLY

Grow Peace Here

This could be one person, or two responding in conversational style, as to how we move from our times of lament into a fuller life of growth. Growth can be challenging and painful. But it is to peace that we are called to grow.

Scripture

There are many lives waiting to hear the redeeming words of the gospel, or to be lifted from hopelessness by the hands of loving servants. But they will be lost to you without the generous response of disciples who share from their own bounty that others may know the joys of the kingdom.

—Doctrine and Covenants 162:7a

Blessing and Receiving of Mission Tithes

Hymn of Transformation  Choose one.

“God, Whose Grace Redeems Our Story”  CCS 570
“We Need Each Other’s Voice to Sing”  CCS 324
“Touch Me, Lord, with Thy Spirit Eternal”  CCS 574

Benediction and Sending Forth

When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ’s new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation, you will become who you are called to be. The rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Christ, awaits your whole-hearted response to the call to make and steadfastly hold to God’s covenant of peace in Jesus Christ.

—Doctrine and Covenants 164:9b
SHARING SERVICE DAY 3

PRACTICE PEACE HERE

Worship Center

Display representations of connectedness: a bridge, spider web, electrical circuit, links in a chain, ecosystem, etc. These could be displayed as pictures or objects.

Materials

Balls of yarn for each small group (for in-person gathering)

You may want to prepare your community for the difficulty of the story that will be shared today. Although effort was made to avoid details, the story does speak of children dying. Parents may want to have this information ahead of time so they can make informed decisions regarding their child(ren)’s exposure to the content of the story.

MELT

CONSENTING TO GOD’S INVITATION FOR OUR TIME TOGETHER

Prelude

Gathering

Choose one or more songs.

“Prayer for Peace” CCS 164
“Dios esta’ aqui’” (“God Is Here Today”) CCS 150
“Gonna Lay Down My Sword and Shield” CCS 321

Welcome

Welcome to this time of sacred community, practice, and sharing. Today we invite you to join us as we explore what it means to Practice Peace Here. Our story of nonviolence today is one of tragedy, forgiveness, reconciliation, healing and relationship. Although things such as culture, faith, and life experiences make us each unique, there are threads of commonality that weave people together as community. Creating the type of community that is expressed in our story doesn’t come without daily faith, contemplation, intention and sometimes sheer determination. As you hear today’s text, consider the power of community to help us grow and love one another.

Scripture

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

—1 Corinthians 12:12-13
Naming our Gratitude

We belong to one another. Invite the community to shout out the names of people, present or absent, living or deceased, for whom they are grateful today.

Community Covenant

Each day, we will share together in a community covenant to remind us how we want to be together as we share and practice deeply in sacred community.

You may think of different ways to engage the covenant each day. Invite diverse voices to participate, including children and youth.

We will honor the worth of every person. We want every person, of every age, to feel welcomed and loved in this community.

We will listen deeply. We trust that God is present in every person’s story. It is not our job to fix or give advice.

We will practice curiosity. There is more to every person than what we can see. If we start to judge or feel defensive, we will turn instead to wonder.

We will share openly. It takes courage to share our stories with each other. We support each other as we risk deeper sharing.

We will be fully present. God is already among us. We will be present to God and each other in this time of sacred community.

MOLD

BEING FORMED IN THE SPIRIT

Song

Choose one, to help the community center.

“Spirit of the Living God”   CCS 567
“Listen in the Silence”   CCS 153
“Come and Find the Quiet Center”   CCS 151

Spiritual Practice: Story of Nonviolence

Reader’s Theater

Ask five people to read for the voices in this story. If possible, ask people who can project the emotion expressed by each of these perspectives. After the story read the questions again, and allow time for people to reflect or journal silently. Consider printing or projecting the questions.

As you listen to this story of nonviolent response, reconciliation, and relationships, consider:
What captures your attention in this story? What questions are stirring within you?

Imagine yourself in this story. Who do you relate to most? Who do you struggle to understand?

As you consider your present life situation(s), what is God’s invitation to you?

For children

Write or draw to answer these questions:

- How do you feel after hearing this story?
- Which person surprises you?

Reader’s Theater

Reader 1:
Today’s story is one that many may know. It is a story of tragedy. It is also a story of unfathomable forgiveness, healing, and relationship. On October 2, 2006, a shooting occurred at West Nickel Mines Amish School in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Five girls and one man died, and five other girls were injured. Listen to some of the voices from the days and weeks surrounding this event.

Reader 2 (Charlie): My name is Charlie. My daughter Elise was born three months premature. She didn’t survive. She was our first child. Marie and I were looking forward to being parents. I feel so much pain and loss. I am angry at you, God, for taking her away. I’m going to make you hurt the way I do!

Reader 3 (Amish Boy): I was in there the day Charlie came barging in and forced us boys to carry supplies from his truck into the schoolhouse. I knew Charlie. He picked up milk from our farm in a tanker truck. I didn’t understand what was going on. After we carried everything in, Charlie ordered us boys out and barricaded the door. All we could do was pray, wait, and hope.

Reader 4 (Marie): My name is Marie. My husband, Charlie, never got over the loss of our daughter, Elise. He suffered from periodic bouts of depression. I would ask him, “Why don’t you talk about this with someone? Can you talk about it with me? Can you talk about it with your parents? Could you talk about it with someone at church? Don’t you have a friend you could talk about this with?” And I was always met with the same resistance and the same, “No, I can handle this on my own.” It was obvious at the end that he couldn’t.

I will never forget the phone call I got from him early that morning. He called to tell me that he was never coming home, and that he’d left her a letter. I was alarmed and pleaded with him to reconsider whatever it was he was about to do. I just thought it was something that he was doing to himself. I had no idea that it was going to involve other people. I pleaded with him to come home and talk to me. He never came home. What happened that day—what Charlie did—was unthinkable.

I found myself struggling to come to grips with my husband’s death and his crimes. I was lost. I felt alone, devastated, broken. How can I face my community? What do I tell our children?
The last thing I expected was a visit from a group of grieving Amish. My dad went out to meet them. I couldn’t hear what they were saying, but I could see the exchange that was happening. I could see their arms extending. And the way they laid their hands on my dad’s shoulder. I couldn’t hear the words they were saying, but I could feel the emotion of the moment. They told me dad they had forgiven my husband. They were concerned about me and concerned about the kids, and wanted us to know that they supported our family. It was overwhelming. But it was by no means the end of their grace.

Media besieged us as we proceeded to Charlie’s burial. Even though they don’t like to have their pictures taken, members of the Amish community placed themselves directly in front of news cameras to shield my family. They turned their backs to the cameras so the only pictures that could be taken were of them and not of our family. It was amazing to me that they would do that for us. It was one of those moments during that week where my breath was taken away, but not because of the evil. But because of the love.

**Reader 5 (Terri):** My name is Terri. My son did a terrible thing. After we realized what had happened, my husband was inconsolable. He kept saying over and over again, “I will never be able to face my Amish neighbors again.” Later that afternoon an Amish neighbor told him otherwise. “We love you. We don’t hold anything against you or your son. We’re a forgiving people.” I was stunned.

Later in the week we had a private funeral for our son. As we went to the gravesite, there must have been almost 40 Amish coming out from around the side of the graveyard, surrounding us like a crescent. Love just emanated from them.

At one point I recall one of the fathers saying, “I believe that I have forgiven, but there are some days when I question that.” Forgiveness was something I really struggled with—accepting it. I found it especially difficult when I met one of the survivors, Rosanna. She was the most injured of the survivors. She is still tube-fed and uses a wheelchair. She has seizures, and when it gets closer to the anniversary date, she seizes more. Life is not as it should’ve been for this girl.

I was blessed to be granted permission to help with Rosanna once a week. I read to her, I bathe her, dry her hair. While I can’t say it with 100 percent certainty, I believe Rosanna knows who I am. Our relationship is a healing balm.

**Reader 6 (Christ King):** My name is Christ. I am Rosanna’s dad. Amish are like anyone else, with the same frailties and emotions. We hope that we have forgiven, but there actually are times that we struggle with that, and I have to ask myself, “Have I really forgiven?” We have a lot of work to do to live up to what we are bragged up to be. Everyone was talking about this forgiveness thing, and I felt that was putting a lot of weight on our shoulders to live up to that. Rosanna wasn’t expected to survive her injuries. She laughs, cries, and responds to stimuli, and is mentally alert. But she doesn’t walk, talk, or eat without a tube. She requires constant care. I am deeply appreciative of the time Terri spends with Rosanna. It provides a few hours of relief in our otherwise busy days. None of us would have ever chosen this. But the relationships that we have built through it. …There are no words adequate enough to explain the blessings.

*Reread the questions from above. Allow time for personal reflection, journaling or drawing. You might choose to play some meditative music or maintain silence during this time.*
RECEIVING THE BLESSING OF SHARING AND HEARING ONE ANOTHER’S STORIES AND EXPERIENCES

Give the community a few moments to breathe after what they have just heard. Absorb the story for a few moments in silence.

Optional

Have a soloist sing a capella, “Soften My Heart” CCS 187 as a response to what was just shared.

Group sharing

Offer a ball of yarn/string as a catalyst for conversation and inclusivity for all ages. If your group is meeting virtually use a shared screen through a whiteboard-type application. (Most teachers will be familiar with appropriate platforms/applications.) Each group participant’s name can be put on the virtual whiteboard.

Form small groups by setting chairs in a circle (or in a breakout room if online). Invite people to share from their time of reflection. Make sure to draw attention to the Community Covenant and its role in creating safe space. One person will start with the ball of yarn/string. They will share with the group.

Once that person is done, if someone in the group hears something they can relate to—it could be a feeling, thought, detail (for example, “When I was 15…”)—they raise their hand. The person who shared will then throw the ball of yarn or string to that person while holding on to the end of the yarn or string.

The next person mentions the commonality and then proceeds to share their reflection. Once they are done, anyone in the group that has a commonality with what was shared (in any way similar), the ball is thrown to them. The person that just shared will hang onto their spot of yarn or string. Eventually this process will create a web. If the group is online, names of each group member can be put on a shared whiteboard-style screen around the outside edge of the screen. As each one shares a line can be drawn to connect the people as a visual representation of the web.

Song

Draw the community together.

“We Are One in the Spirit” CCS 359

“Put Peace Into Each Other’s Hands” CCS 309

USE

DISCERNING RESPONSE THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Discernment Practice

Holy Attention is a conscious decision to be fully present at any given time, in any given situation, while with any other person. It requires us to put aside thoughts of the future (what we need or want to do, where
we need or want to be), memories, emotions or ideas rooted in the past and simply focus on the present moment. Utilizing our senses to take in all that is around us and within us. Deeply listening to those we come in contact with. Putting aside our thoughts and ideas to simply hear and sense what another is thinking, feeling, experiencing.

As you go through this day, practice Holy Attention. Be fully present in your coming and going, in your interactions and conversations, in times of stillness. Listen. Just listen. Listen around you. Listen within you. Listen in the silence. Listen in the noise.

Closing Song
Choose one. If there are time constraints, consider singing just one or two verses.

“We Are the Ones the World Awaits” CCS 305
“Listen in the Silence” CCS 153
“Let There Be Peace on Earth” CCS 307

Pastoral Prayer


Resources for the Story of Nonviolence

• One Light Still Shines: My Life Beyond the Shadow of the Amish Schoolhouse Shooting; Marie Monville and Cindy Lambert; Zondervan
• Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy; Donald Kraybill, Steven Nolt, and David Weaver-Zercher; Wiley
• Think No Evil: Inside the Story of the Amish Schoolhouse Shooting...and Beyond; Jonas Beiler and Shawn Smucker; Howard Books
• The Happening—Nickel Mines School Tragedy; Harvey Yoder; TGS International
WORSHIP DAY 3

PRACTICE PEACE HERE

FOCUS: Mold Me
Matthew 5:46-47

Worship Center
A worship center could include elements particular to where your experience is happening. What elements of practice might be represented in our experience here?

A virtual worship center could invite each participant to share something that represents practice to them. Consider taking a picture of your community to use throughout reunion.

WE GATHER

Gathering
Choose two or more songs.

“God of Wonder, God of Thunder” CCS 18
“Teach Me, God, To Wonder” CCS 176
“Gentle God, When We are Driven” CCS 222
“Light Dawns on a Weary World” CCS 240
“Let Justice Roll Like a River” CCS 288

WELCOME

Welcome

Sharing and Response

Discerning Response
Ask one or two people to respond to the discerning question posed in the morning Sharing Service.

Today as I practiced Holy Attention, I heard…

Together We Respond
“All Are Welcome” Verse 3 CCS 276
_used in today’s Children’s Lessons._
Call to Worship

Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Be assured that love will overcome the voices of fear, division, and deceit. Understand that the road to transformation travels both inward and outward. The road to transformation is the path of the disciple.

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:3c-3d

Invocation

Musical Response Choose one.

“Summoned by the God Who Made Us” CCS 330
“Weave” CCS 327
“In Christ We Live” CCS 326

Reflection

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

—Matthew 5:46-47

Meditation

“Spirit of the Living God” CCS 567

Sing once or twice; could be a solo or an instrumental.

Read

This could be one reader or multiple readers.

Love your neighbor as yourself.
Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.
Love your neighbor no less than you love yourself.
Love your neighbor as if they were yourself.
Love your neighbor with the same love you yourself are worthy of.
Love your neighbor with the same concern and compassion you yourself deserve.
Love your neighbor in the extravagant way you desire to be loved.
Love your neighbor’s well-being just as you love your own.
Love your neighbor’s needs the same way you would want your needs loved.
Love your neighbor enough to let them hold you accountable.
Love your neighbor enough to challenge them when they don’t love themselves—or you.
Love your neighbor when it’s the last thing you want to do.
Love your neighbor’s story as your own story.
Love your neighbor’s success as your own success.
Love your neighbor’s struggles as your own struggles.
Love your neighbor as they would want to be loved.
Love your neighbor from an active, involved, invested, humble place of solidarity.
Love your neighbor as yourself.
Love yourself loving the practice of loving your neighbor.

—Dan Gregory

www.facebook.com/dangregory86/posts/10100180900916429

Mindfulness Story

_I Am Peace: A Book of Mindfulness;_ Abrams Books for Young Readers; Susan Verde author, art by Peter H. Reynolds

_Read or watch a video of this book read aloud. This book includes guided meditation._

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXA3837uv3w

Mindfulness means being fully in the present moment. Children can learn how to manage their emotions, make good choices, and balance their busy lives by learning to be mindful. Express emotions through speech. Find empathy through imagination. Wonder at the beauty of the natural world.

Discussion

- We talked about Holy Attention this morning. Did you notice anything special today? Did you stop and listen? What did you hear? What did you see that you might have passed by?
- What happens when we notice our friends beyond just what we see and hear?
- Spend a few minutes with the guided meditation.

Prayer for Peace

O living God, whose presence now surrounds us and fills our hearts with joy and hope and peace, help us to see that in your world around us your Spirit breathes, your love will never cease. But weary souls, that love not comprehending, still need to know that your love brings release.

The peace of Christ be in us and shown through us, and fill our world with harmony and peace. The peace of Christ will fill us and renew us, and bring us new direction and release. Help us to be responsive, God, work through us; your Spirit breathes, your love will never cease! Amen.

—“O Living God,” CCS 183

Or, use today’s Prayer for Peace at www.CofChrist.org/daily-prayer-for-peace

Hymn

“O Lord, Hear My Prayer”

_Sing once or twice, or as a solo or an instrumental._

Message, Testimonials, or a Community Activity

Practice Peace Here

_Write acrostic peace poems or acrostic peace thoughts in small groups._
An acrostic is a poem or other form of writing in which the first letter, syllable or word of each line (or paragraph, or other recurring feature in the text) spells out a word, message, or the alphabet.) Starting with each of these letters—P E A C E—what are five ways to practice peace? Draw a picture or symbol to go with your writing. Divide the work among your group. Use different mediums (crayons, markers, air clay, pipe cleaners). Invite each group to share what it means to Practice Peace Here.

WE RESPOND GENEROUSLY

Disciples’ Generous Response

If you truly would be Community of Christ, then embody and live the concerns and passion of Christ.

—Doctrine and Covenants 164:9d

Blessing and Receiving of Mission Tithes

Hymn Choose one.

“We Are One in the Spirit” CCS 359
“We Lord Make Us Instruments” CCS 364
“O God of Love Grant Us Your Peace” CCS 316

Benediction and Sending Forth

Sending Forth

Beloved Community of Christ, do not just speak and sing of Zion. Live, love, and share as Zion: those who strive to be visibly one in Christ, among whom there are no poor or oppressed.

—Doctrine and Covenants 165:6a, 6c

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

—1 Corinthians 12:12

Go, continue to practice peace here.
SHARING SERVICE DAY 4

DISCERN PEACE HERE

MELT
CONSENTING TO GOD’S INVITATION FOR OUR TIME TOGETHER

Prelude

Gathering Music
“I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me” CCS 581
“Into My Heart” CCS 573
“Spirit of the Living God” CCS 567

Welcome
Welcome to this time of sacred community, practice, and sharing.

Today we invite you to join us as we explore what it means to Discern Peace Here. We will be looking through the lens of the stories our children watch, read, and hear. As people of Christ’s peace, we are called to notice the stories we are consuming daily and when we are being formed by images and stories of redemptive violence and when we are being formed by images and stories of Christ’s peace.

Sometimes this happens in subtle ways and we don’t notice it. It can be the way we talk in politics, in the news, in the movies we watch. Anytime there is a bad guy and a good guy, and the good guy wins through violent means, we are consuming a cultural narrative of redemptive violence.

Jesus was constantly inviting his disciples to rethink who was a bad guy and who was a good guy and how to respond when our impulse is violence. In fact, Jesus almost always helped us to see that God desires everyone’s wholeness and sees the inherent goodness in us all. In Community of Christ, we believe in the worth of all people, which means there are no bad guys. This can be hard and complicated because sometimes people do things that are violent, mean, oppressive, and destructive, but we believe in the power of redemption, reconciliation, and creative ways to reach out in love to solve our problems as a first response.

Today we will explore stories that help us imagine what it looks like to discern peace wherever we are.

Invocation
Invite three children to participate.

Child 1: God, sometimes I get so angry. I want to hit someone or yell something really mean.
All Children: Discern peace here.
Child 1: But then I think about peace and take a breath. You are with me in my anger.
Child 2: And sometimes I am so sad. My heart hurts. I don’t want to play with my friends anymore.
All Children: Discern peace here.
Child 2: But then I think about peace, tell my friends how I feel, and we make up. You are with me in my sadness.
Child 3: God, sometimes I like to pretend that I am a superhero and I hurt all the bad guys.
All Children: Discern peace here.
Child 3: But then I think about peace and find ways to play that are more loving and fun.
All Children: You are our peace.
Child 1: Help us remember peace when we are angry.
Child 2: And when we are sad.
Child 3: And in our play.
All Children: Amen.

Community Covenant
Each day, we will share in a community covenant to remind us how we want to be together as we share and practice deeply in sacred community.

*You may think of different ways to engage the covenant each day. Invite diverse voices to participate, including children and youth.*

We will honor the worth of every person. We want every person, of every age, to feel welcomed and loved in this community.

We will listen deeply. We trust that God is present in every person’s story. It is not our job to fix or give advice.

We will practice curiosity. There is more to every person than what we can see. If we start to judge or feel defensive, we will turn instead to wonder.

We will share openly. It takes courage to share our stories with each other. We support each other as we risk deeper sharing.

We will be fully present. God is already among us. We will be present to God and each other in this time of sacred community.

**MOLD**

**BEING FORMED IN THE SPIRIT**

**Song**
*Choose one.*

“Lord, Who Views All People Precious”  
“Gentle God, When We Are Driven”  

*CCS 637  
CCS 222*
Scripture Reading
Read this text three times, allowing brief pauses of silence between each reading to ponder the questions.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

—Isaiah 52:7

What messages of peace have you received lately from movies, television, friends, stories, the community?

Pause for silence.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

How are you called to be a messenger of peace throughout your daily life? What stories and news of peace are you called to share with others?

Pause for silence.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

Rest in this invitation and calling as you listen to our next story of peace.

Spiritual Practice
Stories of Nonviolence

Read, tell, or play a video of this story from Katie Harmon-McLaughlin as she reflects on an experience with her 3-year-old daughter while watching a movie that has a surprising nonviolent twist. Warn the community that there are spoilers if they haven’t seen the movie!

A ‘Big Hero’ Lesson
One day, I was sitting with my 3-year old daughter watching the Disney movie, Big Hero 6. This movie follows the story of a talented but troubled and grieving young boy, Hiro, whose older brother died in a tragic accident. Hiro’s brother had created a super-cool robot, Baymax, whose mission is to help other people and offer healthcare. As the plot unfolds, the story grows more complicated and quickly a villain emerges, Professor Callahan, who has his own complicated story of grief, anger, and revenge. Hiro discovers that Professor Callahan was responsible for the fire that killed Hiro’s older brother. Hiro gets very angry. At the heart of the movie, Hiro tries to reprogram Baymax, the healthcare robot, to kill Professor Callahan.

But before he can do this, Baymax asks Hiro an important question, “Will terminating Professor Callahan improve your emotional state?” It is such an innocent, honest question from a robot whose
mission is to help and heal, but it is a critical moment in the movie where the main character, Hiro, takes a deeper look at what is motivating him and what to do with the grief and rage he feels. He confesses that no, killing someone else will not make him feel better. As I watched with my 3-year old watching this scene, I felt overwhelmed with gratitude that she was glimpsing another story, a rare story, of peaceful response rather than killing, of a simple question that uncovered the pain that sometimes leads us to commit violent actions.

Hiro ends up capturing the villain, but Hiro and his friends vow to do it peacefully, and by the end of the film even the villain is somewhat redeemed because we see the complexity of his own story and the grief that motivated his actions. People are complicated and sacred. I hope my 3-year old got the message from a lovable, wise robot advocating nonviolent response. I know I did. I am grateful anytime I encounter stories, especially stories for our children, that demonstrate alternatives to violence and help us see the true source of our actions.

—Katie Harmon-McLaughlin, Spiritual Formation Ministries

Show Video Clip

www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8XZThf69pc

Check copyright capacities to see if you can stream this clip. A streaming license might cover Disney Movies, or purchase a short-term streaming license for reunion and camps.

After the story, invite people to take a few moments in silence or with meditative music to reflect on what they have heard/seen and write or draw in response.

- What captured your attention in this story?
- What memories, images, or emotions come up for you?
- What is God’s invitation to you in this story?

FILL

RECEIVING THE BLESSING OF SHARING AND HEARING EACH OTHER’S STORIES AND EXPERIENCES

Small-group reflection and sharing
Try to make the groups as intergenerational as possible
- How many people have seen Big Hero 6 (show of hands)?
- Has there been a time in your life when you thought a violent verbal or physical reaction would “improve your emotional state?” What can improve your emotional state?
- What is God’s invitation to you in today’s story?

Large-group reflection
- What did you hear in your small group that impacted you?
• Can you think of other stories (in books or movies) that demonstrate a peaceful alternative to solving our problems?
• What is God’s invitation to you in this story?

Song
“Ososo”

USE

DISCERNING RESPONSE THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Question/Practice
Cathi Cackler-Veazey gives a sneak peak of the new Children’s Peace Pavilion in Independence, Missouri, USA, and talks with her grandchildren about the practice, “Stop. Think. Peace.”

Consider making “Stop. Think. Peace.” visible throughout out the day.

Closing Prayer or Sending Forth

God, you know the motivations of our hearts and the thoughts in our minds. You know our histories and the pain we carry from past hurts. Help us to see beneath the surface of our anger and hurt to the redemptive power of your love that can make all things new. Help us to stop, think, and act in peace when we are tempted to react with violent words or actions. Dream within us new stories of how to respond to challenging moments so that we can dream and live your vision of peace for all people.
Amen.

Closing  Choose one.
“My Peace”
“Prayer of Peace”
WORSHIP DAY 4

DISCERN PEACE HERE

FOCUS: Fill Me
Matthew 8:23-27

Worship Center

*A worship center could include elements particular to where your experience is happening. What elements of discernment might be represented in our experience here?*

*A virtual worship center could invite each participant to share something that represents discernment to them. Consider taking a picture of your community to use throughout reunion.*

WE GATHER

Gathering Songs
Choose two or more songs.

“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” CCS 87
“Earth and All Stars” CCS 102
“Spirit Fill Us” CCS 160
“God is Calling” CCS 172
“Let Us Pray for One Another” CCS 186
“For the Healing of the Nations” CCS 297
“Prophetic Church, the Future Waits” CCS 362
“I’ve Got Peace Like a River” Campfire song

Used in today’s Children’s Lessons.

WELCOME

Welcome to Worship

Sharing and Response

Discerning Response
*Ask one or two people to respond to the discerning question posed in the morning Sharing Service.*

Today I put “Stop. Think. Peace.” where I could be reminded throughout the day of them, and this is what I experienced…
Together We Respond
“All Are Welcome” verse 4 CCS 276
Used in today’s Children’s Lessons.

Call to Worship

The Spirit of the One you follow is the spirit of love and peace. That Spirit seeks to abide in
the hearts of those who would embrace its call and live its message. The path will not always
be easy, the choices will not always be clear, but the cause is sure and the Spirit will bear
witness to the truth, and those who live the truth will know the hope and the joy of discipleship
in the community of Christ.

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:7

Singing Our Discerning  Choose one.
“Come Let Us Dwell” CCS 173
“The Love of God” CCS 210
“Lord Speak to Me” CCS 179

Invocation

Scripture Reading
This could be dramatized as it is read or assigned different speaking parts.

And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A windstorm arose on the sea, so
great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and
woke him up, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” And he said to them, “Why are you
afraid, you of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was
a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and
the sea obey him?”

—Matthew 8:23-27

Meditation
“Spirit of the Living God” CCS 567
Sing once or twice; could be a solo or an instrumental.

Option 1: The Rabbit Listened
by Cori Doerrfeld

Read or watch a video of this book read aloud.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJ8OPujLaq4

Option 2: Use this drama option.

Have two people talking as friends, having a heart-to-heart talk. One person is sharing about things in
their life that are troubling them (a disagreement with a friend that was left on bad terms, a mistake
that they made at work, hurtful words that they said to their significant other that they regret, a health scare with their aging parents, worrying about being able to pay their rent with after some unexpected car expenses). With each thing that is shared, the other person tells them not to worry, it’ll be fine, and places a Band-Aid on the hurting individual. (Or create larger Band-Aids cut out from paper so they are more visible to the audience.)

Eventually, the person places a Band-Aid over their hurting friend’s mouth. The hurting individual looks really sad while the other person continues babbling on positively about their life while walking away. “Hope you feel better!” they call out.

Another person joins the sad, bandaged individual. “Are you OK?” they ask. The bandaged person shakes their head.

“Do you want to talk about it?” they ask. The bandaged person nods their head.

Slowly, the person begins peeling off the Band-Aids. “These look really painful. I know I can’t fix it, but I’d love to sit with you and talk about it, if you’re ready.”

The formerly bandaged person sighs and smiles and the two embrace. “It’s a long story, I don’t want to burden you,” the formerly bandaged person says.

“Please,” as the newcomer puts an arm around the hurt person’s shoulder. “I’m here to listen.”

**Hymn**

“Open My Heart”

*Use the tune from CCS 53, “Old Hundredth,” with words from CCS 171.*

**Message**

Putting It Together: Discover, Grow, Practice

**Prayer for Peace**

Adonai, Allah, Great Spirit, Jesus, God of all nations and all peoples, by whatever name you are known, we come before you in praise and thanksgiving. Guide us into the joy of being, and the desire of joyful peace for all peoples.

*The people pray in silence.*

Great God, we would ask for your guidance as we try to live by your standards of peace in our daily living. Forgive our sins of selfishness and pride, we humbly ask.

*The people pray in silence.*

Hear our collective prayers, O God of Peace, that your peace may become the peace of this world.

Amen.

---Prayers and Readings for Worship, Peter Judd, editor

*Or, use today’s Prayer for Peace at www.CofChrist.org/daily-prayer-for-peace*
WE RESPOND GENEROUSLY

Disciples’ Generous Response

Faithful disciples respond to an increasing awareness of the abundant generosity of God by sharing according to the desires of their hearts; not by commandment or constraint. Break free of the shackles of conventional culture that mainly promote self-serving interests. Give generously according to your true capacity.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:9

Blessing and Receiving of Mission Tithes

Hymn  Choose one.
“Praise the Source of Faith and Learning”  CCS 174
“God Is Calling”  CCS 172
“Teach Me God to Wonder”  CCS 176

Benediction and Sending Forth

Even here, in the gaps,
where the unknowing
leaves you restless,
remember that the wisdom
your soul longs to gather
takes time.
Slow down. Look around.

What are you meant to learn here?
Where is action required?
Where is stillness required?
Wrestle with these questions
of a lifetime.

—Morgan Harper Nichols,
www.instagram.com/p/CE-ZdTRg3ki
SHARING SERVICE DAY 5

CREATE PEACE HERE

Today’s peace story is about the Rwandan Genocide. It might be difficult for some participants, especially younger ones, to hear or reflect on. Context is very important in understanding this story. Consider having someone on hand to listen to those who struggle to process the story and their response to it. The heart of this story is to illustrate the transformational power when we choose peaceful response to violence, even when that violence is extreme and done personally to us.

We should not be naive when it comes to such work, but we must also be open to its potential. Although not directly from Rwanda, many of the hymn suggestions originate from the African continent or focus on healing and reconciliation.

MELT

CONSENTING TO GOD’S INVITATION FOR OUR TIME TOGETHER

Prelude

Gathering Music
“Dona Nobis Pacem” CCS 155
“Ameni” CCS 113
“As We Gather” CCS 73

Welcome/Invocation
As a welcome or invocation to this service, read this passage of scripture. Feel free to offer your own prayer or welcome or scripture passage that is appropriate to the theme.

Open your hearts and feel the yearnings of your brothers and sisters who are lonely, despised, fearful, neglected, unloved. Reach out in understanding, clasp their hands, and invite all to share in the blessings of community created in the name of the One who suffered on behalf of all.

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:3a

Community Covenant
Each day, we will share together in a community covenant to remind us how we want to be together as we share and practice deeply in sacred community.

Think of different ways to engage the covenant each day. Invite diverse voices to participate, including children and youth.
We will honor the worth of every person. We want every person, of every age, to feel welcomed and loved in this community.

We will listen deeply. We trust that God is present in every person’s story. It is not our job to fix or give advice.

We will practice curiosity. There is more to every person than what we can see. If we start to judge or feel defensive, we will turn instead to wonder.

We will share openly. It takes courage to share our stories with each other. We support each other as we risk deeper sharing.

We will be fully present. God is already among us. We will be present to God and each other in this time of sacred community.

MOLD

BEING FORMED IN THE SPIRIT

Song

“Spirit of the Living God”    CCS 567

Spiritual Practice: Have someone read this story of nonviolence or show the video of the Hedman family from Placerville, California, USA talking about this story with one another. Find the video at www.CofChrist.org/reunion-resources-2021. After sharing the story, read these questions, allowing time between each one for people to reflect or journal silently to themselves.

A Story of Nonviolent Response

Create Peace Here

Today’s peace story comes from Finding Beauty in a Broken World, a book by Terry Tempest Williams, recipient of the 2011 Community of Christ International Peace Award. Williams traveled to the country of Rwanda in Africa as part of a small team there to help create a memorial to the victims of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide in which hundreds of thousands were killed in the Hutu and Tutsi conflict. (Genocide is the systematic and deliberate killing of a large group of people by another group usually based on particular characteristic like ethnicity or religion.) While she was in Rwanda, Williams learned of a particular type of restorative justice system enacted after the genocide called Gacaca (ga-cha-cha). Unlike traditional court systems, the goal of Gacaca in Rwanda is to discover the truth about war crimes committed during the genocide and foster healing and reconciliation between the victims and perpetrators of those crimes.

This community-based form of restorative justice, although a long-standing Rwandan tradition, was established anew after more traditional criminal tribunals moved too slowly and convicted too few perpetrators. Although Gacaca is not perfect, it is an alternative justice system that focuses on reconciliation rather than punishment and creates the opportunity for healing. In other words, it creates a space for peace to flourish where there was once violence.
In Rwanda, Terry Tempest Williams had a translator named Louis. He told her a story of Gacaca. During the genocide a woman witnessed the murder of her children and husband—her entire family.

When the murderer was called before the community, he accepted the crime he had been accused of and apologized to the woman. In response, the woman, who had no more family and was alone, chose to forgive her family’s killer and even take him into her home vowing to do whatever it would take to make this man feel like her own son.

This powerful story demonstrates the transformation that is possible when we create new spaces for peace in our world, spaces that foster healing and reconciliation instead of punishment. It is not easy work, but it is to this type of work that we are called to create peace here.

After reading the story, invite participants to sit in silence for a moment to let what they have just heard settle onto their hearts. After the silence, read the following questions out loud. Participants may either just meditate on the questions or journal their responses. They may engage one, or all, of the questions. Allow for a few minutes after each question.

For reflection
- What parts of the story about the Gacaca and the woman and her family’s killer stand out to you?
- What parts shimmer or catch your attention?
- What experiences or memories does this story stir in you? What emotions does it evoke?
- How is God inviting you to create peace here through this story?

FILL

RECEIVING THE BLESSING OF SHARING AND HEARING ONE ANOTHER’S STORIES AND EXPERIENCES

Small-group sharing
Invite participants to form intergenerational small groups, no more than 3 or 4, or just stay in one larger group depending on what people are comfortable with and your group size. Have each person in the group share their responses to one of the reflection questions.

Before the sharing begins, be sure to stress that this activity is just as much about listening as it is sharing. This is a time to practice active listening skills, which include allowing others to speak fully without interruption.

Large-group sharing
Respond to this quote by Dorothy Day: “I only love God as much as the person I love the least.” When have you acted in love toward those you struggle to love?
**Song of Response**  *Choose one.*

- “Beauty for Brokenness”  
  CCS 302
- “Alleluia”  
  CCS 116
- “Senzeni Na”  
  CCS 200

**USE**

**DISCERNING RESPONSE THROUGHOUT THE DAY**

**Discernment Question**

*Consider making these questions visible throughout the day.*

How will you live the story of peace once you leave this experience?  
How will you be shaped by stories of peace and nonviolence?

**Closing Song**  *Choose one.*

- “We Shall Overcome”  
  CCS 261
- “Let Justice Roll like a River”  
  CCS 288
- “Healer of Our Every Ill”  
  CCS 547

**Closing Prayer/Sending Forth**

We love because he first loved us. Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brother or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brother and sisters also.

—1 John 4:19-21

“I only love God as much as the person I love the least.”

—Dorothy Day

God, give us the courage to love boldly, radically, impossibly, compassionately. Enlarge the boundaries of our hearts so that we might love with your wild, unruly love that knows no bounds. Help us to love unrestricted, unconditional, all people and in all circumstances. Even as we work for justice, grant us the strength to love our enemies and to work toward common understanding. Dream in us another way of being. May we become your peaceful humanity for the well-being of your whole creation. We pray you will guide us in the way of Jesus, the peaceful One. Amen.
CREATE PEACE HERE

FOCUS: Use Me
John 8:12-19

Worship Center

A worship center could include elements particular to where your experience is happening. What creative elements might be represented in our experience here?

A virtual worship center could invite each participant to share something that represents creating peace here. Consider taking a picture of your community to use throughout reunion.

WE GATHER

Gathering Songs
Choose two or more.

“Now Sing to Our God” CCS 108
“Learn from All the Songs of Earth” CCS 141
“Restless Weaver” CCS 145
“God of Creation” CCS 147
“O May Your Church Build Bridges” CCS 224
“There’s a Church Within Us” CCS 278
“For Everyone Born” CCS 285
“Christ, You Call Us All to Service” CCS 357
“Bring Forth the Kingdom” CCS 387
“Onward to Zion” CCS 390
“Send Me Forth” CCS 651
“Now Let our Hearts Within Us Burn” CCS 658

WELCOME

Welcome to Worship

Sharing and Response

Discerning Response

Ask one or two people to respond to the discerning question posed in the morning Sharing Service.
How will you live the story of peace once you leave this experience? How will you be shaped by the stories of peace and nonviolence?

**Together We Respond**

“All Are Welcome”  
*Used in today’s Children’s Lessons. Sing verse 5.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Open your hearts and feel the yearning of your brothers and sisters who are lonely, despised, fearful, neglected, unloved. Reach out in understanding, clasp their hands, and invite all to share in the blessings of community created in the name of the One who suffered on behalf of all.

Do not be fearful of one another. Respect each life journey, even in its brokenness and uncertainty, for each person has walked alone at times. Be ready to listen and slow to criticize, lest judgments be unrighteous and unredemptive.

Stand firm in the name of the One you proclaim and create diverse communities of disciples and seekers, rejoicing in the continuing fulfillment of the call to this people to prophetically witness in the name of Jesus Christ.  

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:3a-3b, 6a

**Hymn Choose one.**

“Now in this Moment”  
“Creator God Creating Still”  
“When Morning Gilds the Skys”  

**Invocation**

**Scripture Reflection**

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” Then the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.” Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and [my God] who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the [God] who sent me testifies on my behalf.” Then they said to him, “Where is your [God]?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my [God]. If you knew me, you would know my [God] also.”  

—John 8:12-19, adapted
Meditation Moment
“Spirit of the Living God”  
Sing once or twice; or could be a solo or an instrumental.

Responsive Reading
This could be one reader or multiple readers; it also could be read repeatedly several times.

Call: Peace be with you as we part  
Response: Peace in body, mind, and heart
Call: Peace be with you as we go  
Response: Peace the world will want to know.

—“Peace Be With You,” CCS 662

Story Reflection
the dot
Peter H. Reynolds; Candlewick

“Just make a mark and see where it takes you.” The words of Vashti’s teacher are a gentle invitation to self-expression. But Vashti can’t draw—she’s no artist. To prove her point, Vashti jabs at a blank sheet of people, leaving an unremarkable, angry dot. “There,” she says. That one little dot marks the beginning of Vashti’s journey of surprise and self-discovery. This one little dot marks the beginning of this delicate fable about the creative spirit in all of us. That one little dot marks the beginning…

Read or listen to the story being read aloud.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Clpw7PG7mIQ

For discussion
• What did Vashti draw?  
• Is this art?  
• Why? Or Why not?  
• If you are asked to draw peace, would it be OK if you drew a dot? What can others do with your drawing?

Distribute half- or quarter-sized sheets of paper and several crayons/markers. Create images of what peace looks like here. Individual drawings can be collected and created as a collage, either at the front or side or the worship area, as the service continues. Be sure participants “sign” the images. If virtual, consider using the whiteboard feature on Zoom.  
https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205677665-Sharing-a-whiteboard

Singing Our Commission
“Arise, Your Light is Come!”  
Use verses 1 and 2.

CCS 635
From Here, How Will We Create Peace Here?

- How has your perspective changed this week?
- What will you be doing differently when you return to your home community?
- What call are you sensing? Does it scare you a little? Are you excited?

Closing Message
“Create Peace Here and Where We are Called”

Suggest this be focused and brief. Possibly a challenge as to how will we now, “Let Peace Dwell Here.” How will we continue to be melted, molded, filled and used to create peace here on Earth?

Hymn
“Arise, Your Light is Come!”  
Use verses 3 and 4.  
CCS 635

Prayer for Peace
We pray for peace that the peace of mind that Christ can bring is peace in knowing how to sing in spite of doubts of why or how, in spite of fears of here and now. The peace the strengthens faithful souls cannot be built on self-made goals, but rather comes to those who heed a call for help in time of need. So one finds peace within the heart when each with other bears a part. When peace for me is peace for you, then Christ is present, peace is true. Christ invade our life and will until we see your justice still defining best of all human worth, reshaping dreams of peace on earth. Amen.

—“The Peace of Mind,” CCS 320, adapted

Or, use today’s Prayer for Peace at www.CofChrist.org/daily-prayer-for-peace

WE RESPOND GENEROUSLY

Disciples’ Generous Response

The call to respond is urgent. Look to the needs of your own congregations, but look also beyond your walls to the far-flung places where the church must go. Each disciple needs a spiritual home. You are called to build that home and care for it, but also to share equally in the outreaching ministries of the church. In that way the gospel may be sent to other souls also yearning for a spiritual resting place.

—Doctrine and Covenants 162:7d

Blessing and Receiving of Mission Tithes
**Hymn**  *Choose one.*

“God’s Melody of Peace”  
“Let Us Sing a Worldwide Anthem”  
“In the Crossroads of This Moments”  

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**Benediction and Sending Forth**

You are called to create pathways in the world for peace in Christ to be relationally and culturally incarnate. The hope of Zion is realized when the vision of Christ is embodied in communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness.

— Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a

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**Musical Response**  *Choose one.*

“Peace Be with You”  
*Used in today’s Children’s Lessons.*

“Go Now Forth into the World”  
“Community of Christ”  

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YOUR CAMPFIRE EXPERIENCE

Campfire is an incredibly meaningful experience for reunions and camps. It helps to unite all at the end of the day. Campfires are times to laugh together, sing in harmony, reflect on the day, and settle in for a restful night’s sleep. When done well, campfire has something for everyone and puts a punctuation mark on the theme of the day.

In the reunion experience, be intentional with the day’s focus and theme from the first morning devotions through the evening campfire.

- Consider using songs tied to the daily theme.
- Campfire method often uses this pattern: fun songs (fast pace, high energy) to transitional singing and then serious songs (slower, more worshipful).
- It is important to have something for everyone at the campfire experience. Keep a list of songs, perhaps a collection of index cards with words to song, that can be added to or modified.
- It is important that as our theology continues to change, so does our campfire liturgy. Consider reviewing *Community of Christ Sings* for hymns and refrains that could be used in campfire settings. Use simple verses that speak to your day or week; don’t feel confined to use an entire hymn.
- Carefully reading through the words and asking, “Does this reflect who we are as a people?” becomes an essential part of campfire song selection. Prepare more songs than you will need, knowing the Spirit often prompts a campfire leader in different directions depending on the experience.
- Allow for space between songs. This space allows for spontaneous singing from the group, which is the Spirit breathing with and through us.
- Be sensitive to the makeup of the campfire group. Select something for everyone, and be sensitive to gender identity, which includes nonbinary transgender individuals and others you may not be aware of. Consider using songs that are not gendered, such as: “I will make you fishers of men” could be changed to “…fishers of all,” or change “My God is so big, there nothing that he cannot do” to “…there’s nothing my God cannot do.”
- Consider the violent language of songs, too. There are plenty of songs to choose. Make sure your campfire experience aligns with your class and worship experiences earlier in the day, whether fun, transitional, or serious.
- Be mindful of the group’s energy as you plan and lead groups through this experience. Reading the group’s energy, it will tell you when they are ready for the next section. Be sensitive to the Spirit’s guidance as well.
- Using creative campfire lighting techniques can create long-lasting memories.
• If there are to be skits done by others, make sure to preview them to check for their content. It can be fun to tease each other, but ensure that no one is being harmed or humiliated by a silly or fun-natured skit that goes too far.
• Usually, campfire happens at the end of the day, but it can also be done as a morning devotion if the day is planned as a “backward” day.
• Include prayer and testimony time during the more serious part of the campfire. Giving testimony, stories, and prayer opportunities will help draw the day to a close in a sensitive and meaningful way.
• Share testimonies in the framework of “popcorn responses” to questions such as: Where did you see God today? Where did you hear peace today? Who shared their example of Jesus today?
• Include new and old songs and lots of rounds.
• Invite children and youth to lead songs, offer testimony and prayer.
• Encourage campers to retreat quietly from the campfire experience to extend the Spirit of the moment. This also allows the camp to quiet down for bedtime routines.

Online campfire

A campfire can go virtual. If your reunion experience is an online format, don’t dismiss the campfire concept.

• Campfire leader could lead everything, and participants sing along in their homes with mics muted.
• Campfire leader is a master of ceremony of sorts. Each family or online connection could unmute and share or lead their favorite campfire song or provide a skit.
• Spotlight a fireplace, firepit, or share a video of a campfire.
• Encourage popcorn brought to this online experience or s’mores or other snacks.
• An online campfire can be an excellent opportunity for youth leadership and interaction.
• Be mindful of time. Campfire online is definitely a different experience than in person.

Thank you to Carla Nilsen at the Greater Pacific Northwest USA Mission Center and Jerry Dale Jr. at the Rocky Mountain USA Mission Center for their ideas and offerings.

Ideas from your area can be submitted here.

We extend our prayers and blessings on this formative reunion experience known as Campfire.