

Sub-theme: “Revisiting the Lessons of the Past towards Strengthening of Faith and Witness”

Biblical Text: Romans 5:1-5 RSV

Results of Justification

5 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we^[a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through him we have obtained access^[b] to this grace in which we stand, and we^[c] rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. **3** More than that, we^[d] rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4** and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, **5** and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

REFLECTION

Every generation has its own culture that affects much on how people respond to the call of their times, especially in the church. During the time of Reformation and even before Reformation, people used to receive laws, and orders from their hierarchy without questioning but need to follow what has been written.

All meditations and reflections Martin Luther went through as a priest give him a new phase of his relationship with our God.

“Martin Luther a German Priest saw problems in the Church from faith + good work. Luther thought faith alone gains salvation. On Oct. 31, 1517- Posted 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenburg. His criticisms of the Church and 1000s of copies were distributed through Germany.” (<https://www.seasononline.ca> Discipleship Ministries---21st Century Liturgy **for** Reformation Sunday)

“Luther’s Breakthrough:

He felt as though he underwent a conversion.

He felt great anxiety.

The concept of penance; works to restore one’s self to the state of grace;

Luther felt he was not convicted enough of repentance and feared that he would not be saved.”

In searching for the meaning of our faith in God in line with our practices and beliefs, our God empowered us to examine ourselves bringing with us our doubts, uncertainties, and meaninglessness. God even challenged us to be out of our comfort zone. And God will accompany us in that journey and make us affirm our faith through that experience.

As we revisit the Reformation era and learn lessons from the experience, may we also learn from the struggles of our times now, so that the strength, wisdom, and gift of faith Martin Luther strongly stood for will ignite us also to continue searching and empower us as servants of God even to the point of taking the risk.

NOTES FOR WORSHIP PREPARATION/SYMBOLS TO USE

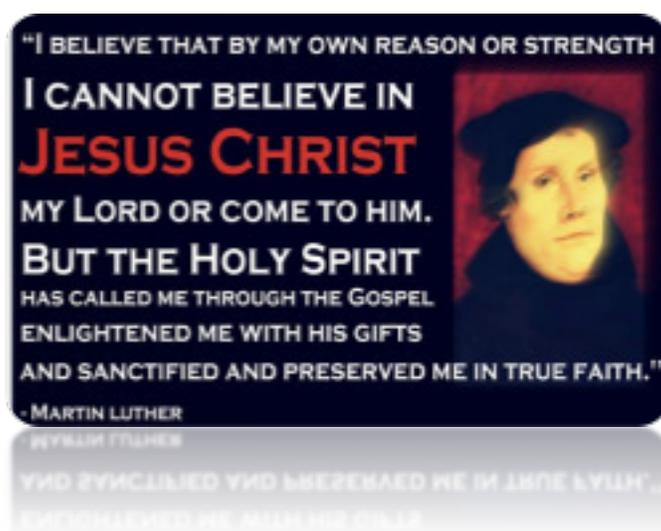
- Before the worship service begins, the Bible Rack or Bible stand is empty , Bible is part of the processional
- Those who have access to internet: view the short summary/ or video clip about the Reformation
- The Pastor may prepare a short history of the Reformation: tap the CYF to hold props for important dates while the narrator read the highlights of Reformation.(only for those who have no internet access)

- Prepare a Cartolina/Manila Paper, then write in big words that can be read by the congregation the "Five Solas of Reformation" English with Latin translation
- Short video clip about Martin Luther, father of Protestant Reformation or "How the Reformation Shaped your World"
- The Pastor will coordinate with the Sunday School teachers before the Reformation Sunday to download the animated movie in English in preparation for the Reformation Sunday Liturgy, especially the kids so they will have an idea of what Reformation is about. (only for those who have internet access and used TV or projector for worship)

THE LITURGY

GOD'S PEOPLE GATHER TO WORSHIP

WORDS TO PONDER:



PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL: (Bring worship symbols: Bible , "Five Solas of Reformation" written in cartolinas)

Processional Song: "What a Perfect Joy" HFJ #53

What a perfect joy in our hearts today when we always walk and live with our God,
 All the darkness of life will disappear in Jesus who is light.
 Rejoicing always, fulfilled our gladness, Our hearts refreshed when we are with our God!

What a perfect joy in our hearts today when we love to serve the Lord our God,
 All creation praises and bless with joy, glorifying Jesus Christ.
 Despite our hardships, we don't regret,
 We are light-hearted when we are with our God.

LIGHTING OF THE CHIRST CANDLE

TO PRAISE AND CALL ON GOD

🕎 CALL TO WORSHIP

(Psalm 18:25-49, Good News version)

Liturgist: O Lord, you are faithful to those who are faithful to you; completely good to those who are perfect. You are pure to those who are pure, but hostile to those who are wicked. You save those who are humble, but you humble those who are proud.

People: (28-31) O Lord, you give me light; you dispel my darkness. You give me strength to attack my enemies and power to overcome their defenses. This God — how perfect are his deeds! How

dependable his words! He is like a shield for all who seek his protection. **The Lord alone is God; God alone** is our defense.

Liturgist: (32-35) He is the God who makes me strong, who makes my pathway safe. He makes me sure-footed as a deer; he keeps me safe on the mountains. He trains me for battle, so that I can use the strongest bow. O Lord, you protect me and save me; your care has made me great, and your power has kept me safe.

People: (36-39) You have kept me from being captured, and I have never fallen. I pursue my enemies and catch them; I do not stop until I destroy them. I strike them down, and they cannot rise; they lie defeated before me. You give me strength for the battle and victory over my enemies.

Liturgist: (40-46) You saved me from a rebellious people and made me ruler over the nations; people I did not know have now become my subjects. Foreigners bow before me; when they hear me, they obey. They lose their courage and come trembling from their fortresses. The Lord lives! Praise my defender! Proclaim the greatness of the God who saves me.

All: (48-49) He gives me victory over my enemies; he subdues the nations under me and saves me from my foes. O Lord, you give me victory over my enemies and protect me from violent people. And so I praise you among the nations; I sing praises to you.

✠ HYMN OF PRAISE

“ O Let Us Praise God” HFJ p.6

- 1. O let us praise God, O let us praise God, The mighty and great Lord.
Let us gather to give thanks with our glad songs of praise. O proclaim God's name forever now, To echo throughout the world O praise God in heaven, O praise God here on earth.*
- 2. O seek God's blessings, O seek God's blessings, O you people of God. Truly serve God without fail and follow God each day. Take the love of God with you and share it wherever you will go. Life's bountiful blessings to you God will bestow.*
- 3. O let us trust God, O let us trust God, our lives we must offer. To God's bosom we draw near, surrender now our all, God pours blessings and keeps blessing, the rest of our days on earth, Let's praise God, O people let's praise God evermore.*

✠ INVOCATION

Liturgist: “Then you will call to me. You will come and pray to me, and I will answer you. You will seek me, and you will find me because you will seek me with your heart. Yes, I will say you will find me.”
(Jeremiah 29:12-14a)

(Pause for silence)

Unison: God of History who journey with our Reformers, we ask for Your presence to continue helping us revisit the lessons of the past as we do our worship today. May You renew the strength of our faith and witness as we listen to Your Word today. Amen

TO HUMBLE OURSELVES AND CONFESS OUR SINS

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

Liturgist: God of history and of Reformation, help us to humble ourselves in your presence as we examine our weaknesses and sins. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew in us a right spirit. Restore to us the joy of Your willing Spirit so that we can see clearly your message as we revisit the past. People of God! Now, let us examine ourselves and ask forgiveness from our redeemer God.

Song to prepare our minds and hearts “Lord, Look Into My Heart” HFJ #89

Lord, look into my heart and see my sinfulness,
The wrongs that I have done, and my unworthiness,
Forgive me, Lord, and may your peace be in my heart.

(Bisaya version): “Susiha, O Ginoo” APP #89
Susiha , O Ginoo ang kasingkasing ko
Ang akong kalapasang nabuhat Kanimo
Pasayloa, hatagi sa kalinaw Mo. Amen

SILENT MOMENT OF CONFESSION (God is listening as we confess our sins)

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S PARDON (Romans 6:22-23)

Minister: “But now you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God,
the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death,
but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

GREETINGS AND COMMUNITY CONCERN

OFFERING OUR CONCERNS THROUGH COMMUNITY PRAYER

Song-Response “Hear Our Prayer, O Lord” HFJ#085
Hear our prayer O Lord, hear our prayer O Lord;
Incline Thine ear to us, and grant us Thy peace. Amen.

THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD’S WORD

JOURNEYING THROUGH THE REFORMATION

(The Pastor may give a short introduction as to why we give emphasis to the Reformation experience and proceed to give a summary or highlights of the movement)

Five major tenets of the Protestant Reformation that have been labeled as the “5 Solas” or “5 Pillars” of the Reformation:

1. ***Sola Scriptura*** – “Scripture Alone” – The Bible alone is our highest authority.
2. ***Sola Fide*** – “Faith Alone” – We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
3. ***Sola Gratia*** – “Grace Alone” – We are saved by the grace of God alone.
4. ***Solus Christus*** – “Christ Alone” – Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King.
5. ***Soli Deo Gloria*** – “To The Glory Of God Alone” – We live for the glory of God alone.

These **five solas** were formulated to point out the biblical doctrines that the reformers were identifying as major distinctions between their beliefs, their teachings, IN CONTRAST TO the many **unscriptural** Roman Catholic Church’s teachings.

Martin Luther’s 95 Theses

Martin Luther who started out his religious life as a Catholic monk, wore out his welcome in the Catholic church when he started questioning and confronting some of their teachings and practices, as he came to see that those Catholic doctrines and traditions were at odds with the Bible. He had wanted to bring “reform” (what he felt was positive and necessary change) to the Catholic Church but was met with strong opposition from Catholic leadership, especially when he started speaking out against abusive practices of the Catholic church that involved robbing the poor by taking advantage of their fears regarding the fate of their deceased loved ones. In 1517, Luther greatly fueled that opposition to his proposed reforms, when he wrote up a list of 95 errors (which could also be termed grievances or or points of dispute) in practice and in doctrine – primarily related to the practice of **indulgences** (charging people to have a priest get their loved ones out of an imaginary place called Purgatory). Luther nailed that list to the door of a Church in Wittenburg, Germany. At that time, Luther was a professor of moral theology at the University of Wittenberg. That list of errors came to be know as Luther’s “Ninety Five Theses“, also known as his “Disputation on the Power of Indulgences”. (<https://comingintheclouds.org/about-protestant/denominations/introduction/?print=print>)

or thru a *Short video history of Martin Luther, Father of Protestant Reformation(with internet access)

Pause in silence.... meditating on what was heard & seen about the Protestant Reformation

Liturgist: Let us continue to prepare our minds and heart by listening to the Word of God

THROUGH SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 5:1-5 RSV

Congregation Response:

“ Beautiful words wonderful words, wonderful words of life” (2x)

or

Congregational Response

“Bulahan Ka”

*Hinalad : A collection of Cebuano anthems and Liturgical Responses
Compiled and Edited By: Jean Cuanan-Nalam & Dave Jan Fabe*

Bulahan ang namati sa Pulong sa Dios
Bulahan ang nagtuman sa Pulong sa Dios
Bulahan ang namati, namati ug nagtuman
Bulahan ang nagtuman sa Pulong sa Dios
Bulahan ka! Bulahan ka!

THROUGH SONG

THROUGH MEDITATION

THE ACT OF GIVING AND COMMITMENT

CALL TO OFFERING

Liturgist: Having received the lessons of the past thru the life of our reformers, Let's respond to God's call and hear Him say, "Give generously to Him and do so without a grudging heart; Then because of this the Lord your God will bless you, in all your work and in everything you put your hand to."
(Deuteronomy 15:10)

OFFERING OF TITHES, PLEDGES AND OTHER OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY SONG

DOXOLOGY

Bless thou the gift our hands have brought,
Bless thou the work our hearts have planned;
Ours is the faith, the will, the thought
The rest O God is in thy hand. Amen

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Liturgist

HYMN OF CHALLENGE

“Proclaiming Christ Today”

HFJ # 303

1. Proclaiming Christ today is to remember our past;
Learn the lessons of history,
Redeem the time at last.
2. Proclaiming Christ today is to repent from all our sins;
Following Jesus Christ, Loving Lord;
The Truth, the Life, the Way.
3. Proclaiming Christ today is to rekindle our
Dream for a world of genuine peace,
For all of us to own.

4. Proclaiming Christ today is reaffirming our
Faith in Jesus Christ the Savior and Lord
For new humanity.
5. Proclaiming Christ today is to renew our witnessing,
Living the life of Jesus our Lord
In what we do and say.
6. Proclaiming Christ today is to respond to calls to
Serve, where deeds of mercy and loving care
Are all for us to share.

or

“Reformation Song”

(The congregation may sing along with the video especially those who have internet access. The song may be downloaded and projected during worship)

1. We seek the strength our forebears had to stand in Christ alone.
The passion for Your Word, O God, pass on to us today.
Keep us from the fear of man, Set our gaze upon The Lamb!
Reform our hearts, our church, our land! Renew us Lord!

Chorus: We stand by grace alone, committed to the Scriptures; the spoken Word of God
We live by faith alone in Christ our King, and give the glory all to God alone.

2. We speak as those who went before of life in Christ alone.
Your Spirit gives us words of light to put before mankind.
Help us live by Your command, Setting forth your Words demand!
Reform our hearts, our church, our land! Renew us, Lord! (back to chorus)
3. We stand with them amidst the flames and cry “In Christ alone”.
Their message from our lips sustains “Our God is gracious still!”
Father help understand Trials and comforts from Your hand!
Reform our hearts, our church, our land! Renew us, Lord! (back to chorus)

Or

“Work In Your Kingdom” HFJ p 302

(Cebuano: “Ang Bulohaton sa Imong Gingharian”)

1. Work in Your kingdom advances and continues, Even through hard times, all odds and tribulations,
Despite our human infirmities and weakness, Use us, O Savior till the task is done.
2. There is no service impossible to render, If we but trust in your strength and in your power,
Make us, O God, be diligent and zealous. Until Your full will here on earth be done.
3. Lord, all our time we now offer in Your service, All the resources to us you have entrusted;
Use all our knowledge, our intellect and wisdom, Our enthusiasm, strength, and might, O God.
4. All of our talents which are your gifts from heaven, We would be careful to use these as intended, So
that Your Kingdom be built up and exalted, O God our Parent, source of love and light.

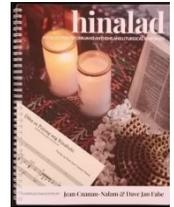
Pastor: Being your people, Oh God Who received your Word thru the life of the reformers, we offer our life to You. And may You renew our strength and wisdom that would guide us and inspire us to continue doing the lessons that allude our time today. As we act the Word we heard thru everyday challenge, may you remind us of the gift that we received from You. Now, here we are ready to continue witnessing the faith we profess.

This we offer to our God who is with us now and forever. Amen

✠BENEDICTION

Pastor:”Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.(Romans 5:1) And now , “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”(2 Corinthians 13:14)

✠**Congregational Response :** (for CEBUANO speaking) “Busa Igsoon, Lakaw “
(Hinalad : A collection of Cebuano anthems and Liturgical Responses
Compiled and Edited By: Jean Cuanan-Nalam & Dave Jan Fabe



Pulong: Sianne Gabor-Mendoza Huni:
Jean Cuanan-Nalam
Duyog: Gina Raakin

Sukad pa sa sinugdan ato nang napamatud-an
Ang Dios nagatuman sa saad Niya nga balaan
Busa igsoon, lakaw, ang pagtoo ipatigbabaw
Ang Dios nagatukaw uban kanimo sa tanang adlaw
Busa igsoon, lakaw, ang pagtoo ipatigbabaw
Ang Dios nagatukaw, Amen ug amen

OR

“ Sent by the Lord Am I”

“Sent by the Lord am I, my hands are ready now to make the earth the place in which the kingdom comes(2x)

The angels cannot change a world of hurt and pain into a world of love, justice, and of peace.
The task is mine to do, to set it really free. Oh, help me to obey; help me to do Your will.”

POSTLUDE RECESSIONAL

References:

UCCP Hymnal of a Faith Journey

(Hinalad: A collection of Cebuano anthems and Liturgical Responses

Compiled and Edited By: Jean Cuanan-Nalam & Dave Jan Fabe

Good news Bible. Today's English Version)

Bible RSV & Good News Bible

<https://comingintheclouds.org/about-protestant/denominations/introduction/?print=print>

The liturgy was prepared by Rev. Lilibeth Lacia Damiao of Associate Conference of Surigao - Southeast Mindanao Jurisdictional Area

Bible Texts: Matthew 22:14; 1 Samuel 3:1-14

Theme: “Ministerial Formation: A Meaningful Journey of Being Called to Serve”

REFLECTION

According to the UCCP-Office of the Church Workers Ministry (UCCP-OCWM) we have a total of 1,948 church workers in our church which is categorized into the following:

Ordained	1058	54.31%
Licenciate	671	34.45%
Diaconial	156	8.01%
Intern	43	2.21%
Bishop	20	1.03%
	1948	100.00%

Age bracket of Church Workers per title as of 3/15/2022

age bracket	ordained	licentiate	Diaconal	MS/intern	Bishop	Total
20-30	6	65	7	32	0	110
31-40	90	129	19	6	0	244
41-50	224	105	30	3	0	362
51-60	357	148	36	2	10	553
61 and above	381	224	64	0	10	679
Total	1058	671	156	43	20	1948

We have 2,822 Local churches in the entire UCCP. Based on the number of church workers vis-a-vis to the number of LCs, it is understandable that one church worker is in charge of two to three local churches. Some conferences are already doing it. This is alarming. If we look at the data above (Church workers),we can see a huge gap between those ages 61 and above with a total of 679 compared to those 20-30 with a total of 110. We don't want that in the future there will be local churches that would be closing because of lack of church workers.

There was a time during a CYF gathering, I tried to ask them what courses they would want to take up when they go to college. Many of them mentioned different courses. Out of 120 young people, only 1 had expressed her desire to take up Theology. We tried to ask the reasons why they don't want to take up Theology and these are some of their responses:

Firstly, *financial reasons*. The “salary/honorarium” of CWs is a challenge to the existing high prices of basic commodities. It is not enough to support the family’s daily needs;

No permanent house. Young people especially members of the family of church workers are fully aware of the hardship of transferring from different locations and houses every end of Church workers’ term in the Local

Church. Also, they struggle from the emotional they experienced from leaving their environment, schools, friends to whom they are emotionally attached. They are even confused why they have lots of houses.

Next is the *treatment of church members to church workers*. They see how “some” church members treat their church workers as employee of the church. There are also some church members who expect the family of church workers to be always present in the church helping and attending in the church work and services, and to the extent of being like care takers and security guards of the church.

These are some of the challenges that confront us a Church. With this situation, the Church needs to strengthen the program on recruitment to the ministry at all levels. It is stipulated in the Magna Carta for Church Workers.

Samuel is a product of this program. It started even when he was not yet conceived.

In 1 Samuel 1, there was a couple named Hannah and Elkanah. As a usual couple, they wanted to have a child. We know that having a child in their times is a manifestation of being blessed. But Hannah is barren. This situation did not stopped her desire to have a child. She prayed hard to God to give them a child. Her being sincere in praying, she was even accused of being drunk by the Priest Eli. Though Eli tells Hannah that her prayer will be answered. God answered their prayers. Later on Samuel was born.

We always hear, Christian Education happens from”womb to tomb” and it is supported by the wise man, “Train up a child in the way he/she should go and when he/she is old he will not depart from it “ (Prov.22:6). This is exemplified in the life of the couple Hannah and Elkanah.

From this account, we understand that *recruitment in the ministry starts from home*. Parents play a great role on this. Our aspirations for our kids should be coupled and nurtured with earnest prayers and commitment. Parents are expected to bring with them their kids to the church. Not just to send them by themselves.

When their prayer was answered and Samuel was born, his parents brought him to the temple as promised (1 Samuel 1:11-28). Doing this was a strange and unusual for parents to do but it was accepted in their times. Samuel’s exposure in the temple, and staying with Priest Eli is where he heard the call of God. Through the help and facilitation of Priest Eli, Samuel was able to hear and answer the call of God.

Aside from the home, according to our text, the Church is the other venue for the recruitment to the ministry. The Church has a vital role in facilitating our young people to discern their call in the ministry. The home and local church serve as the basic foundations for informal formations of people towards the ministry. Parents and the local church as the locus of mission play a great role in responding to such challenge. Recruitment for the ministry happens in the immediate environment where young young people involve themselves into. Recruitment for the ministry should be intentional and be part of the whole program of the local church. Local churches should see themselves as stakeholders in the ministerial formation of the Church. Just as the role of the Ministerial Formation Centers is important, the help of the local churches should also be taken of great value. May our local churches would consider this as they plan out their programs and local expressions of the faith and mission of the Church.

Notes for Worship Preparation

- Prepare the the following symbols
 - a. Bible
 - b. Magna Carta for Church Workers
 - c. stoles
 - d. flowers
 - e. 2 candles (to represent the humanity and divinity of Jesus)
- Rehearse the song before the worship (if needed)
- an altar call could be incorporated to challenge those who want to enter into the ministry

THE LITURGY

The community prepares to worship

PRELUDE (The cross, Bible, candles, flowers and stoles are brought to the altar)

Cross. The principal symbol of Christian religion; sign both of Christ himself and of the faith of Christians.

Holy Bible. A faithful and inspired witness to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ and in history, to illumine, guide, correct and edify believers in their faith and witness. We use Theological Education through the Holy Bible.

2 candles represent the divinity and humanity of Jesus. He is divine but became human and lived among us.

Flowers. It symbolize the innocence, holiness and beauty which is derived from Christ. It signifies grace, virtue and heavenly warmth which radiates from believers.

Magna Carta for church workers. This document contains the policies, roles and responsibilities of church workers from recruitment until retirement.

Stole. This is a symbol of the office of the ministry of Word and Sacrament; It looks like a yoke. Yoke is a wooden beam used to carry or pull heavy objects by distributing the weight evenly on both shoulders and can be used by humans and animals a like. When yoke is put on the neck of carabao or cow, it means he can not go wherever he wants. The same is true with stole. Same is true with church worker, when they wear the yoke, it means she/he is yoke with Christ. They can not just go or do what she/he wants to do but the will of God.

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

PROCESSIONAL

The community worships God

SALUTATION (Liturgist)

++COMMUNITY SINGING

"It's a great thing to praise the Lord"

It's a great thing to praise the Lord, its a great thing to praise the Lord

It's a great thing to praise the Lord, walking in the light of God.

Walk, walk, walk in the Lord. Walk, walk, walk in the Lord

Walk, walk, walk in the Lord. Walking in the light of God.

* Serve the Lord

“When the Spirit of the Lord”

When the Spirit of the Lord is in my heart,
I can preach like Peter preached,
I can preach O Lord, I can preach O Lord,
I can preach like Peter preached. (2x)

-Pray like Daniel prayed

-Lead like Martha led

“Sing Hallelujah”

Sing hallelujah to the Lord. Singing hallelujah to the Lord
Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah to the Lord.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Come, people of God. Come to the presence of God! Come with joy this beautiful moment full of praise and thanksgiving in our hearts as we celebrate this Theological Education Sunday. We seek the presence of God in our lives. Let us listen to God in humility.

Congregational response (singing) “God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak” HFJ,307

Words: Frances Ridley Havergal, 1871:alt.;

Music: Arr:from Robert Schumann, 1872

God, speak to me that I may speak in living echoes of your tone;
As you have sought, so let me seek your erring children, lost and lone.

Oh, lead me, God, that I may lead some wonderer’s along life’s way
Oh, feed me, so that I may feed your hungry ones with out delay.

Liturgist: We bring our lives to God once again to examine and cleanse our spirits. For God to revive our minds and to fill us with knowledge and wisdom.

Congregational response (singing) ”God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak” HFJ,307

O fill me, with your fullness, God, your over flowing love to know;

In glowing word and kindling thought, your love to tell, your praise to show.

Liturgist: Take this moment to focus on the work of Theological Education or education and training for the ministry as we praise our God who called human beings for the work of ministry.

Congregational response (singing) ”God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak” HFJ,307

O use me, God, use even me just as you will, and when, and where,

until your blessed face I see, your rest, your joy, your glory to share.

++INVOCATION (unison)

O God who calls people in the ministry. Thank you for this fellowship to celebrate your faithfulness. We come to you in humble adoration. Come in our midst. Speak to us Lord and help us to listen to your voice and discern your will, and may we learn to respond according to your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

WORDS OF WELCOME/CHURCH CONCERNS

Pastor

The community asks God's forgiveness

TESTIMONY

(Video Clips regarding testimonies of ministerial students or Conference Ministerial Committee representative/s could be invited to share the program/concerns of the conference regarding Ministerial formation)

CALL TO REPENTANCE *(congregation may sit or kneel)*

Liturgist: We come to God acknowledging our weaknesses as individual and as a Church.

Congregation: Lord, we are always pre-occupied with our personal concerns. We are too busy with every details of our lives but we neglect to give importance of recruiting young men and women in the ministry. We make big programs but give little attention to nurture our young for the future. We fail to become models so that they would be inspired to enter for training in the seminaries. We always want to increase our budget in the church but we forget to increase the support to ministerial students, our church workers, and Theological Schools/college/seminaries that train our ministerial students for the task of ministering our churches in the near future. We build schools and seminaries but we are tempted to increase tuition fees secularizing trends in our time which continue to marginalize people especially those who are less privileged. Sometimes we always pray for our own good but we missed to include those who mold and equip people carrying out this sacred tasks for service in the ministry despite all the odds and difficulties they face.

All: O God of ministry, forgive us we pray. May you open the door of our hearts and our church to the call for the ministry towards an authentic service to your people, and for a truly meaningful and fulfilling life as Christians.

AFFIRMATION OF GOD'S PARDON

Pastor

Brethren in Christ, the Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us, in the name of the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, Amen (Psalms 103:12).

Congregational response (to be sung) "Caribbean Hallelujah"

Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Hallelujah, hallelujah!

The community hears the word of God

THE MESSAGE

++**Through the Reading of the Scriptures:** Matthew 22:14; 1 Samuel 3:1-14

+**Through Song** "My Task" (HFJ p.3111)

+ **Through the Word Spoken** Matthew 24: ; 1 Samuel 3:1-18

The community responds to the word of God

LITANY OF MINISTRY

Minister: O God, who sent Jesus into the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life to set others free, shape us for your ministry.

Congregation: Claim us, O God, for your service, and direct us toward your will.

Minister: You have graced all members of Christ's body, one by one, with gifts of the Spirit to fulfill their vocation: to lead lives worthy of your calling, to be workers who have no reason to be ashamed, to shine as lights to the world, salt of earth.

Congregation: You have granted each of us the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Minister: You gave grace according to the measure of Christ's gift, and some are called prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up to the body of Christ.

All: Grant that together we may all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of your Son, the full stature of Christ.

Minister: Through your grace, O God, may we lead a life worthy of the vocation to which you call us.

Congregation: Claim us, O God, for your service, and direct us toward your will. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

Liturgist: The work of ministry needs our material blessings. The harvest is full but laborers are empty. May young men and women find a meaningful journey as they continue to discern to answer the call for the ministry. Let us willingly and joyfully share our blessings for the furtherance of God's Kingdom.

THE OFFERING OF FRUITS OF LABOR AND LIFE

HYMN OF OFFERING "With Gifts that Differ by your Grace" HFJ,245

With gifts that differ by your grace your Spirit fits us all,
That Christians in each time and place may answer when you call
You strengthen some to take a stand, to prophesy or preach
While others give with open hand, or heal the sick, or preach.

And yet, because our faith is frail, we bury gifts you give.
Afraid to risk, afraid to fail, we are not free to live.
At times we use your sacred gifts for only selfish ends
Our purpose fades, our focuses shifts, and conflict soon attends.

Come, Spirit, build your church a-new, that all may do their part,
Together finding life in you, diverse, yet one in heart.
So may your people seek your will, transformed in all our ways.
We offer body, mind and skill, a sacrifice of praise.

++DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

We give you thanks for all the blessings you have bestowed upon your people oh God. You have been faithful even in the history of our lives until at present as manifested by our life, fellowship and faith. Here are the fruits of labor and life, we offer them to you. May you bless them that many will follow you and find meaningful journey of being called to serve you especially to the young who would commit their lives in your service. In the name of the God who continues to call his people in the ministry, Amen.

HYMN OF COMMITMENT “**Lord, You Give the Great Commission**” (Tune: **Stand up, Stand up for Jesus**)

(Special offerings may be taken at this point of worship)

1. Lord, you give the great commission, "Heal the sick and preach the word."
Lest the church neglect its mission and the gospel go unheard,
help us witness to your purpose with renewed integrity:
With the Spirit's gifts empower us for the work of ministry.
2. Lord, you call us to your service: "In my name baptize and teach."
That the world may trust your promise, life abundant meant for each,
Give us all new fervor, Draw us closer in community:
With the Spirit's gifts empower us for the work of ministry.
3. Lord, you make the common holy: "This my body, this my blood."
Let us all, for earth's true glory, daily lift life heavenward,
asking that the world around us share your children's liberty:
With the Spirit's gifts empower us for the work of ministry.
4. Lord, you show us love's true measure: "Father, what they do, forgive."
Yet we hoard as private treasure all that you so freely give.
May your care and mercy lead us to a just society:
With the Spirit's gifts empower us for the work of ministry.
5. Lord, you bless with words assuring: "I am with you to the end."
Faith and hope and love restoring, may we serve as you intend,
and, amid the cares that claim us, hold in mind eternity:
With the Spirit's gifts empower us for the work of ministry.

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

As we get out from the four corners of this church, keep us Lord, from following our own fleshly pursuits, but rather may we be guided by You in all the areas of this ministry work and be a blessing for the ministry. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

BLESSINGS

Pastor: Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3:20-21)

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "Lord, You Give Your Great Commission" (Last stanza)

5.Lord, you bless with words assuring: "I am with you to the end."
Faith and hope and love restoring, may we serve as you intend,
and, amid the cares that claim us, hold in mind eternity:
With the Spirit's gifts empower us for the work of ministry.

POSTLUDE

RECESSIONAL

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Legend: ++-those who are able may stand

References:

Hymnal of Faith Journey, UCCP,2002

Call to Confession (adopted and revised from Hymnal of Faith Journey p.442)

The liturgy was prepared by Rev. Marcela Sacayle, National Program Coordinator of Evangelism and Church Development (LLCDM- ECD)

*Migrant Workers Sunday/ Stewardship Sunday/ NCCP Sunday/ First Sunday of ADVENT
November 27,2022*

Sub-theme: “Rebuilding and Restoring with Hope as Responsible Stewards”

Biblical Text: Luke 16:10-13 (NRSV)

10 “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?”

13 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

Notes for Worship Preparation

- Symbols needed

Bible, Matchstick, Cross, Advent Candle

- For the lighting of 1st Candle of Advent, we may choose two youth - preferably male and female for the reading and one child for the lighting of candle.

REFLECTION

On this day, we are celebrating the Migrant Workers Sunday, Stewardship Sunday, NCCP Sunday and First Sunday of Advent – however, we are putting more emphasis on Stewardship Sunday.

According to Merriam Webster, stewardship refers to the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. Using our biblical perspective, stewardship is about exercising the authority over the creation that God has given unto us. Through this, we are reflecting the image of God and care toward all of creation and live out our roles as caretakers and stewards. It means that it does not only refer to financial resources, but also non-financial resources like human resource and natural resources.

UCCP Constitution – Article II Declaration of Principles Section 9. The United Church of Christ in the Philippines advocates vigorous Christian stewardship expressed in the cheerful giving of tithes, time, talents and possessions.

As we celebrate the Stewardship Sunday, let us be reminded on the approved policy of the National Council Meeting on Stewardship in the Local Church.

- Every member of a UCCP local congregation shall undertake a basic membership course on stewardship in order to have a common understanding of stewardship.
- Every member of the church shall be encouraged and challenged to be faithful in their giving of tithe in faithfulness to the biblical teaching and practice.
- Every local church shall set aside an endowment fund, the interest of which will be used for special projects in the church.
- Every local church-based school shall allocate in their budget support for the local church program whenever feasible.
- Every local church shall strictly implement the UCCP financial management systems.
- Every local church shall look into the possibility of putting up a job placement program for their members, whenever practicable.
- Every local church shall faithfully remit their Wider Mission Support (WMS).

Our biblical texts explicitly explained that stewardship is part of the life of the believers. How we handle earthly treasures or material resources reflect not just how wealthy we are but most importantly how trustworthy we are with things entrusted to us. It is not about how plenty was received but how we take care of what was given. Responsible stewardship is an expression of our faith and a response to God's faithfulness, as well.

The resources we use and maximize are not intended for personal gain but for the fullness of life; not just for human beings but also for the whole of God's creation. We are called to become stewards to impose our dominion and authority but to reflect the works and creativity of the Creator.

THE LITURGY

SILENT MEDITATION

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10

PRELUDE/PROCESSIONAL

COMMUNITY SINGING OF PRAISE

LITANY OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

Liturgist: Creator and Loving God, we praise you for the gift of life that you have given us, a life that is full of continuous blessings and a life that is full of hope each day.

Community: As we face each day with uncertainty due to circumstances and different issues, you give us life that we take care of and life that can also serve as blessing to others.

Liturgist: Lord, we thank you for the gift of time, for the material resources, for the people around us, and for the talents you have entrusted us.

Community: In times of fears and doubts, your gifts have been essential and useful which help us continuously live with joy and motivation and be able to stand against different concerns and struggles that challenge us each day.

All: Lord, with all the gifts we have received from you, help us to be faithful and responsible stewards. May these gifts empower us to be instruments to rebuild and to restore the brokenness of our world, not just for our own but also for the rest of creation.. Amen.

†HYMN OF PRAISE

♪ “Let’s Worship and Praise God” ♪

HFJ,10

Let’s worship and praise God with joyful songs,
for the blessings that God has bestowed,
Let’s praise god and worship the Lord with songs,
for the blessings that God bestowed.

Chorus: God’s grace unfathomed and free, flowing on through the night, through the day

Let’s praise God with singing, let’s praise God in service, together let’s praise the Lord.

Let’s worship and praise God with joyful songs,
for Christ Jesus, God’s gift to the world
Let’s praise god and worship the Lord with songs,
for Christ Jesus, the Living Word (Chorus)

Let’s worship and praise God with joyful songs,
praise and offerings to Yahweh belong

Let's praise God and labor in service true,
so the blessings so fresh, so new. (Chorus)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Liturgist: "Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." (James 5:16 NRSV).

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, as we continue worshipping you and thank you for all the blessings you have given unto us, we admit that oftentimes we also used these gifts to step against each other. There are tendencies for us to be boastful. And there are times when we keep on closing our eyes to the times when those gifts can be beneficial to the communities in need. With those instances, we ask for your forgiveness and continue to seek your guidance so that we may live out our mission to rebuild and restore with hope as responsible stewards. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

"In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight." (Ephesian 1:7-8) As we are forgiven for our sins and shortcomings, we are now called to be responsible stewards of the gifts that we have received.

†RESPONSE 🎵 "With Gifts that Differ by Your Grace" 🎵 HFJ 245

And yet, because our faith is frail, we bury gifts you give.
Afraid to risk, afraid to fail, we are not free to live.
At times we use your sacred gifts for only selfish ends.
Our purpose fades, our focus shifts, and conflict soon attends.

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST CANDLE OF ADVENT– "Hope"

Youth: In these changing and challenging times, we are called to be beacons of hope, bringer of light and the salt of the world. From the beginning, God entrusted us the mission of being stewards and we pursue this mission in a broken world filled with hate, prejudice, unpeace, division, and greed. And as we go through the season of Advent, may the Lord enlighten our minds, deepen our understanding and strengthen us in this long pilgrimage as stewards of creation and God's people.

(A child will light up the 1st candle of advent)

THE COMMUNITY SHARES DIFFERENT CONCERNS

(At this point, concerns about the migrant workers and families; news or issues concerning the member churches of NCCP and concerns related to the stewardship campaign of the Church/ local church may be shared by the Pastor)

COMMUNITY PRAYER

Pastor

†RESPONSE 🎵 "Here on a Table Spread" 🎵 HFJ 261

Here on a table spread, we shall make a pact of solidarity,
The cracked and broken pots, we shall place them at the table of our God

And together we will share the grief, and together feel the nation's wound
In this we need to till and sow, plant the seeds of liberating spirit.

Here at one table build, 'stablish and erect, together celebrate
Upon the festive meal of truth, one in hope we are united
Let love and peace be celebrated on justice' firm solid ground

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

† *Reading of the Scripture*

Old Testament	Genesis 1:28
New Testament	Luke 16: 10-13

† *Response* ♪ “Gloria Patri” ♪

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end, Amen, Amen.

Message thru Song

Message thru Sermon “Rebuilding and Restoring with Hope as Responsible Stewards”

THE DEDICATION OF LIVES AND LABOR

Call to Offering (Liturgist)

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father (our God) in heaven. So, whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father (our God) who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:1-4) Let us now faithfully offer the fruits of our Lord's gift and by our labor.

Offering of Labor, Life and other Offerings

† *Response* ♪ “We Give You but Your Own” ♪ HFJ 93

We give you but your own, whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully

Offertory Prayer

We are grateful for the different gifts we have received. We acknowledge that everything was from You, our Creator. But we are more grateful for You, our Creator who out of Your creative power and generous heart made us humans worthy of taking care and using all that which are made available for us. May our response to Your faithfulness and love be worthy also of Your praise and glorify You. Amen

†HYMN OF PRAISE

♪ “You are Salt for the Earth” ♪

HFJ,246

You are salt for the earth, O people, salt for the kingdom of God!

Share the flavor of life, O people: life in the kingdom of God

Refrain: Bring forth the kingdom of mercy, bring forth the kingdom of peace.

Bring forth the kingdom of justice, bring forth the city of God!

You are a light on the hill, O people, light for the city of God!

Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine for the kingdom of God (Refrain)

You are a seed of the word, O people, bring forth the kingdom of God!

Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the kingdom of God (Refrain)

We are bless'd and a pilgrim people, bound for the kingdom of God!

Love our journey and love our homeland: love is the kingdom of God! (Refrain)

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

As we light the first candle of Advent, may the promise of hope brought us to our knees and acknowledge that we need You in all our days. May our work in rebuilding and restoring show our commitment to being responsible stewards to life and creation. Empower us Lord through Your Spirit, so that all our works may also bring hope to others. Prepare us for the coming of the One who is promised and may our waiting become moments of introspection and reflection. Amen

BLESSING

Pastor: As we go out into the world, live out the message of hope.

Be responsible stewards not just of your gifts

Be responsible stewards not just of your life

Be responsible stewards of God's promise

Of abundance and fullness.

†Response

♪ “Now unto Him (Jude 24-25)” ♪

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-goSBEisqTw>

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy

To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power,

Both now and ever. Amen.

POSTLUDE

RECESSIONAL

References:

Hymnal of Faith Journey, UCCP, 2002

UCCP Constitution and By-Laws

The liturgy was prepared by Jonie Ben Marasigan, National Program Coordinator of Community Ministries (LLCDM-CM)

Family Sunday / International Human Rights Sunday / Second Sunday of Advent - PEACE

December 04, 2022

Sub-theme: “Rebuilding and Restoring with Respect for Human’s Dignity”

Biblical Texts: Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72: 1-7; 18-19; Romans 5:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12; Luke 4: 18-19;

Matt. 25: 36- 37; Jeremiah 22:3

NOTES FOR WORSHIP PREPARATION

- Prepare the following symbols to use:

cloth or scarf, sarong : which symbolizes comfort, it will be placed on shoulders

REFLECTION

This liturgical resource material will incorporate this Sunday’s three emphases.

Human dignity is one of the important things which everyone upholds. Every human being is worthy to be valued and respected. Such respect is fading and being destroyed due to peoples’ low regard to life through bad practices and allowing harmful things to happen. This post-pandemic scene shows how life, lifestyle, relationship, livelihood, sense of community and fellowship in the family changes. Somehow, fullness of life cannot be felt to the point of being hopeless. Something is destroyed and disrupted. Pandemic brought so much anxiety and confusion as to how people should protect themselves including children now that face to face classes and on-site conduct of work is now allowed. Those who have lost their jobs need to find other ways to sustain the family financially. Inflation brought more suffering and struggle to the masses.

Isaiah’s prophecy gives us the final answer and assurance of comfort despite challenges. We reach out to the coming Messiah to calm our hearts and be affirmed that – God is with us. This produces “endurance and character and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” (Romans 5)

There is a need and a call to rebuild and restore with respect of everyone’s right to express, right to experience silence, right to equality, freedom from discrimination and from degrading treatment. With hope in Jesus Christ, with hope in living harmoniously, with hope in living with peace, the full life which we can experience, one is by respecting each one’s dignity.

‘We are called to act with justice and righteousness... and do no wrong or violence. ‘ (Jeremiah 22:3)

THE LITURGY

MOMENT OF SILENCE

PROCESSIONAL

CHURCH CONCERNS

OPENING SONG

“The Peace of the Earth Be with You”

Words: Guatemalan traditional; translated by Christine Carson

*Music: Guatemalan folk melody
<https://youtu.be/fwhNH5ILa7E>*

*The peace of the earth be with you
The peace of the heavens too
The peace of the rivers be with you
The peace of the oceans too.
Deep... peace... falling over you
God's... peace... growing in you...*

***OPENING PRAYER (All)**

With great thanksgiving and hope, we acknowledge your presence O Lord, and the presence of your children: our brothers and sisters whom we encounter and continue to work with in building Your kingdom here on earth. As we examine our lives, our community, and our family this Advent season, may we be reminded of your call to us, as bearers and heralds of love who treat one another with respect. Bestow on us your peace and care. Thank you Lord for this encounter. In Christ's name, Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE OF PEACE (to be read by a family)

Father & Mother: Advent is the season of remembering the time when the people await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the baby born in Bethlehem. God sends us the peace of Christ to earth.

Child / Children: On this Second Sunday of Advent, we light the candle symbolizing PEACE. May this light ever remind us that God is peace and this is God's gift to us. Let us remember the words of the angels when they declared "Peace on earth, goodwill to all!"

(the candle of hope and peace are lit)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Liturgist: Be still, let us listen to the whole creation...

People: Let us embrace the gift of silence... (pause)

We have the gift of family and friends yet... we do not listen to them
We have the gift of home yet... it is a place where abuses are done
We have the gift of friendship yet... we limit our friends
We have the gift of feelings yet... we invalidate and disrespect theirs
We have our Lord's blessing yet... we fail to share

(sung)

“If I Have Wounded Any Soul Today” HFJ 66; 1st & 4th stanza only

*Words: C.M. Battersby. Alt.
Music: Ches H. Gabriel; Arr. C.H.G.*

*If I have wounded any soul today,
If I have caused one foot to go astray,
If I have walked in my own willful way,
Dear Lord, forgive!*

Liturgist: Come, Oh people let us bow before our Lord and share, confess our failure to listen to the whole creation... *(silent confession)*

*(sung) Forgive the sins I have confessed to Thee;
Forgive the secret sins I do not see;
O guide me, love me and my keeper be,
Dear Lord, my God...*

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S PARDON AND LOVE

Minister: As the Psalmist prays for guidance and support for King Solomon, we also pray for forgiveness so we can be heralds and leaders too in restoring and rebuilding with respect for human dignity and letting justice flow down for the poor and oppressed. By grace we are saved, by confessing we are forgiven.

Liturgist: Now, let us stand and proclaim God's justice and righteousness as we hope and work for peace in the whole creation. Praise to you O Lord, Jesus Christ!

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

"Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior" HFJ,118

*Based from: COME THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS; Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Eng. Transl. Helen S. Tejero, 2002; Arr. Isabel D. Vista*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfiBKyL-OxY>

*Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior the long awaited One,
From our sins and from all our fears, we pray that you'll give us rest.
You have given hope and gladness, strength to face realities.
All the nations are rejoicing, as they join in songs of praise.*

*Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior, the holy, incarnate One,
You were born as one to show us to live a just, righteous life,
Through the everlasting Spirit, guide us in our journey's long,
And when all our tasks are ended, bring us to your glorious home.*

(Another Option – hymn to sing)

"We Hail You God's Anointed" HFJ,371

("Ang Dinihogan Daygon")

Words by James Montgomery, 1821; alt.

Music: Elena G. Maquiso 1971

*We hail you God's anointed, the long awaited One!
Hail in the time appointed, your reign on earth begun!
You come to break oppression, to set the captive free;
To take away transgression, and rule in equity*

*You shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth;
And joy and hope, like flowers, spring in your to birth
Before you on the mountains shall peace, the herald go,
And righteousness in fountains, from hill to valley flow*

*The wise shall bow before you and gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore you, and praise all peoples sing;
To you shall prayer unceasing and daily vows be said,
Your realm is still increasing, with you, O Christ, as head*

*O'er evert foe victorious, you on your throne shall rest;
From age to age more glorious, all blessing and all-blessed;
The tide of time shall never your covenant remove,
Your name shall stand forever, your changeless name of Love*

READING OF THE SCRIPTURE

ANTHEM

SERMON

(Silence)

(Cloths, scarf or sarong are placed on the shoulders to the worshippers seat-mate)

LITANY FOR FAMILIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

“God’s Call for Today” HFJ,262

Words & Music: Luna L. Dingayan, 1989

Transc. Perla P. Dingayan, 1989

“O Hesus Among Gipaabot”

Fathers: God of justice and compassion, guide us to remember and affirm our faith that we are created in
Your likeness with dignity and worth.

All: Guide us Oh Lord, we pray,

Mothers: Omniscient God, help us to remember the value of family that appreciates each other’s company
with love and respect

All: Remind us Oh Lord, we pray,

*(Sung) Creation grows now in travail in need of care and dignity
Come people of the world, let’s share our lives for to live is to care for the earth....*

Grandparents: God of protection, teach us to care for and support survivors of abuse and be a voice to the
voiceless.

All: Teach us Oh Lord, we pray,

Youth: Welcoming God, help us acknowledge and accept with respect those who are different from us as
we work towards becoming an inclusive community.

All: Help us Oh Lord, we pray,

Children: God of comfort, use us to listen to and empathize with your people’s sacred stories

All: Use us Oh Lord, we pray,

*(Sung) From many nations we have come with burning hearts and minds
To share to all what we have seen and heard as God’s call in our lands and seas....*

Choir: God of assurance, calm us with your warm embrace and we entrust to You our anxiety brought by
the pandemic,

All: Fill us with your joy and peace, we pray

Ministers: And We pray for governments and church leaders to seek and pursue equity in every human, and
to end division..

*(Sung) We’ve heard the lessons of the past, how greed destroyed humanity
The nations rise and fall in flames of war and the people live in misery....*

All: We pray for strength... In Jesus Christ’s name the Messiah, Amen.

*(Sung) Ref. – We have seen the struggles of the poor,
we have seen our bond of unity
We have heard God calling us today;
Pray for peace, work for justice
and restore creation’s dignity....*

CALL TO OFFERING

Liturgist: As Prophet Isaiah was crying out to “Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight”, “May the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon us, righteousness shall be the belt around our waist, and faithfulness be the belt around our loins”. Let us respond to the call of faithful giving and present our worthy offering to God.

BRINGING OF THE OFFERINGS

*DOXOLOGY

THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

*HYMN OF PROCLAMATION “Let Justice Flow Down” [MFW 26b]

by Douglas Homanaw, Canada

*Refrain: Let justice flow down, down like a river, down to the valleys where the helpless cry
Righteousness flow through us forever, lead us to the streams that will never run dry.*

*Flow to the mouths of the hungry, flow to the hands of the poor
Flow to the hearts of the orphans, the ravages of war (Ref.)*

*Flow to the streets of the homeless, finding no place they can go
Flow to the cells of the prisoners, who face each day alone (Ref.)*

*Flow through the courts of our nation, guide us in love’s decrees,
Lead us to streams of salvation; and flood our lands with peace (Ref.)*

(Another Option – Hymn to sing)

“O Bless Our Family, Dear God” [HFJ 190]

“Ang Amo nga Panimalay”

Words by Exequiel P. Puracan, 1971; Eng. Transl. Laila Fuertes, 2001

Music: Elena P. Puracan, 1971; Harm: Grace R. Tababa, 1971

*O bless our family, dear God, Pour out your blessings on us all,
And grant to us your peace and harmony, O God;
And help us, Lord, to follow you.
In paths of righteousness and love*

*O give to us your patience Lord, Your goodness unto us bestow
Your mercy and your love will bind us into one
Whatever hardships we may face,
We shall be happy in your grace.*

*BENEDICTION (Minister)

How beautiful our encounter of our Lord with our community of faith and family!
May you cherish each one and go in service with love, respect and hope!
May your ears be ready to listen, may your shoulders be ready to carry each other’s burden!
May your bodies, hearts and minds complete the adventure and challenge to restore and rebuild with respect for human’s dignity!
May this season of advent shower you with God’s blessing and providence in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

*Response

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” [HFJ 124]

Words by Charles Wesley, 1739; alt.

Music From Felix Medelsshon’s “Festgesang,” 1840

Arr. William H. Cummings, 1855

*Hail the Bearer of God's peace! Hail the Son of righteousness,
Light of life our Savior brings, risen with radiant, healing wings
Mildly laying glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us all from earth, born to give us second birth
Hark! The Herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring!" Amen*

Recessional

Sources:

Music for Worship (SUDS)

Hymnal of Faith Journey

New Revised Standard Version Bible

Words to lit the Advent Candles by Rev. Goel B. Bagundol

The liturgy was prepared by Ptr. Mahal Acha of Bohol Conference Incorporated BCI- WVJ

Third Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2022

Sub-Theme: *"Anticipating with Hope the Fullness of Life in the Messiah"*

Biblical Text: **John 15:11** and **James 5:7-10** *New Revised Standard Version*

"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

Patience in Suffering

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Notes for Worship Preparations

- Church Altar with the following worship symbols:
 1. **Open Bible**
 2. **Advent Candles.**
 3. **Flowers and Plants**
 4. **Token** (anything sweet e.g., chocolates, candies etc.)
- The worship mood will be joyful, expectant, in anticipation of the coming of the Messiah, exciting, and liberating in the sense that the anticipation of the coming Messiah will release us from the bondage of anxiety and sadness.
- For a meaningful celebration, the congregation is encouraged to say/express words of compliment or encouragement to each other -a significant moment of their lives when they felt so much joy even in the simplest form of compliment they received from other people or strangers. This part should be done before saying the "**ADVENT PRAYER FOR THE LORD TO COME**" by Renee Swope. Gifts are not just expressed through giving material things. Even the smallest act of appreciation through our words is enough to bring joy to the lives of others.

REFLECTION

If we talk about happiness or joy today, it is so tough to imagine as to how that looks like. Perhaps a glimpse of genuine joy in our generation would bring a positive implication on how we perceive all the things that has been happening around us. Genuine joy or happiness, would require an immense effort to show or to be manifested in our society today, while we see the grim faces of pain and grief, and also the fear of us people recovering from the unthinkable aftermath brought by the pandemic. The various forms of violence caused by domestic or external factors has added to that dilemma of seeking the good in everything. Reported brutal deaths of innocent civilians, natural disasters/calamities that brought devastations to different places, unrest in the Middle East and other countries, and wars inside and outside our own country. It seems that, the world is a miserable place to live in.

The text we found in James reminds us, that in our suffering we need to have patience, just like how the farmers are waiting for the right time for the harvest. It requires perseverance and the willingness to wait for that joy to arrive to us. We are also reminded, that in the sufferings we are currently facing, all of these will soon be replaced with joy or great gladness in our anticipation of Jesus' birth. The joy or happiness we always embody as Filipinos will also translate as our way of uplifting our spirits whenever we encounter countless hardships and unconceivable circumstances. Let us all remember, regardless of the struggles and predicaments we are currently facing, there is always that joy within us. The person who lives with the Holy Spirit is a happy person and a happy person has a reason for thanking God. In our hopeful anticipation of the promised Messiah, during this Advent season, we are reminded that Christian life is a happy and grateful life.

Jesus told his people "to have joy". As followers of Jesus, we should also have that joy in our hearts. *John 15:11* says, "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." Joy does not mean that as followers of Christ we will no longer feel the anxiety or sadness. But it means behind this anxiety and sadness of life, there will always be joy in Christ.

THE LITURGY

PREPARATORY MUSIC

(Christmas/Advent Songs played softly)

PROCESSIONAL

(Songs of Christmas/Advent Songs to be played)

OPENING SONG

"We Hail You God's Anointed"

HFJ #114

Words: James Montgomery, 1821; alt.

Music: Elena G. Maquiso 1971

*We hail you God's anointed, the long awaited One!
Hail in the time appointed, your reign on earth begun!
You come to break oppression, to set the captives free
To take away transgression, and rule in equality.*

*You shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth;
And joy and hope, like flowers, spring in your path to birth
Before you on the mountains shall peace, the herald go
And righteousness, in fountain, from hill to valley flow*

*The wise shall bow before you and gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore you, and praise all peoples sing;
To you all prayer unceasing and daily vows be said
your realm is still increasing with you, O Christ, as head*

LIGHTING OF THE 3rd ADVENT CANDLE OF JOY

(The Leader will light the first candle of HOPE and the second candle of PEACE)

Liturgist: *(Read John 15:9-11)*

*“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.
If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s
commandments and abide in his love.
I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

(Assign a member/family to light and to read the litany below)

Family: Today we will light the third advent candle of **JOY**. In the name of the Spirit that fills the entire world and bestows joy onto our souls, let us ignite a light of true happiness. It is a candle of joy because the birth of Jesus filled everyone who saw him with great gladness in their hearts and minds.

(Light the Third Advent Candle)

CALL TO CELEBRATION *(Based from Psalm 146: 5-10 & Isaiah 61:1-4)*

Liturgist: Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God,

People: *Praise God, our giver of JOY!*

Liturgist: Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;

People: *Praise God, our giver of JOY!*

Liturgist: Who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.

People: *Praise God, our giver of JOY!*

Liturgist: The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.

People: *Praise God, our giver of JOY!*

Liturgist: The Lord watches over the strangers; upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked God brings to ruin.

People: *Praise God, our giver of JOY!*

Liturgist: The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!

All: *Praise God, in all generations. Praise the Lord!*

- or -

Liturgist: The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners

People: To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.

Liturgist: To provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

All: They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

HYMN OF CELEBRATION

“Let Us Gather Now in Praise”

Hymnal of Faith Journey #130

*Let us gather now in praise, on this the holy day of our remembrance
When our Savior Jesus came, a little baby oh so humbly born;
Songs of joy we'll always sing to celebrate this joyful moment,
And together let us raise our voices to our God.*

*Let us celebrate today, a festive, joyous Christmas day for all,
For our God Creator came, in Jesus Christ our Savior and our Lord,
Bringing gifts of love and life, and of salvation for all people,
Life in all its fullness comes, eternal life with God.*

*Let's be happy everyone on this the day of many, many blessings,
Sharing gifts and joyous laughter with each one, our loved ones and our friends
Let our lives be full of love, be truly filled with holy meaning
Alleluia! Let us shout that God is with us now.*

OPENING PRAYER (*Unison*)

Most precious and ever living God, with overwhelming joy in our hearts we await for the coming of the Messiah. We praise you dear God for your everlasting guidance and provision all throughout the year. We thank you for gathering us all together here in this humble place of worship, to celebrate your goodness and grace while we as a community of faith, anticipate the coming of Jesus into this world. We thank you for our brothers and sisters, who are here today sharing with us their joy as we collectively lift our adoration and thanksgiving to you. So, as we come now in spirit and in truth, we invoke your Holy presence to be with your people, this day, this very hour and even through all the days of our lives that seems to be too uncertain. May our communal worship, pleases you dear God and may this gathering bring out the joy that overflows from you and grows into the hearts of your people. This is we pray, to your Most Holy name. Amen

Song Response

“Watcher, Tell us of the Night”

Hymnal Faith of Journey #119

1st Stanza Only

*Watcher tell us of the night, what its sign of promise are.
Traveler, O a wondrous sight! See that glory beaming star!
Watcher, does its beauteous ray news of joy or hope foretell?
Traveler, yes; it brings the day, promised day of Israel!*

THE ACT OF PENITENCE

Call to Confession (*Liturgist*)

Fellow believers, we know that as a community of faith we have a lot of shortcomings in terms of carrying out that sense of optimism, as we collectively anticipate the coming of the Messiah. We, at some point almost lost that innate happiness brought by the gospel, we in turn brought sadness and hurt one another through words and actions. We almost lost that sense of enthusiasm of serving God, we in turn sort to passiveness from the aftermath and ravaging effect of the crises from the past. And most of all we almost lost that vision of the promised Messiah, we in turn sort to hopelessness and sorrow. Now, let us come together as a community of faith lifting up to God our failings.

Prayer of Confession (*Unison*)

God of Life and Mercy, we come to your presence in spirit and in truth. Knowing that we all doubted your immeasurable grace and providence, facing these countless challenges of our time. We acknowledge our shortcomings as your people, and we also admit the mistakes we inflicted to your entire creation as whole. We confess to you our inability to pursue, seek and ushering your kingdom here on earth. We confess to you the pain we caused to our fellow brothers and sisters, our friends, our loved ones, our families and our neighbors. Above all, we confess to you our stubbornness and disobedience in following Your will, doing Your ministry, and living out our faith by serving You and Your people. As we continue to celebrate this season of Advent, may we find

the joy and passion to continually carry out your mission even in the toughest of moments of our time. We ask for your guidance and direction O Lord, and forgive us all we pray. Amen

Silent Moment

(With soft melody/music)

Assurance of God's Pardon

Minister: Anyone in Christ becomes a new person altogether; the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

All: IN JESUS CHRIST, WE ARE FORGIVEN.

(The Book of Common Worship, Declaration of Forgiveness, p.16)

- or -

People of God, acknowledging and repenting our failings to God, is never in vain. It speaks of genuine humility in owning the sufferings and pain we inflicted to the entirety of God's good creation. By lifting up to God our sins, we sure find renewal in ourselves as forgiven people of God. And may the joy brought by the season of Advent offers us an opportunity to share it through faithful service. This is the assurance of God's forgiveness

Song Response

"Watcher, Tell us of the Night"

Hymnal Faith of Journey #119

2nd Stanza Only

*Watcher tell us of the night, higher yet that star ascends.
Traveler, blessedness and light, peace and truth its course portends.
Watcher, will its beams alone gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveler, ages are its own; see, bursts o'er all the earth!*

THE GREETING OF PEACE / COMMUNITY CONCERNS

(For a meaningful celebration the congregation is encourage to say/express words of compliments or encouragements to each other. It can also be, an important or significant moment of their lives when they felt so much joy even in the simplest form of compliment they received from other people or strangers. This part should be done before saying the "ADVENT PRAYER FOR THE LORD TO COME" by Renee Swope.)

COMMUNITY PRAYER

AN ADVENT PRAYER FOR THE LORD TO COME

By Renee Swope-Speaker, Author of "A Confident Heart"

*This Advent, Lord, come to the manger of my heart.
Fill me with Your presence from the very start.
As I prepare for the holidays and gifts to be given,
Remind me of the gift You gave when You sent Your Son from Heaven.
The first Christmas gift, it was the greatest gift ever.
You came as a baby born in a manger.*

*Wrapped like the gifts I find under my tree,
Waiting to be opened, to reveal Your love to me.
Restore to me the wonder that came with Jesus' birth,
When He left the riches of Heaven and wrapped Himself in rags of earth.
Immanuel, God with us, Your presence came that night.
And angels announced, "Into your darkness, God brings His Light."*

"Do not be afraid," they said, to shepherds in the field.

*Speak to my heart today, Lord, and help me to yield.
Make me like those shepherd boys, obedient to Your call.
Setting distractions and worries aside, to You I surrender them all.
Surround me with Your presence, Lord, I long to hear Your voice.
Clear my mind of countless concerns and all the holiday noise.*

*Slow me down this Christmas, let me not be in a rush.
In the midst of parties and planning, I want to feel Your hush.
This Christmas, Jesus, come to the manger of my heart.
Invade my soul like Bethlehem, bringing peace to every part.
Dwell within and around me, as I unwrap Your presence each day.
Keep me close to You, Lord. It's in Your wonderful Name I pray.*

Song Response

“Watcher, Tell us of the Night”

Hymnal Faith of Journey #119

3rd Stanza Only

*Watcher, tell us of the night, for the morning seems to dawn.
Traveler, shadows takes their flight, doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watcher, you may go your way; hasten to your quiet home.
Traveler I rejoice today, for Emmanuel has come!*

SCRIPTURE READING

MESSAGE THROUGH SONG

THE MESSAGE

SILENT MOMENT OF MEDITATION

CALL TO OFFERING (Liturgist)

God is with us in incredible and powerful ways, giving new hope into the world. The ministry of our church today shines with that immense optimism. The entire Christian community, including our church, believes in God's promises. Today, in this season of Advent our delight overflows in generosity. With that let us offer our offerings to God who is the source of every blessing.

OFFERING OF TITHES AND PLEDGES / LIFE AND LABOUR

OFFERTORY SONG

DOXOLOGY

“We Give You but Your Own”

Hymnal of Faith Journey #93

*We give you but your own, whate'er the gift may be:
All that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully. Amen*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Unison)

Provider God, this advent season, the joyful news of Jesus' birth has the ability to bring us immense joy. Our happiness is independent of what is happening in our lives, in our surroundings, or with the people we are with. It is independent of the gifts we give or get or the ones we would discover. Nothing on earth can ever truly satisfy our joy. You are the source of our joy. That same joy that flooded the hearts of the shepherds, the angels, the wise men, and Mary and Joseph still has the capacity to fill our hearts with gladness. With these offerings we bring may we truly uphold our duties as your good stewards of the blessings you entrusted to us. Amen

HYMN OF DEDICATION

“Let Us Even Now Go”
Hymnal of Faith Journey #132

*Let us even now go to Bethlehem, go to Bethlehem of Judea.
Jesus Christ, our Lord, he is the King of Kings;
Now in Bethlehem is born,
Now in Bethlehem is born!*

*Let us even now offer love and praise to the Lord, our God, To the Lord, our God,
Who from heavens' throne Has sent a gift of love,
Jesus Christ God's only Son,
Jesus Christ God's only son!*

*Let us even now sing with heart and soul; “Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!”
Let us sing our praise that all the world may know,
All the world may know God's love,
All the world may know God's love*

CLOSING PRAYER (Unison)

O God, you still bring us the same delight today when we anticipate the coming of Jesus here in this world. When you bestowed upon us the priceless gift of Jesus Christ, you gave us a reason to rejoice. You came to live with us. You endured the cross at Calvary for us. For our sake, you conquered death by rising from the grave. When we put our faith in you, you cleanse us of our sins and grant us eternal life. Our happiness is not derived from our work, our loved ones, our relationships, our wealth, or our accomplishments. Our happiness is not derived from our possessions or the people we are with. Our happiness comes from you and a gift from you. You are the source of all our joy. As we receive the good news of Jesus' birth during this Advent season, may gladness overflow from our hearts. We pray in the sacred name of Jesus. Amen.

- or -

BENEDICTION (Minister)

Be joyful people.
Let joy fill our being, and share Christ's joy to everyone we meet
See the good in each other and rejoice together.
Remember happy times and express hope for more happy times to come to spread joy.
Let us all pray for our world and share Jesus' joy.
In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share joy.
As we go out into the wonder of God's creations, let us all be bearers of joy in our anticipation of Jesus' coming, both now and in the days to come. Amen.
(Borrowed and rephrased)

Song Response

“Let Us Even Now Go”
Hymnal of Faith Journey #132

*Let us even now sing with heart and soul; “Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!”
Let us sing our praise that all the world may know,
All the world may know God's love,
All the world may know God's love*

POSTLUDE

RECESSIONAL WITH JOYFUL SONGS OF ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

REFERENCES:

UCC Worship Ways Resource Guide via www.ucc.org

UCCP Sunday School and Liturgical Guides via www.uccpchurch.com

Hymnal of Faith Journey

The liturgy was prepared by Pastor Japhet Vallera of Central Mindanao Area Conference- NWMJ

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 18, 2022

Sub-theme: “Heralding the Coming of Emmanuel”

Biblical References: Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 Romans 1: 1-7; Matt 1:18-25

REFLECTION**“Heralding the Coming of Emmanuel”****Matthew 1:18-25***Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son*

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[a]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^[b] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^[c] because he will save his people from their sins.”²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”^[d] (which means “God with us”).²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

In the text, Joseph was greatly confused about what kind of message this might be coming from an angel named Gabriel. Gabriel said to Joseph “Son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit”. If we put ourselves in the situation of Joseph hearing these words from someone we don’t know, what would be our reaction? To give us an idea, when the angel appeared to humans in human history based in the Bible as mentioned a couple of times, it is God who sent these angels to deliver a message to someone and give him/her a mission to save the humanity from our sinful actions in this world and accept within oneself the coming of Emmanuel to save us, humans, from our dreadful sins and for us to restore ourselves and have a new life with God our mighty Savior. Now, this is my question for all of us here, in case this will happen to you. What would be our reaction? If we hear a message that was like Joseph’s dream? Keep your answers to yourself, your hearts and minds, and I hope and pray that our answers would follow God’s commandments and will.

As we commemorate this historic event, may we not be blinded by lies and historical distortion especially since we are challenged every day with so many whispers of lies and temptations. May we always listen to what is good and true in accordance to our faith confession and understanding of God’s mission. May our consciousness broaden and give us hope for the present to our brighter future. May we continue to celebrate God's love that will mend shattered relationships. May we be like Mary and Joseph who took a decisive action to enhance their lives and the future of all. There is power in the present if there is a commemoration of the past that shaped history into a better future. Again, we hope and pray that when God calls us in different ways may we answer and follow what Mary and Joseph did for the betterment of our society. Amen

NOTES FOR WORSHIP PREPARATION

- Upon lighting the advent candle, someone will bring the Advent emphasis written on a piece of paper or cut-out letters: HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE
- **PROCESS:** Prepare a world picture and cut it into four puzzle pieces. Each piece would represent the four Advent emphases (hope, peace, joy, and love) Upon lighting each of the candles, each piece of the divided world will also be placed where it should be and complete the picture.
- **Altar symbols:** Cross, Candle, Bible, Flower/Plants, Advent Candles

THE LITURGY

PRELUDE/ PROCESSIONAL

LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

INTROIT

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” HFJ #117

Words: Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum

Transl. John Mason Neal

Arr. Thomas Helmore

*O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear*

[Refrain]

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel*

*O Come O wisdom from on high and
Order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show
And help us in that way to go*

*O come O come Adonai who
came to all on Sinai high
And from its peak a single law
proclaimed in majesty and awe.*

*O come O shoot of Jesse
free your own from Satan's
tyranny, From depths of hell your people save
and give them victory o'er the grave.*

*O come O key of David come and
open wide your heavenly home
Make safe the path to endless day
to hells destruction close the way*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Praise and glorify God! Great is God's love and salvation.

People: Let us rejoice in the coming of the Lord as the fulfillment of our hope for an abundant and full life!

Liturgist: Heraldng the Good News of life for the poor and oppressed, He will come to bring love and peace.

People: Let us praise and thank God for the eternal love and care for us and for all creation.

All: LET US SING WITH HOPE AND LOVE FOR THE CHANGE BROUGHT BY OUR LORD IN OUR LIVES, IN OUR COMMUNITIES, AND IN ALL CREATION.

✚ OPENING PRAYER

Liturgist

Our God – Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, in this Advent season, your promise is reliable at all times, seen and felt by generations. In our worship, today, comfort us with Your Spirit so that we can continue to open ourselves to Your plan and we can celebrate meaningfully. Accept our worship with our lives as an offering. May You find it fragrant and pleasing in Your sight. Bless us in our dedication to this worship and our service to each other. In the name of Jesus who gave His life for us to open the door of salvation according to his promise. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Youth 1: As we light the first candle of Advent, may we be made aware of the brokenness we see and experience in our world. Our hope comes from God. Our hope gives us strength to put back the broken pieces to make us whole again.

(the first puzzle piece will be placed by the assigned youth)

Youth 2: As we light the second candle of Advent, may we be reminded of our aspiration for peace not just for ourselves but for the whole world and the rest of God’s creation. Our concerns are universal, and so our prayer for peace is for all.

(the second puzzle piece will be placed by the assigned youth)

Youth 3: As we light the third candle of Advent, may we take joy in the promise of full life in Jesus Christ. May our expressions of faith help in bringing about this promise.

(the third piece of the puzzle will be placed by the assigned youth)

✚ HYMN OF CELEBRATION

“A Child is Born” HFJ# 134

*Words & Music: Pastor Aderiano y Reyes
Transl. Grace R. Tabada*

A child is born, A Child is born
The Savior Jesus Christ to us is born.
O what joy and gladness the earth the earth had felt
With the angels and the heavenly host
Let us all be glad, shake the sadness off
And with happy songs let us sing.
Let us celebrate, Let us celebrate
For the powerful One is born.

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH CANDLE OF ADVENT (candle of LOVE)

Family: In this world filled with experiences of brokenness, challenges, anger, and inequality, God has revealed and lit up our hearts with the candlelight of Love, as we patiently await His Coming. He is Emmanuel, the Christ the Lord. Let us hear the voice of our Lord!

While the candle is lit, the congregation sings:

“ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH”

(4TH stanza)

See the babe in manger laid whom the choirs of angel praise
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise

Chorus:

Glo.....ria in excelsis Deo.

Glo.....ria in excelsis Deo.

(as the community sings, the last piece of the puzzle will be placed to complete the picture of the world)

WE BRING TO GOD OUR SINS...

CALL TO CONFESSION

Liturgist: What mercies of God have we failed to acknowledge and what Good news have we neglected to share?
We sin not only in the evil we do, but also in the good we neglect.

People: LET US SEEK GOD’S FORGIVENESS, THAT WE MAY KNOW THE GRACE THAT MAKES FOR
RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER AND WITH GOD.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Liturgist: Let us confess our sins to the God of mercy and Love.

All: O GOD, OUR HOST AND OUR DWELLING PLACE, FORGIVE THE WAYS WE HAVE IGNORED
YOU AND TURNED AWAY FROM YOUR INVITATION. WE HAVE MADE EXCUSES WHEN
YOU CALLED US AND FAILED TO EXTEND WELCOME TO THE POOR AND
DISPOSSESSED. WE HAVE SPENT OUR STRENGTH FOR NOTHING. WE HAVE OBEYED
ONLY WHEN IT IS CONVENIENT TO DO SO. OUR DOUBTS AND FEARS MIRE US INTO
QUESTIONS WITHOUT PRAISE. FORGIVE US, O GOD, AND GRANT LIGHT FOR OUR
PATHS, DIRECT US IN THE WAY YOU WANT US TO GO. AMEN.

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS

MINISTER: Rejoice, People of God, Rejoice because Jesus Christ came to forgive us our sins. Our guilt is taken
away, our sins are forgiven.

PEOPLE: WE RECEIVE GOD’S FORGIVENESS AND LEAVE BEHIND HATRED, JUDGEMENT, AND
REVENGE. BECAUSE GOD LOVES US, WE ARE ENABLED TO TREAT OTHERS AS WE WISH
TO BE TREATED.

All: (singing)

“SAVIOR, LIKE A SHEPHERD LEAD US” HFJ # 207

(3rd Stanza)

Let us always seek your favor , Let us always do your will
Jesus Christ our only Savior, with your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus you have love us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus you have love us, love us still.

THE GREETING OF PEACE AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS

COMMUNITY PRAYER

Minister

✚ SCRIPTURE READING

ISAIAH 7:10-16; PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19
ROMANS 1: 1-7; MATT. 1:18-25

MESSAGE THROUGH SONG

THE MESSAGE

SILENT MOMENT OF MEDITATION

CALL TO OFFERING

Liturgist

In the abundance of the land God has given us, we certainly have much to share. This sharing also reflects the height, breadth and clarity of our service, obedience and faith. Therefore, brothers and sisters, with all our hearts, sincerity, gratitude and love let us offer to the Lord who is the source of all the blessings we enjoy.

Offertory Song:

WE GIVE YOU BUT YOUR OWN HFJ#93

We give you but your own, what e'er the gift may be
All that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Liturgist

Almighty and eternal God, we offer thanks to You for accepting our praise and gratitude and for feeding us with the Spiritual grace of the Body and blood of our Lord Jesus. Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit, that we may serve You with the grace of faith and love, from our word and deed until we reach the joy of Your eternal dominion. Through our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and dwells in us with You and the Holy Spirit. Amen

✚ HYMN OF COMMITMENT

HARK! THE HERALD ANGEL SING HFJ#124

Words: Charles Wesley

Music: From Felix Madelsshon's "Festgesang"

Arr. William H. Cummings

Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled
Joyful all you saints arise, Join the triumph of the skies
With the angel host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem"

Refrain

Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring!"

Christ by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord
Late in time the Savior comes, offering of the virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the God-head see, hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased on Earth with us to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel (Refrain)

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Minister

THE BLESSING

Minister: May every blessing rest upon you, people of God as you continue in your faithfulness.

People: WE CARRY A VIVID AWARENESS OF GOD'S BLESSING INTO A NEW SEASON AND A NEW YEAR!

Minister: God is at work in you, God is served through deeds that enhance life.

People: WE REJOICE IN THE OPPORTUNITY TO REACH OUT TO SISTER AND BROTHERS IN NEED.

Minister: Tell the word the Savior has come!

People: WE HAVE GOOD NEWS TO SHARE!

Minister: The lord bless you and keep you, may the face of God shine upon you! And be gracious to you.

People: MAY GOD'S WILL BE KNOWN TO US AS GOD GRANTS US LOVE AND ENABLE US TO SERVE.

ALL: SO BE IT. AMEN

SONG RESPONSE 'HARK! THE HERALD ANGEL SING" HFJ#124

Hail the Bearer of God's peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness
Light and life our Savior brings, risen with radiant healing wings
Mildly laying glory by, born that we no more many die,
Born to raise us all from earth, born to give us second birth.

Refrain

Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring!"

POSTLUDE

RECESSIONAL

References:

THE ORDER OF THE LORD'S DAY SERVICE FOR CHRISTMASTIDE IV
The book of Common Worship
United Church of Christ in the Philippines
1998

Hymnal of a Faith Journey
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