



**UCCP OFFICIAL THEME LOGO**  
**QUADRENNIUM 2022-2026**

E.Y. 2022-2023 (74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary):

## REBUILDING AND RESTORING WITH HOPE: HERALDING THE FULL LIFE

Suggested text: Ezekiel 37: 1-14

### Symbolism of Elements

Jesus said in John 10:10, "I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly." Heraldng such fullness of life evolves images like the **Green Cross**- which represents Christ's promise of an abundant and meaningful life for all. Such promises persist to dwell in every believer amidst pandemics, war, natural and human-made calamities, and economic and political collapse. The **shawl** defines our joy and creativity in doing God's mission to the world. The **White Dove** represents our peaceful means of attaining shalom. In Christianity, dove symbolizes Holy Spirit – the Sustainer. As believer of God the Sustainer, we are called to be instrument of sustaining grace for all. In Old Testament, a dove was released by Noah after the flood in order to find land; it came back carrying a freshly plucked leaf, a sign of life after the flood. Here, dove is carrying the missing puzzle piece symbolizing that God calls us to rebuild and restore the world where love, peace, and justice prevails; to rebuild and restore the church into its calling as faithful instrument of God's sustaining love to the world. The **piece of a puzzle** that the dove is carrying is our humble part

of a contribution to the work of peace and healing to the broken world. We are but part means we relate with others who are working for peace and justice in the world. **Kerosene Lamp**- Christ is the light of the world and we are sharing Christ's light for the fullness of life In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.". **Vine**- represents connectivity to God and God's creation. It brings us back to Christ's saying, that without God we are nothing. We depend on our existence, our life work, and our all to God alone. The **Brick Wall**- represents Nehemiah's rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem that invites collected effort and cooperation among members of the UCCP as well as the



communities where our local churches are located. The Brick Wall is encircled by the Community Circle which means our life work is but part of the global work, we work together amongst ourselves and with other faith communities and even with the rest communities who have different beliefs, cultures, and traditions. We belong to God's household of the whole creation- humans and other creatures of the world. The **missing puzzle pieces between earth and brick wall** represents brokenness due to the flight of God's people from the covenant relationship with God. **Community circle** represents the unity. The vine has a profound meaning like connection, strength, and determination. The unity of God's people is the strength of UCCP. With unity our determination in transforming both church and society becomes reality.

Below the theme reveals the following symbols; **Scroll**- represents an emblem of wisdom and an early emblem of the Apostles. Jeremiah 36:2 "Take a scroll and write on it all the words which I have spoken to you concerning Israel and concerning Judah, and concerning all the nations, from the day I first spoke to you, from the days of Josiah, even to this day. It symbolizes heralding. **Black lines** represent Bible, our action and our proclamation are deeply rooted in the Holy Bible. **Mechanical Gear, UCCP Logo, & Cross** which best describe our mechanism of the UCCP Life Work. The mechanical gear rotates the movement of our ecclesiastical life work founded by God's word. It is used to increase the power of a turning force that in a way gives us a view of our "sola scriptura" principle. It also represents progress, work, and innovation. In this logo, gear represent focus in this quadrennium – rebuilding and restoring – with hope that God is with us in our innovations.

Pandemic due to Corona Virus Disease 2019, escalating oil price hike, increasing unemployment rate, high hunger rate, extra judicial killings, red tagging, oppression, and exploitation of people and natural resource are the faces of brokenness in our world and country today.

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REBUILDING AND RESTORATION are visions, hopes, and actions towards the realization of the full life. The full life means many things to the Scriptures. It is not unrelated to the social vision of shalom that you can find in the Old Testament, or to the gospel of the reign of God as proclaimed in the New Testament, or even the reconciled life in the Pastoral Letters. We can safely say that the gospel of the faith is the full life which we can experience in part or as a foretaste when God reigns in us, in our world, and creation. The scriptures also affirm that the full life was seen in the person of Jesus Christ and his work (John 10:10) and thus, something that was a reality in the passion, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

REBUILDING AND RESTORATION presupposes an experience of fragmentation and destruction. This narrative abounds in the Scriptures from the time of the fall (Gen 3:23) to the abandonment of God's people's covenant relationship with God (Ez 16:59). This separation from God has brought so much devastation in inter-human relations, in history, and to the earth (Romans 8: 22).

The theme's annexing of the word hope ("WITH HOPE") adds a perspective to the praxis of restoration and rebuilding. Set in their scriptural contexts, restoration and rebuilding are not easy. The fragmentation and the destruction were so thorough that even the concept of "original sin" was thought

of in theology, or that going through the eye of the needle (Mt 19: 24) and be “born again” (Jn 3: 1-7) are requirements of faith, or that we not only “wrestle with flesh and blood but with “powers and principalities” (Eph 6:12-18). To “build and to plant” (Jer 1:10) means you must dig deep into the roots of the human crisis, and this would invite resistance if not persecution. Rebuilding and restoring with hope acknowledges this context but at the same time negates this in the faithful’s act of radical hoping.

Rebuilding and restoring with hope points to our embracing the promise of the full life and the hope inspired by the full life. It is this hope that generates our “*gana*” for the full life. *Kapag ginanahan tayo*, the full life that we have embraced would be a reality in the here and now of our radical hoping.

The UCCP may be a little off the grid with its talking past the pandemic and its thematic agenda of "rebuilding and restoration with hope." The pandemic still rages on and there are surges now and then. Yet, it is precisely at this time when we need to muster that prophetic will to announce hope that life can be rebuilt and restored from the "valley of dry bones" (Ez 37:1-13). “Hope” to us as a faith community is the transgression of the normalization of life in the valley of dry bones. It is what aligns us to the vision of a fuller life for all. Hope is what could energize us into restoring and rebuilding our lives and institutions in this pandemic-ravaged world.



E.Y. 2023-2024 (75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary):

## REBUILDING AND RESTORING WITH HOPE: HERALDING THE UNITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Suggested Texts: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

### Symbolism of Elements

Celebrating our 75 years of UCCP Founding Anniversary takes us back to our biblical and protestant historical rootedness. The **White Cross**- Represents Christ's work of reconciliation. Like Christ reconciled all humanity and creation to God, we are also called to work for reconciliation rather than division, we are challenged to take the first move to connect and begin to reunite with those who departed from us. Like the organic union of UCCP, we need to open up possible unity with other faith communities. White Cross also represents the purity of our thoughts, intention, and humility. It brings us back to our historical rootedness and beginning as UCCP. **The red stole** calls for a festive celebration of our beginning and the **chalice** and the **sacramental bread** invite us all to celebrate Christ's presence from the beginning of our existence until today and towards our ecclesiastical future. The **bushes** represent the burning bush of Moses that called him to let God's people go. God's liberation from all forms of bondage is the very core of ecclesiastical existence. It also represents ONE BODY, MANY PARTS. Then **Clock** symbolizes our rich and meaningful heritage and



historical journey as a church amidst the changing times. The various watercolor **Christian Symbols** represent our mark of service to the world. We are known for our biased toward the poor, Lumad, and the oppressed, known for our ecumenical and interfaith solidarity, and partners and in solidarity with others who work for peace, development, and protection of all creatures. The **Pentagon** or 5 sidelines symbolizes the 5 Protestant traditions of the UCCP. The Pentagon also represents our Diamond Celebration of our UCCP.

At the center, you can see the symbol of "**Two Hands holding together**". It represents Christ's Hand with the nailed mark and the follower of Christ who responded to the calling to be partners of God's Mission to the world.

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In times where unity of the church is challenged, it is appropriate to think, look back, and contemplate; how is our church doing? Our church is very popular of its democratic processes in governance, where members can freely express their sentiments and opinions, however its unity in implementing decisions keep the vigor of our church much stronger. The pandemic affected our churches' routine. Worships, bible studies, and other church activities were suspended in fear of the coronavirus escalation. However, it motivated our churches to be more creative and more receptive to the call of our times. The Struggle for Unity in various discussions especially in property development of our church shook our strength but this made the member churches more aware, more concerned, and more responsive. It can be seen in our accomplishments and performances, especially the overwhelming wider mission support extended by various conferences. It is also a clear manifestation of the presence of democracy in all systems and processes of our church governance.

When Apostle Paul mentioned "ONE BODY, MANY PARTS", it talks about unity of believers in the church regardless of their differences, whether race, especially the Greeks and the Jews, social status, culture and practices. Believers of the church of Corinth experienced division because of many beliefs brought by different leaders. Paul wanted to remind the people of the church of Corinth the faith rooted in the life of Jesus Christ. He inspired them to recognize their individual diverse talents and challenged to coordinate and synchronize their moves with the central of the head that is Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of unity in the church by submitting themselves to its right beliefs according to the teaching of Jesus Christ exemplified by His life.

The Unity of the Church is essential, it gives us hope despite our diverse heritage. Our Statement of Faith remains a true and correct guide to all of us. We are the body of Christ, the united community of those who have been restored to God through Jesus Christ, and entrusted with his work. Our Unity is vital in Rebuilding and Restoring our hope. When we herald the Unity of the Body of Christ, we also proclaim our trust and submission to the greatest authority of that One Body.

E.Y. 2024-2025 (76th):

## REBUILDING AND RESTORING WITH HOPE: HERALDING THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

### Symbolism of Elements

UCCP believes that God is at work to make each person a new being in Christ and the whole world in God's kingdom in which love, justice, and peace prevail. Heraldizing the work of the people of God is put into the following images; The **Cross and its white Stole**, the **Shepherd carrying a staff in its right hand and a lamb** on his left, the **triangle** wherein 2 branches of **palm** attached to it, and the **people** having a background by some mountains afar. The work of God's people has twofold- the Shepherding which involves caring for all the members, and the self-care of every individual. It also involves nurturing, disciplining and discipleship. There is an important value for every individual like Jesus' parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd will leave the 99 to find the lost 1. The **triangle** symbolizes the 3 ministries of Jesus- the Healing, Preaching, and Teaching ministry. It also symbolizes harmony, equality and balance. The **stole** represents the bonds and fetters with which Jesus was bound during his Passion and also denotes the duty to spread the Word of God

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It's been years since the COVID 19 pandemic struck the world. Its horrendous outcome is still being experienced and continues to impact various facets of life. The pandemic has caused the Philippine economy to take a nosedive. In fact, such nosedive is described as the lowest since 1947 during the second World War. People's initiatives to bring to light the realities of our society are met with harshness and threats by those who profit from the pandemic. Such has made bouncing back and recovering from the pandemic a seemingly impossible task. The quest for an abundant and peaceful life remains a struggle and times continue to be uncertain especially for those who are at the margins of the society.

Today, we are hardly even at the verge of bouncing back or overcoming the pandemic. That quest for an abundant life remains a struggle and times have continued to remain uncertain. In the midst of the continuing uncertainty the church must continue to stand. The church ought to remain staunch in fulfilling and realizing her mission. The United Church of Christ in the Philippines since the very beginning has always been known for her faith and praxis, manifested especially in her firm commitment to justice, peace, and human rights, and her ministries with the marginalized sectors and communities. Since the very beginning UCCP existed not for itself but it's mission. This resolute commitment for mission is embodied in the UCCP Statement of Faith especially in the following statements:

*WE BELIEVE... That the Church is the one Body of Christ, the whole community of persons reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and entrusted with God's ministry."*

*WE BELIEVE... That God is at work to make each person a new being in Christ and the whole world God's Kingdom in which love, justice and peace prevail. The Kingdom of God is present where faith in Jesus Christ is shared, where healing is given to the sick, where food is given to the hungry, where light is given to the blind, and where liberty is given to the captive and oppressed.*

Persistently fulfilling God's ministry must be continually at the core of the life of the church. The sub theme **"HERALDING THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD"** encourages us to ruminate on the following:

1. The works of the people of God...



What is this “*work of God’s people*” that we are speaking about? The work of God’s people refers to the mission that has been entrusted to those whom God called. This is humanity’s response to God’s work. The UCCP Catechetical guide on the SOF states that *God’s Work is to make each person a new being in Christ, and the whole world God’s Kingdom — in which love, justice, and peace prevail*. To ensure that this work is accomplished God calls people to take part in this mission. God calls us to participate in the process of building God’s kingdom. The purpose of God’s calling includes the following: to admonish, warn, direct, encourage, intercede, teach, and counsel. In the Old Testament times, God called prophets to do these works because according to 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 36:15 God has compassion for his people and on His dwelling place.

The whole of 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 36 speaks of the fall of Judah into the hands of the Babylonians. This dismal event in Israel’s history is often viewed as God’s judgment on Judah for their sins, especially of their leaders. Yet in this same chapter the writer emphasizes the compassion of God. God sent messengers to the people of Judah to constantly remind them because of His deep compassion.

Today God continues to call the church for such tasks especially in the face of all the challenges which is even more difficult with the pandemic. As mentioned earlier, the Covid-19 pandemic made the people’s condition even worse. What made matters even worse was the fact that those greedy for power made sure that they benefit from the pandemic. As we face the realities, we need to be more aware of our work as people of God.

## 2. The act of heralding the works of the people of God...

To herald is to announce and to proclaim. But what is it that we need to announce and proclaim? First and foremost, we need to proclaim the good news. This missionary mandate is clearly stipulated in Matthew 28:19. This missionary mandate that Jesus bestowed to the disciples is founded on the fact that God desires salvation for all. The writer of 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 16:23 declares “*Sing to the Lord all the earth. Tell of his salvation from day to day.*” This same message is also found in Psalms 96:1-2. This is a celebratory Psalm in praise of the one true God and the Creator of all things. This Psalm focuses on two main emphases: celebration and proclamation. To celebrate is to

make God the center of true worship in gratitude for the good and wondrous things God has done. One of the events which may have prompted the penning of this psalm was the recovery of the Ark of the Covenant. However, beyond celebrating is the call to proclaiming God's salvation to all the earth.

As we herald God's salvific and liberating acts, we must also herald the works of God's people. To herald the works of God's people is to both praise what has been achieved and to learn from errors that have been committed. People called by God to do God's work are far from perfect. The men and women in the bible called by God to participate in God's work had their share of flaws and weaknesses. Even Isaiah describes himself as "a man of unclean lips" in Isaiah 6:5. This declaration about himself came after witnessing a vision that tells of God's glory. Yet this humbling experience of Isaiah was not perceived as a hindrance in responding to God's call. Isaiah responded to God's call by emphatically saying "Here I am, Lord. Send me."

Heralding the works of God's people is to be like Isaiah who humbled himself before the Lord by accepting his iniquities yet at the same time sincerely committing himself to God's mission. Accepting our faults and iniquities is not a loss. In fact, it is a gain since it opens us to the transforming and renewing power of God as it did to Isaiah.

The renewing power of God in the lives of every member of the church ought to be manifested in each one's participation in the life and works of the church. The mission of the church does not end. Various tasks and responsibilities must be accomplished as the church continues the ministry of proclaiming God's wholistic salvation to the world.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the ever worsening political and economic unrest should not be seen as a hindrance to the realization of abundant life in Christ. Rather, it must serve as a challenge for the church to continually call on people who will say "Here I am, Lord. Send me." This Covid-19 aftermath necessitates a more steadfast commitment and greater vigor in doing God's work.

E.Y. 2025-2026 (77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary):

## REBUILDING AND RESTORING WITH HOPE: HERALDING THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

Suggested Texts: Isaiah 65: 17-25; Luke 3: 1-18;  
Rev. 21:1-7

### Symbolism of Elements

Heralding the New Heaven and New Earth can be pictured out with hands offering new creation order. The **Purple Cross** represents awaiting for this new heaven and new earth with a red stole that calls for celebration and festivity. The **creation** with all **the animals, people of different ages, genders**, and beliefs come together to celebrate God's newness of life. The **rainbow** that touches from heaven to earth emphasizes the connectivity of heaven and earth like Christ broke down the temple's curtain so also this promise of newness. The **Hands** present God's hand offering this new heaven and earth, all at the same time. There is no division, there is no status, no age, no gender, and no set of beliefs and traditions- all are gathering and celebrating. Here in the newness of things, the old things are gone. No more tears; no more death, no more mourning, crying, or pain. God will dwell with God's people.

Below the theme reveals the following symbols;

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A herald, according to the Dictionary of Biblical Themes is “one who proclaims a message or paves the way for a promised event”. They at times pronounce judgment; at other times, they proclaim good news.

The Isaiah passage is a vision of hope. The 8<sup>th</sup> century prophets (Micah, Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea) as well as Jeremiah warned the people of God of the impending doom that will fall on them and their nations, Israel and Judah, because of the many injustices happening. The prophets warned that if there was no turn-around (repentance) from these situations of injustice and unpeace, they would be crushed by other nations. Amid the pronouncement of the coming judgment, Isaiah stood out as a prophet of hope. Beyond the downfall of Israel and Judah, Isaiah projected visions of hope for a better future (e.g., Isa. 9:1-7; 32:15-20). There would be restoration.

Among his proclamation was that of the new heaven and new earth. The newness envisioned is comprehensive (65:17); it will not just be a renovation, but a total restoration that eclipses the former state of things. *Hindi lang patse-patse; kundi buong-buo at bagong-bago.*

This rebuilding and restoration will be a cause of rejoicing (vv. 18-19). Isaiah is known for vivid imageries. In 9:2-3, he paints a gloomy picture of people walking in darkness and in the shadow of death. But rejoicing broke forth as they saw a great light. It was a rejoicing similar to that when harvest time is reached. It was a rejoicing when liberation comes, as in the breaking of the yoke of oppression that long overburdened them. He pictured the weapons of war being turned into tools of productions (9:5, see also 2:4 - swords into plows, spears into pruning hooks). There would be a government that would be established and upheld with justice and righteousness.

We also see in the Isa. 65 passage, Nature in Order. There is harmony in creation. As Barbara Lundblad puts it, “the peaceable kingdom where predators and their prey live side by side, and babies play unharmed near poisonous snakes”. She then added that “Woody Allen once gave his own interpretation of this vision: “The wolf shall lie down with the lambs. But the lambs won’t get much sleep.”

We can go further than Barbara Lundblad or Woody Allen, for in the peaceable kingdom the old categories no longer work or hold true, the old categories of predator and prey are no longer operational. “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and lion together, and the cow and the bear shall graze together.”



The lamb, the young goat, the calf, and the cow will have no more reason to be afraid. Why? It is because the wolf, the leopard, lion, and bear will acquire new taste buds - they will become vegetarians. Hallelujah! It says they will graze together. They will be consuming grass, and it is not the recreational variety now legal in California. *Ibang damo yun.*

This transformation reminds me of the story of that bully preying on small kids, scaring them with his tattooed body, depicting a snake and an eagle on his bare chest. He would move the muscles on his chest and it seems that the objects would come to life. “Gusto mo bang tuklawin ka ng ahas at ilipad ka ng agila doon sa mga ulap at saka ka ihulog?,” sabi niya sa isang batang nanginginig sa takot pero di niya namalayayn na dumating pala ang tatay ng bata na mas matangkad at doble na maskolado sa kanya. “Ano ang pinagmamayabang mong yan?,” turo ng tatay sa ahas na tattoo. “Earthworm po,” sabi ng bully. “Eh yan?,” turo sa agila. “Kalapati po.”

Sa pangitain ni Isaiah ang ahas ay magiging earthworm at ang agila ay magiging kalapati. Wala ng bully. Wala ng nangbibiktima at nabibiktima. No more predator and prey. Old hostilities give way to reconciliation and existing fears are laid to rest. Nature in order.

The second way to see this rebuilding and restoration is in a construction of social and economic levelled field. It is CASER - Christ’s Advocacy for Socio-Economic Restructuring.

Luke quotes Isaiah 40:3 - The voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be filled; every mountain and hill shall be brought low. And the crooked shall be made straight. And the rough ways shall be made smooth.”

Luke, of course, was the very same Gospel writer who immortalized the Magnificat, which in part reads:

He has shown strength with his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;  
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate  
he has filled the hungry with good things  
and the rich he has sent empty away. (Luke 3:51-53)

This will be a great social and economic leveler.

Unpeace caused by the unequal distribution of wealth and by the continuing widening gap between the rich and the poor will soon be gone, and all will have their own vine and fig tree, they shall live in peace and unafraid.

Unpeace caused by big nations imposing their will against smaller nations; unpeace caused by mighty nations intervening and meddling in the affairs of weaker nations will just be a fading memory, mere footnotes in history. “God will judge between peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations will not lift up sword against nations, and they shall learn war no more” (Isa. 2:4).

In Revelation 21, God promises to make all things new. The rebuilding and restoration comes to full circle to the Creation story. Someone has remarked that our story begins in a garden and ends (or restarts) in a garden. Here in the newness of things, the old things are gone. No more tears; no more death, no more mourning, or crying, or pain. God will dwell with God’s people.