

## May 2008 Womaen's Caucus E-news: Mother's Day Resources

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Greetings, Womaen's Caucus supporters!

Welcome to the first electronic newsletter from the Womaen's Caucus Steering Committee! We hope to send out these e-news updates on a regular basis, to keep you informed about our current projects, upcoming events, and resources that may help you in your daily living as a Brethren feminist. This month's message focuses on worship resources for Mother's Day. Coming months will spotlight feminist wedding ideas, resources for empowering girls, and updates about our activity at Annual Conference. If you are ever interested in signing up a friend or unsubscribing from these emails, you can check the bottom of every message for information about getting in touch with us.

As we plunge on through this new century, the Womaen's Caucus Steering Committee is hoping to make use of new technologies that will help us stay connected with our supporters and allies. We have a new website with new resource posted regularly: [www.womaenscaucus.org](http://www.womaenscaucus.org). We also have a blog with our commentary on world and CoB news, which we invite you to visit and post a comment to share your insights: [www.womaenscaucus.wordpress.com](http://www.womaenscaucus.wordpress.com). We know that you have lots of great ideas and resources to share with the rest of Womaen's Caucus, so we hope you will continue to keep us in your thoughts, prayers, and in-boxes for years to come!

Blessings of peace,

The women of the Womaen's Caucus Steering Committee: Jan Eller, Audrey deCoursey, Anna Lisa Gross, Sharon Nearhoof May, Peg Yoder, Jill Kline

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### **MOTHER'S DAY WORSHIP RESOURCES – from Womaen's Caucus**

Mother's Day is one of those rare chances we get to lift up the work and wonder of women. Yet, even on this day of celebration, there are many women who are overlooked and unheard in worship that honors women solely for their parenting. We are challenged to find ways to celebrate women who are mothers, women who cannot

be mothers, and women who choose not to be mothers.

We offer these worship resources for your use or to spark your creativity as you plan services that honor the creative, nurturing power of women. All of these resources and more are available at our website:

<http://www.womaenscaucus.org/Resources/Inclusivity/Inclusivity/Language/worship.html>

LECTIONARY TEXT for May 11, 2008 - Pentecost (Red)

Acts 2:1-21 – Pentecost story

Psalms 104:24-34, 35b – "O Lord, how manifold are your works!"

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 – "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit"

John 7:37-39 – "'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

HYMNS

*Lord Bless the Hands*, Brethren Hymnal 93 - because mothering is done by many people.

*Mothering God*, Brethren Hymnal 482

*How Shall I Sing to God?* Brethren Hymnal Supplement 1019

*Bring Many Names*, Hymnal Supplement 1088

*Loving Spirit*, Hymnal Supplement 1064 - We invite you to change the words of the third verse to reflect gender-inclusive language.

TAKE ACTION FOR MOTHERS

Church World Services (CWS) supports midwives working in refugee camps in Darfur, southern Sudan. Support their work to support mothers facing some of the toughest living conditions a woman can face, by visiting [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org). The CWS website also offers 'alternative' Mother's Day gifts of donations made in the name of your mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, wife, or friend, complete with cards to download to accompany your gifts.

PRAYERS

When you were pregnant with Israel, God

--did your ankles swell?

--did your fingers tingle and droop?

Did you spend your time waiting, marking time,  
and doing infinite chores?

After you announced the birth of the nation,  
knowing it would be long, three generations long,  
till the birth of the people on its land--

After you announced this birth, God--

did you sit counting the days and the years?  
Did you plan how you would raise Ephraim,  
your darling child?  
how you would call him from Egypt,  
draw him with cords of love?  
Did you count the days  
till you could teach her to walk?  
till you could bend down and feed her each morsel?  
When you carried Israel in your womb, O God,  
did you think how you would nurture forever,  
how you would carry him till old-age?  
Did you plan every moment of her upbringing,  
dreaming of the perfect child?  
Or were you very busy with all the other tasks of creation, God,  
planning universes,  
setting up laws,  
organizing history?

(from Motherprayer, by Tikva Frymer-Kensky, adapted by Anna Lisa Gross, drawing on  
Gen 15:13-15, Jer. 31:20, Hos. 11:1, 13, 14, Isa. 46:3-4)

Narrow, narrow is the path!  
You deliver us from narrowness.  
From Egypt you brought us forth,  
In straits we call upon you.  
You answer us expansively.  
Narrow was the path between the waters of the Red Sea  
A canyon between two high walls.  
Then out into the light and bright and wide  
of the world beyond Egypt.  
My way is narrow  
In the straits I call upon you:  
Widen my path,  
deliver me to the light  
of life.

(from Motherprayer, by Tikva Frymer-Kensky, adapted by Anna Lisa Gross, drawing on  
Ps. 118:3)

In my womb you formed the child,  
in my womb I nourished it.  
You formed and numbered the baby's limbs,

I contained and protected them.  
You who could see the child in my depths,  
I who felt the kicks and the turns,  
together we counted the months.  
Together we planned the future.  
Flesh of my flesh,  
form of your form.  
Another human being upon the earth,  
a home for God in this, our world.

(from Motherprayer, by Tikva Frymer-Kensky, drawing on Ps. 139:13, 15, 16, Jer. 1:5, Isa. 49:5, Gen 1:26)

We come together today in praise and thanksgiving  
for the gift of life itself.  
Someone gave birth to us and some of us have given birth.  
All of us have been mothered in our time,  
All of us have mothered.  
Let our time today be one of recognition--  
That we arrive from so many places,  
Joy and delight,  
Wistfulness and longing and worry,  
Unmet needs and unfulfilled dreams,  
Loss and sorrow, loss and emptiness,  
loss and regret.  
All that life is made of, mothers are made of too.  
Today we sing the songs of so many:  
Mothers who are single parents, foster parents,  
Mothers who relinquished their young out of necessity,  
Mothers who found their heart in adoption,  
Mothers who left their children in a thousand ways,  
Mothers who rejoice and mothers who mourn.  
There is a kind of love we cannot live without.  
It is never too late, no matter our age or situation.  
We sing a song of gratitude for all the moments  
of being known, being cherished, being found.  
Amen.

(Mother's Day Prayer, by Mary J. Harrington)

TALK BACK

Love Mother's Day? Dislike it? Have a Mother's Day sermon of your own to share? To discuss any of these topics further or to share your own resources, please visit our blog at [www.womaenscaucus.wordpress.com](http://www.womaenscaucus.wordpress.com) and post a comment.

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**Womaen's Caucus** is a voice for women and their supporters in the Church of the Brethren. We are an independent non-profit organization staffed mostly by volunteers and sponsored by donations from folks like you. **To support our work**, please visit our website's "[Join us!](#)" page. **Visit us on the web** at our website, [www.womaenscaucus.org](http://www.womaenscaucus.org), and at our weblog, [www.womaenscaucus.wordpress.com](http://www.womaenscaucus.wordpress.com). **To subscribe or unsubscribe** to Womaen's Caucus e-news or to send suggestions for future issues, please email [wcaucus@hotmail.com](mailto:wcaucus@hotmail.com).