



Which Calendar?

Daily life is pretty much driven by the calendar. But which calendar? The January to December Gregorian calendar? The September to June public school calendar? The fiscal year business calendar? The September to April university calendar? Which of our many calendars sets the rhythm by which we pattern our lives? Which is the one that guides the way we think about life, relationships and the things we hold as being of utmost importance and deepest meaning? If you answered “none of the above,” then you have already anticipated my next point, which is to say that there is one more calendar,

another way of shaping and dividing our days and weeks and months that trumps all the others. I am, of course, speaking about the calendar of the Christian Year.

The Christian Year is a way of ordering time and life by a counter-rhythm, one that molds the church community by means of a pattern distinct from, and at times in conflict with, the many other ways we have of marking time. This calendar is ordered according to the movement of God within time and beyond it, among God’s people and in spite of them, a movement which, for Christians, finds its centre in the Jesus story—his incarnation, his life and ministry, his passion, death and resurrection, his presence in the birth of the church through the Holy Spirit, and in the abiding work of God in and through the church today, in the world.

Church leaders – pastors and others – are charged with the important task of leading God’s people in such a way that they are formed by the rhythms of faith in Jesus and the calling of God, instead of the influences and lure of other calendars. In keeping with this, MC Canada invites our congregations to celebrate and observe a variety of “special” emphases throughout the Christian year, which help to keep the church focused on its shared mission, and on the bonds of unity in Christ, by whom we are redeemed and in whom we live.

The following is a list of Special Sundays for 2009. I invite you to take advantage of the rich resources that have been prepared for these occasions. You receive these resources through regular mailings of *Equipping*, in *Leader* magazine, and online at our Resource Centre (www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/894). May the peace and generosity of Jesus Christ mold and shape you as you plan and participate in worship in this year of our Lord, 2009.

–Dave Bergen, *Executive Secretary, Christian Formation*

Special Sundays for 2009

Many of these Sundays are supported with worship materials created especially for the occasion by our ministry councils and organizations, and in collaboration with MC USA. The body responsible for creating worship resources is listed in parenthesis:

- **Jan. 18, Stewardship Sunday** (Mennonite Church Canada Formation) emphasizes stewardship as believers’ joyful response to God’s action in their lives (third Sunday of January).

- **Jan. 25, Mennonite World Fellowship Sunday** (Mennonite World Conference) features the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ worldwide family of more than 1.3 million members and 202 church bodies in 67 countries (fourth Sunday of January).
- **Feb. 1, Church Education Sunday** (Mennonite Church Canada Formation) emphasizes the educational ministries of Mennonite Church Canada from elementary through graduate school levels (first Sunday of February).
- **Feb. 25 – April 12, Lent-Easter** Resources available in *Leader* magazine.
- **May 3, Many Peoples Sunday** (Mennonite Church Canada Witness) emphasizes the multicultural and multiracial nature of Mennonite Church Canada (first Sunday in May).
- **Sept. 13, Sunday School Promotion** (Mennonite Church Canada Formation) emphasis on the dedication of the new Sunday School year (second Sunday of September).
- **Sept. 27, Publishing Sunday** (Mennonite Publishing Network) emphasizes the creation and distribution of Christian resources that instruct, educate, inspire, and challenge members of the church and world (fourth Sunday of September).
- **Oct. 4, World Communion Sunday** (Mennonite Church Canada Formation) is a worldwide ecumenical event (first Sunday of October).
- **Oct. 25, Mennonite Heritage Sunday** (Mennonite Church Canada Formation) emphasizes the relevance of Anabaptist roots in the life of the Mennonite Church today (last Sunday of October).
- **Nov. 8, Mission Sunday** (Mennonite Church Canada Witness) emphasizes the missions programs of the church (second Sunday of November).
- **Nov. 15, Peace Sunday** (Mennonite Church Canada Witness) emphasizes peacemaking and justice ministries as central in the mission of the church at all levels of its expression (third Sunday of November; and/or Sept. 20 on the Mennonite World Conference schedule).
- **Nov. 29, 2009– Jan. 3, 2010 Advent, Christmas, Epiphany** Resources available in *Leader* magazine.