

Theme: “Heralding the Fullness of Life in Jesus Christ”

Biblical Text : Matthew 1:18-25

Notes for Worship Preparations

- For the Church altar preparation, put arranged flowers to beautify the altar, plants to give nature ambiance in worship, an open Bible, a Cross, and the Advent Wreath- to be lit during the lighting of the Christmas candle.
- Place to the front 12 baskets or boxes labeled with month of the year for the everybody's Birthday Celebration offering.
- Set us a Nativity symbol on the altar.

Symbols to be used for the worship:

- Candles in Advent Wreath, Bible, and Cross.
- Nativity symbol

REFLECTION

During the surge of the COVID-19 Pandemic, a family, like many other families, was struggling to put food on the table. Certainly, luxuries were considered a very distant dream for all. Our children were put to closed doors and restricted to explore the world. The senior citizens were locked in their houses which hindered them to enjoy the remaining years of their lives. The Church was closed, while worship was conducted at home through online platforms. Many companies have stopped their operations and work was suspended, displacing many workers and greatly affecting their source of income to provide for their families. Many people were deprived of a decent living. In as much as many loves to celebrate Christmas, no celebrations had taken place, for many it's meaningless.

Many of our brothers and sisters have experienced depression and got scared of being infected by the virus. Nations were drawn to many concerns; health issues, calamities that hit many places and left devastated, plus the plunging drama of the national election and had brought back many memories from the past, for having candidates with questionable records to position and occupying a significant office in the government, who would potentially bring the political system to its collapse. These striking situations greatly affect the unity of the Church- a whirlwind that shakes one's faith upside down.

Christmas is at hand. Everyone is excited and we can feel it wherever we go. Every Christmas season, people ask why Christians celebrate Christmas. Many attempted to answer the questions and provide their interpretations, but some people think Christmas celebration is simply a commemoration. That's why we reenact the story.

While I had my research for resources to help me discuss this question, I browsed an old file from my external drive and found Christmas material from an unnamed file, without a title on it, no reference where it was taken, and no author as well. I decided to share a portion of this paper to help us understand the biblical perspective on why Christmas is celebrated.

The same question may be asked about the early church's celebration of the birth of Jesus: What is the message proclaimed in the nativity story?

We have two birth stories of Jesus; they are found in Matthew and Luke. One looks at the story through Joseph's experience, the other through Mary. Both stories, however, have three temporal aspects: past, present, and future. These aspects hold the key to how early Christians understood the birth of Jesus.

First, Matthew begins his gospel by identifying Jesus as a descendant of Abraham and David. What Matthew is trying to say is this: Jesus is the descendant in whom God's promises to Abraham and David are fulfilled. This is also the reason for the many quotations and allusions in Matthew on Messianic prophecies. For Matthew, the coming of Christ affirms the past.

The story of the birth of Jesus did not begin as an historical event. It began as a prophecy. Therefore, our Lord's birth is foremost a fulfillment of God's promise.

Second, there is empowering of the present in the birth narrative of Jesus. Joseph and Mary had the same initial response to the coming of Jesus: they were both hesitant. They both reacted according to their human limitations.

Joseph, desiring honor, planned to divorce Mary. Mary found it impossible for her to be pregnant without a man in her life. Against their hesitance, God, by his Spirit, empowered both of them to accept the impossible and face the consequences.

The narrative of empowerment extends to the three wise men; the shepherds; the innkeeper; and, notably, Zechariah and Elizabeth. Zechariah embodied the spiritual tone of the faithful ones from the Old Testament who looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. "Revived" is probably a term more appropriate for Zechariah. But the empowerment and revival did not end in the nativity story. As the gospel of John, so records: "And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace" (1:16), the whole New Testament teaches empowerment and revival for all who believe.

By retelling the birth of Jesus every year, we draw empowerment for our Christian walk because we insist to define this life, here and now, to be dependent upon that one decisive historical event.

Lastly, there is also a proclamation of the future. "...and you shall call him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Luke provides us with a complementary perspective on this. Read Luke 1:32-33. *"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

Two words are attached to the act of naming Jesus - salvation and kingdom. These words are not independent ideas. These are words that embody the belief in God's sovereignty in creation, revelation, redemption, and final judgment. They are the kernel of the gospel that the apostles

proclaimed: salvation in Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

Remembering the birth of Jesus is our act of continually proclaiming his primary significance in shaping human history today until it ends. This is the assertion of the Book of Revelation: that human history will end according to God's words in the same Jesus who came as a baby, proclaimed God's love, and was crucified for the salvation of mankind.

Why do Christians Celebrate Christmas?

We celebrate Christmas because we insist that Jesus' birth is historically a fulfillment of a promise.

It is a time to remember God's acts in history, not only of humanity but also, I mean especially in our lives throughout this year. (Count your blessings one by one, as a hymn goes.) This means that we need to sit down (alone and corporately as a church or a family and remember how God has dealt with us throughout this year. And, of course, this also means a time of thanksgiving-for God's merciful and gracious interventions in our lives (e.g., keeping our families intact despite the many pressures to break the family, or keeping us alive despite the many dangers we face). This also means that Christmas is a time of communal worship – a time for us who are beneficiaries of God's acts in history to celebrate our God as his people.

We celebrate Christmas because we insist that Jesus' birth is the decisive event that empowers our lives today.

Celebrating Christmas is our communal witness to the message of the Incarnation. Therefore, it also means a time of renewal – a renewal of our commitment to the gospel as an individual and as a church, as we celebrate its message. It is a time to renew our passion (1) to know our God more, and (2) to proclaim the gospel of his salvation – or to make him known in words and in action. It is also a time to renew our commitments to our human relationships. Our relationships with others must reflect our relationship with God. Our relationships with others have importance and meaning only because of the Incarnation.

We celebrate Christmas because we insist that Jesus' birth continues to shape our future and will bring human history to a beautiful ending in God.

We celebrate, not only by looking back at the nativity story, but also by looking forward to what the nativity story promises us to become or to have - a life with God, here and now; a life with God, there and forever; a life full of hope, peace, joy, and love because of Jesus Christ.

THE LITURGY

WORDS TO PONDER

"Peace on earth will come to stay, when we live Christmas every day."
Helen Steiner Rice

PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL

MINISTERIAL GREETINGS

Minister: Good news, you who are weary and heavy burdened! Sing for great joy, you who are tired and shackled with pain! For the Lord, our Redeemer, has come!

CHORAL INTROIT "The First Noel"

*The first Noel the angel did say, was to certain poor shepherds
In fields as they lay, in fields where they lay a keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.*

Refrain: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel. Amen.

CALL TO CELEBRATION

Liturgist: In the midst of festivities, shouts, and bright lights, we feel the darkness of our souls.

People: Come, God of power and light, help us.

Liturgist: In the midst of gatherings, we feel alone and alienated.

People: Come, God of peace and hope, hear our cries.

Liturgist: In the midst of celebration, our hearts cry out.

People: Lord, hear us and come to us. Bring us peace.

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION "O Come All Ye faithful" HFJ#135

Words and Music: Latin Hymn; ascribe to John Francis Wade

Translation: Frederick Oakeley, 1842 and others; alt.

O come, all ye faithful joyful and triumphant
Oh come now, O come now to Bethlehem;
Come and behold the ruler of all angels;
O come in adoration, O come in adoration
O come in adoration, Christ is Lord.

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation
Sing all you messengers of heavenly love;
Glory to God, all glory in the highest:
O come in adoration, O come in adoration
O come in adoration, Christ is Lord.

All Hail! Lord, we greet You, born this happy morning,
Jesus to you shall all glory be given;
Word of our God, now in flesh appearing;

O come in adoration, O come in adoration
O come in adoration, Christ is Lord.

****INVOCATION**

(Unison)

Our parent God, you have brought us again to the glad season when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that Christ's Spirit may be born anew in our hearts this day and that we may joyfully welcome Jesus to reign over us. Open our ears that we may hear again the angelic chorus of old. Open our lips that we, too, may sing with uplifted hearts. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

Liturgist: As we light these candles today, we thank God for the hope given us, for the peace bestowed, for the joy poured into our hearts, and for the love that redeems us and shows us the way.

People: Hope, peace, joy, and love. Four candles, four promises continually offered to us by God, and all of them manifest in this one we light tonight: the Christ candle.

In Christ we find the hope of transformation, the peace that follows justice, the joy of self-fulfillment in community, and the love that encompasses us in all our diversity, empowering us to make our own unique contribution to this world. In Christ we find light and life, and the courage to be like him, answering his call and following in his footsteps.

(Lighting the First, Second, Third, Fourth Candle)

Minister: We light the Christmas candle as a sign to the world that today, in the City of David, a Savior is born, who is Christ the Lord. We no longer fear the darkness for our Light has come. That light that enlightens all people has broken into our world. And the world will never be the same again.

(Lighting the Christmas Candle)

PRAYER

(Unison)

We rejoice in God's steadfast presence in our lives,
and in God's unique presence in the life of Jesus of Nazareth
born of Mary, growing through childhood into an adult,
in all his life manifesting the peace, love, and justice of God;
his voice undimmed by the centuries
his call and his promise as clear to us as it was to his disciples so long ago.
Come to us, Lord Jesus,
Be born in us this night, in our hearts, our minds, our lives.
May the light of your life be kindled in us,
And lead us to the shining truth,
of God with us, God for us, God in us. Amen.

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

People: Merciful God, we confess that often we find darkness more comfortable than light. We confess that we find your good news frightening and unsettling, especially when we consider its demands as well as its promises. We confess that Christmas has become more to us a holiday than the birth of Christ, partly because we do not want a Christ-Child in our lives or in our world. Forgive us, break us, bend us, remake us. Give us the courage to lay ourselves open to the wonder and healing of your coming.

Minister: Be born again into our world, be born again into our hearts and lives. Hear now our silent and personal confessions as we prepare ourselves for your nativity. The true light that enlightens all has come into the world. That light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to put it out. This is the good news: God has heard our confession. God has forgiven our sin.

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

This night no one is a stranger. All are joined together as one family through the miracle of the birth of one small baby. Let us share our joy and excitement at being present when God reaches down to touch the earth. Let us reach out and touch each other in love incarnate. Merry Christmas to one and all!

****Singing**

“Joy To the World, the Lord is Come!” HFJ 127

Words: Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Music: Lowell Mason, 1836

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth its praises bring;
Let every heart prepare Christ room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the earth the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, no thorns infest the ground.
Christ comes to make all blessing flow, far as the curse is found
Far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of God's righteousness, and wonders of God's love,
And wonders of God's love, and wonders, wonders, of God's love.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Minister: Loving God, we praise you for the prophets who told us to wait in hope, for the word you gave them has come true. We thank you for the promise of the one who would reveal to us your nature and show us the way to your kingdom. For a child has been born to us, your Son has been given to us. Help us to accept and receive the Messiah and to be witnesses to your glory... Lord hear our prayer...

Children & Youth: Lord Jesus, Word of God made flesh among us, shine into our lives like the Bethlehem star - and reveal your truth and grace. Be born in our hearts as you were born of Mary. Help us to accept and receive you and be witnesses to your glory... Lord hear our prayer...

Parents: Spirit of God, strength, comfort, and wisdom within, overshadow us and come upon us. Help us to say yes to all that you have planned for us and fulfill the calling to which you call us. Help us accept and receive the gifts you pour out upon us and to minister

your love to the world around us... Lord hear our prayer...

All: Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, hear our prayers of thanksgiving and of intercession. We hold before you the joys you have granted us and our world. We lift to you the burdens you have placed upon hearts....

RESPONSE

"Angel's We Have heard On High" HFJ 121

Words and Music: traditional French carol; Transl. St. 1-3

"Crown of Jesus Music II", 1862; alt;

St. 4, "Carols Old and Carols," 1916; alt.

Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly through the night,
And the mountains in reply, echoing their brave delight
Glo.....ria in excelsis Deo!
Glo.....ria in excelsis Deo!

SCRIPTURE READING *(Can be a Dramatic Reading)*

ANTHEM *(Can be a Christmas Cantata)*

MESSAGE *(can be a Nativity Scene, a Christmas Musical play, or a spoken message)*

CALL TO OFFERING

Liturgist: Come now and kneel before the Christ child. Bring all that you are and all that you have. Offer your gifts in wonder and surprise and awe. Offer your gifts in joy and delight.

THE CELEBRATION OF EVERYBODY'S BIRTHDAY

(As your birth month is called, please come forward and bring your birthday offering)

OFFERTORY MUSIC

****THANKSGIVING PRAYER**

UNISON

There are so many things to be thankful for tonight, O God. Receive our birthday offerings, our tokens of gratitude for the life that you have given and for your love incarnate in the babe of Bethlehem. We are even more grateful for the assurance of that God is with us amidst struggles and challenges. We embrace the wonder and joy looking forward for the gift of fullness for the whole of creation. We gladly offer back our lives to You, Oh God. Amen

****HYMN OF COMMITMENT**

"WE ARE THE REASON"

Words and Music by: David Meece Arranged by Bryce Imman

As little children we would dream of a Christmas morn
And all gifts and toys we knew we'd find
But we never realized A baby born one blessed night
Gave us the greatest gift of our lives.

Chorus: *We are the reason that he gave his life, we are the reason
That he suffered and died to a world that was lost
He gave all he could give to show us the reason to live.*

As the years went by we learned more of our gifts,
and giving of ourselves and what that means, On the dark and cloudy day,
A man hung crying in the rain, because of love, because of love

Coda:

I finally found the reason for living, it's in giving every part of my life to him
In all that I do, every word that I say, I'll be giving my heart just for him, for him.

BENEDICTION

Minister

The Lord blesses you and watch over you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace; and May God the Creator keep you in all your days. May God the Redeemer shield you in all your ways. May God the Comforter bring you healing and peace. May God the Holy Trinity drive all darkness from you and pour upon you blessing and light. Amen.

RESPONSE

““Angel’s We Have heard On High” HFJ 121

Words and Music: traditional French carol; Transl. St. 1-3

“Crown of Jesus Music II”, 1862; alt;

St. 4, “Carols Old and Carols,” 1916;alt.

*Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee, Christ, the Lord, the new-born King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

POSTLUDE

REFERENCES:

1. UCCP Hymn of a Faith Journey
2. [Ministry Matters™ | Worship Elements: Christmas Eve \(Option 2\)Corporate Confession of Sin and Assurance of Pardon | Monergism](#)
3. Pilgrim Christian College Christmas Liturgies *2013, 2015, 2017 & 2021).

The liturgy was prepared by REV. BERNADETTE SUSAS- CURAN ofCMAC-NWMJ

Theme: “Celebrating The Fullness of Life in Jesus Christ”

Biblical Texts: Isaiah 52: 7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

Notes for Worship Preparations & Symbols:

- Assign families in lighting the advent candles and Christ’ Candle
- Design the altar with broken pots

Broken pots symbolize the world’s brokenness- our broken relationship with the CREATOR, with the whole CREATION, and with EACH OTHER.

REFLECTION

“Celebrating the Fullness of Life in Jesus Christ Through our Commitment and Struggle”

“The Church can be truly the Church when she does her divinely appointed task in the larger community. The Church that does nothing to share the Word to the world indicates that Christ means little to her. No amount of pious talk could camouflage nor extinguish it.”¹

Busikad is one of the edible sea shells we have in Eastern Samar. Its name “busikad” is derived from the root word “sikad”, which means “to kick”. It moves slowly from one place to another by kicking, and it kicks every time they are being picked. Sumisipa sila sa tuwing pinupulot sila sa dagat. This is the reason why I choose busikad as a portrayal of celebrating the fullness of life in Jesus Christ. To celebrate the fullness of life is to kick—it is to struggle! To struggle and commit towards justice and peace---it is a struggle for identity, for dignity! The second characteristic of busikad is, it never goes alone—they stay together. Somehow, it is difficult to find because it camouflages as a stone or seaweed. However, if we find one, we should look carefully in its surrounding because for sure, it has companions----sama-sama sila sa iisang lugar. They have the spirit of camaraderie. *Celebrating the fullness of life is not an “individual thing” for we*

¹ Mission and Evangelism Committee, Manual for Mission and Evangelism, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1988, p. 10

are interconnected, interrelated, and interdependent. Therefore, we are being reminded that "to celebrate the fullness of life is to acknowledge God's intervention and act of liberation through our commitment and struggle towards the transformation of both Church and society."

"The Church, however, recognizes the interwovenness of human needs so that meeting the needs of the spirit can never be enough without attending to the needs of the body and of the mind. Body, mind, and spirit must be addressed together to serve the whole person".²

A. God's Intervention is an Act of Liberation

We knew God as a liberating God. God is not pleased with oppression and exploitation. When the Habiru were in their most distressing situation, God intervened. God said to Moses, *"I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of land to a good and broad land.....The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them* (Exodus 3:7-9). In this text, we could observe that God is actively involved in the life of the people---especially the oppressed ones. God uses God's senses and whole being to liberate them. God continues to work for liberation.

B. God's Work for Liberation is Visible Through our Obedience

The Church has been commissioned not to be a Messiah, but to be God's "co-missionary". The Church's commitment must be visible in her day-to-day living. To commit ourselves to God is to live the mission of God. To live the mission of God is to obey God—as Jesus obeyed the Lord. Moses obeyed the Lord when God said to him: *"So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt"* (Exodus 3:10). This obedience is not just a partial obedience----wherein we will obey God whenever we are comfortable. This obedience "requires" our whole self-immersed in God's mission-----in season and out of season. Our commitment is shown in how we immersed our life in the community—as Jesus did!

C. Our Obedience Leads Us to Struggle for the Fullness of Life

² Ibid. p. 14

We are also struggling for the fullness of life. Tulad ng busikad na sumisipa kapag kinukuha sila mula sa kanilang nakagisnang tahanan, tayo din ay sisipa laban sa lahat ng uri ng pang-aapi at inhustisya. We will never be silent whenever there is oppression and injustices.

We proclaim fullness of life for all! Not just for some, not for the few but for all. I love the idea presented in the 4th Chapter of Manual for Mission and Evangelism. It says, “.....*God works to make the entire creation whole again. This can be manifested in the salvation of both the oppressed and the oppressor, wherein they are given back their dignity. The former being able to live as human and not subhuman. The latter being able to live as human and not as superhuman.*” This reminds us that holistic salvation is a reconciliation of the entire creation to God, and the reconciliation with each other. The oppressors also need to be freed from this systemic evil. They too need liberation. They are part of the community!

THE LITURGY

MUSIC PRELUDE

ENTRANCE OF WORSHIP LEADERS

OPENING OF THE BIBLE

CHURCH CONCERNS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minister

SONG OF INVOCATION “Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face” HFJ#254

Words: Horatius Bonar, 1855; alt. Music: Frederick C. Atkinson, 1870

Here, O my Lord, I see you face to face,
Here would I touch and handle things unseen,
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon you lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here share the cup, the gracious gift of heaven,
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

LITANY OF REPENTANCE

Liturgist: We call ourselves whole, yet we are broken.

People : We call upon God, the Redeemer, to make us whole again.

(moment of silence while soft music is played)

Liturgist: We give gifts, yet we forget the value of the greatest gift God bestowed upon us. That gift is called LIFE. Life here on earth.

People: Forgive us for undermining the value of life here on earth for we just focus on the life after death.

Liturgist: We sing Christmas hymns and carols, yet we neglect to sing hymns that set us free. Free from the bondage of sin---free from exploitation and oppression.

People: Forgive us for undermining the value of freedom for we thought that oppression and poverty is part of God's will.

Liturgist: We reenact the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet forget to live the message of his birth - a life that pursues peace based on justice.

People: Forgive us for undermining the message of Jesus' birth for it is easier for us to romanticize God's love than to work for peace.

(Moment of Silence while soft music is played)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Minister)

The God who became flesh and dwelt among us embraces us with the truth that God's love is beyond what we can imagine. This love became immanent and reached out to us to experience God's presence and forgiveness. Let us extend God's forgiveness to one another as we sing a hymn of praise.

+ HYMN OF PRAISE

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

Words and Music by John F. Wade

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,

O come now, O come now, to Bethlehem.

Come and behold him, born the ruler angels;

Refrain:

**O come in adoration, O come in adoration,
O come in adoration, Christ is Lord.**

True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal;
lo He shuns not the Virgin's womb;
Son of *Creator, begotten not created; (Refrain)

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all you messengers of heavenly love!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; (Refrain)

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given.
Word of *Creator, now in flesh appearing.

+ LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

Liturgist: We enter the moment of fulfillment from all the waiting we have had. Let us be grateful as we lift up our voices: "Glory to God in the Highest"!

People: (singing) *Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King!*

Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing,

And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Liturgist: As we light these candles, we are grateful for the:

HOPE God shares (*light the first Advent Candle*)

PEACE God bestows (*light the second Advent Candle*)

JOY that overflows (*light the third Advent Candle*)

LOVE that redeems (*light the fourth Advent Candle*)

People: (singing) *Glo.....ria! In excelsis deo. Glo.....ria! In excelsis deo.*

All: We give thanks for God's gift in Jesus. We thank God that thru Christ, God's light has come into the world and made it possible for us to see, and in seeing, to rejoice. God's truth, God's love, God's very self, transforms all who receive Him.

SUNG RESPONSE

“Joy To The World” HFJ#127

Words: Isaac Watts, 1719; alt. Music: Lowell Mason, 1836

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns; let all their songs employ.

While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,

Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy

Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and make the nations prove

The glories of God's righteousness, and wonders of God's love,

And wonders of God's love, and wonders, and wonders of God's love!

LIGHTING THE CHRIST' CANDLE: (by the assigned family)

All: Loving God, Emmanuel, we thank You for being with us---- for sending Your Son to walk with us and to lead us. Grant that the HOPE, the PEACE, the JOY, and the LOVE of which we have heard and spoken of throughout Advent may be fully realized in us as we worship and serve You through Christ Jesus our Lord, this both now, and in the new year that comes, and forevermore. Amen.

+ SCRIPTURE READING

+ SUNG RESPONSE

“Angels We Have Heard On High” HFJ# 121

Glo.....ria! In excelsis deo. Glo.....ria! In excelsis deo.

THE ANTHEM

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

CALL TO OFFERING (Liturgist)

As the Word incarnate and became human through Jesus Christ, let us also be incarnate into a new being as God's children through the offering of our lives and labor, talents, and resources. Come! Bring the sacrifice of service into the presence of God with hope, peace, joy and love.

OFFERING OF LIFE AND LABOR

+ RESPONSE

Glo.....ria! In excelsis deo. Glo.....ria! In excelsis deo.

+ OFFERTORY PRAYER (Liturgist)

Holy, incarnated God, the God who walk and work among us, receive these offering of our lives and labor. May this be an instrument of your peace and love. May this be a vessel of joy in serving you. May this be a channel of your strength and courage. As you generously gave your life to the world, may we possess enough generosity to give our life for advancement of your kin-dom, Amen.

+HYMN OF COMMITMENT “We’ve a Story to Tell to the Nations” HFJ#310

Words and Music: H. Ernest Nichol

We've a story to tell to the nations that will turn their hearts to the right
A story of truth, and mercy, a story of peace and light, a story of peace and light.

Chorus:

**For the darkness shall turn to dawning and the dawning to noonday bright
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on the earth, the kingdom of love and light.**

We've a song to be sung to the nations that shall lift their hearts to the Lord,
A song that shall conquer evil and shatter the spear and sword,
and shatter the spear and sword.

We've a message to give to the nations that the Lord who reigns above
Has sent us the Christ to save us and show us that God is love, and show us that God
is love.

We've a Savior to show to the nations Who the path of sorrow has trod
That all of the world's great peoples might come to the truth of God,
might come to the truth of God.

+ BENEDICTION:

Leave this place clapping, (*clap*)

Leave this place stomping, (*stomp*)

Leave this place snapping, (*snap*)

Leave this place smiling,

Leave this place rejoicing.....

+ SONG RESPONSE “Trees of the Fields” HFJ#100

Words: Steffi G. Rubin, 1975; based on Isaiah 55

Music: Stuart Devermann, 1975

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace,
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you,

There will be shouts of joy and all the trees of the field,
Will clap, will clap their hands.
And all the trees of the field will clap their hands,
The trees of the field will clap their hands,
The trees of the field will clap their hands,
While you go out with joy.

RECESSIONAL

The liturgy was prepared by Rev. Luisa Givero of SIDC- EVJ

<i>NEW YEAR'S EVE SERVICE</i>	<i>December 31, 2022</i>
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Theme: “**HERALDING the NEW JOURNEY WITH HOPE**”

Biblical Texts: *Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8; Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46*

Notes for Worship Preparation

- Prepare Communion elements
- candle for each member
- Christ candle

REFLECTION *(lifted from Like A Mustard Seed: Commentaries on the UCCP Statement of Faith)*

“History, as viewed from the Christian perspective, does not simply refer to events of the past, but of God’s ongoing purpose moving irresistibly towards the final denouement, in which God’s will shall finally prevail over man’s sin and rebellion. The Book of Revelation is probably the best source of information on how this drama of redemption will be accomplished in God’s own good time. The first part of this apocalyptic literature deals with the conflict between good and evil-the cosmic forces symbolized by such imageries as the beast, the dragon, and the plagues - and the last part deals with the final Battle of Armageddon where the Lamb of God, the Christ, will emerge triumphant over the forces of evil and the New Jerusalem comes down from God to be with men (people) forever.

This is why God the Statement of Faith speaks of God gathering His children in His Kingdom, and thus makes all creation new. God, by His redemptive act in Christ, through the resurrection and consummated by His return at the end of history, will finally

be with His people in a community where human frailties and limitations will be a thing of the past. (Revelation 21: 1-4)

That beatific vision will surely defy language. For the complete harmony of creation, now renewed in the plan and purpose and image of God, will be a transrational reality. But the fact of God's presence among His people, now reunited in Divine Union never to be marred by human sin or the pain of separation in time and space, will surely complete God's plan for the New Age. Such a new community with God living in and among it, marks the final gathering of all His children, in a world where the past is gone.

*But our Statement of Faith goes a bit further. It says that God will make all creation new. this fact is also recognized in that beautiful passage in the Apocalypse where, where after describing the New Jerusalem, the writer also focuses attention in the character of God as Alpha and Omega (Revelation 21: 5-6). God as the Beginning and the End, the source of all that is, and the end of all that will be, is a concept which the historic Christian faith calls **"the Christian hope."***

This eschatological hope is not, however, without some attendant dangers. Millenarians and other extremists often predict that the Second Coming of Christ will be on a definite date, only to be disenchanted later because Christ did not come as expected. This is not a utopia imagined by some millenarian poets and dreamers, but it does point to a fulfillment of all human hopes when the ultimate reality of who God dawns on all people.

Saint Paul, for his part, believes in the return of Christ as taking place within his lifetime. When however, this created some problem in the early Corinthian church, he sternly told them that the imminent return of Christ should not be a cloak for being lazy and indifferent to the challenge of living in this world.

Which bring us to the more practical application of this doctrine: the fact that we look to His coming again should no lull us to indifference and complacency in facing the problems of man (people) and society. Actively involving ourselves in the struggle for justice and human dignity is actualizing in concrete and human terms the meaning of what it means to believe in the return of the Lord. Some Christians are heavenly minded that they are not earthly good.

When all human hopes have failed and everything looks hopeless, the Christian hope sees that future breaking into our time when God in all His fullness will reign in justice and truth. This may mean a forward look, but such a hope activates us to make that kingdom real in terms of our participating in the human struggles and problems that our time demands. We, as part of that Resurrection faith, will keep on our witness against the face of forces and of cosmic evil arrayed in high places of authority; maintain active witness and testimony that the Reign of God shall finally be done on earth as it is in heaven."

As we welcome another year of our faith journey, we are not afraid of what lies ahead of us. Holding on to our Christian hope, we take the challenge of heralding the life promised where God truly reigns.

THE LITURGY

PREPARING THE HEART and SPIRIT

** Ring a blee 3x. a moment of silence*

** a voice over will read the poem*

The Work of Christmas Begins

*When the carols have been stilled,
When the star-topped tree is taken down,
When family and friends are gone home,
When we are back to our schedules
The work of Christmas begins:
To welcome the refugee,
To heal a broken planet,
To feed the hungry,
To build bridges of trust, not walls of fear,
To share our gifts,
To seek justice and peace for all people,
To bring Christ's light to the world.*

(the Pastor will light the Christ's candle while the voice over read the last phrase "to bring Christ light to the world")

PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL

†CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive Reading)

Liturgist: The New Year brings to mind the promise of God to have a new heaven and earth.

All: Praise God, the alpha and omega. Praise God who has done good to us.

Liturgist: Let us celebrate life's new possibilities, heralding new journey with hope in Christ our Lord.

All: Praise God, for the water and land and forest resources, for the rice and the fruit of the tree that symbolizes life.

Liturgist: This is the day of reaffirming our covenant with God.

All: Praise God for giving us the opportunity to welcome the New Year with hope and blessings.

†HYMN OF PRAISE

“PRAISE TO THE LORD THE ALMIGHTY”

Author: Joachim Nender (1680) | Translator: Catherine Winkworth (1863)
(1st, 2nd & 3rd Stanza only)

14 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

1. Praise to the Lord, the Al-might-y, the King of cre-
2. Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so won-drous-ly
3. Praise to the Lord, who doth pros-per thy work and de-
4. Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me a -

a - tion! O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy
reign - eth, Shelters thee un - der His wings, yea, so
fend thee; Sure-ly His good-ness and mer-cy here
dore Him! All that hath life and breath, come now with

health and sal - va - tion! All ye who hear, Now to His
gen - tly sustain - eth! Hast thou not seen, How thy de-
dai - ly at-tend thee. Pon - der a - new What the Al-
prais - es be-fore Him. Let the A - men Sound from His

Baptist Hymnal 1991 14
WORDS: German Hymn, Joachim Neander, 1650-1680; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.
MUSIC (LOBE DEN HERREN, Irregular): Stralsund Gesangbuch, 1665; harm. W. Sterndale Bennett, 1816-1878

14 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

tem-ple draw near; Praise Him in glad ad-o - ra - tion.
sires e'er have been Grant - ed in what He or-dain - eth?
might-y can do, If with His love He befriend thee.
peo-ple a - gain, Glad - ly for aye we a-dore Him.

†INVOCATION (Unison)

Our God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, we thank you for today. Thank you for the gift of life for all. May we honor and worship you today. Bless this hour of worship and dwell with us so that our hearts may be open to receive your word as we herald your kingdom. In Christ Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Response

♪ “PRAISE TO THE LORD THE ALMIGHTY” ♪
(4th Stanza)

CALL TO CONFESSION

HFJ#413

God have mercy. Forgive our carelessness, forgive us for any promises we broke, for any friends we failed or any persons we have hurt. Forgive our inhumanity; forgive our politics and commerce, forgive our selfishness and greed, forgive us for leaving Christ unfed, unhoused, without healing and without hope. Forgive us as we bring ourselves and our possessions back to you in Christ’s name. Lord, have mercy.

SONG OF CONFESSION

♪ “Search Me, O God” ♪ HFJ#216

*Words: J. Edwin Orr, | Music: Maori melody
Hymnal of Faith a Journey # 216 | First Stanza only*

Search me, O God, and know my heart today;
Try me O Savior, Know my thoughts I pray
See if there be some wicked way in me
Cleanse me from every sin and set me free

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Seek the Lord while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near. Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the Lord that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously. (*Isaiah 55:6-7*) May the God of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image. Praises and glory to his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Response

♪ “Search Me, O God” ♪ HFJ#216

*Words: J. Edwin Orr, | Music: Maori melody
Hymnal of Faith a Journey # 216 | Second Stanza only*

I praise you, Lord for cleansing me from sin
Fulfill your Word and make me pure with in.
Fill me with fire, where once I burned in shame
Grant my desire to glorify your name

†SCRIPTURE READING

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.

ANTHEM**“FOR HOPE WILL LIGHT OUR WAY”****-MLJ CHOIR**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLN4p0NjMWI>**SERMON****“HERALDING NEW JOURNEY WITH HOPE”****CALL TO OFFERING**

See and savor how abundant and beautiful the creation of God’s hands is and how great is God’s love for us. Now let us once again offer our lives, the fruits of our labor and faithfulness to our Sustainer. Let us now give our offering to our Lord.

OFFERTORY**†DOXOLOGY**

*Praise faith that keeps us ever strong
Praise hope that triumphs over wrong
Praise dreams that make our spirits rise
Praise voices raised in joyful cries. Amen.*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Unison)

Holy and Everliving God, we give you thanks for feeding us with the spiritual food of the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. Now, strengthen, O Lord, the hands which have been held out to receive your holy things, that they may ever serve you. Grant that the tongues which have uttered your name may ever speak the truth; that the eyes which have seen your great love may also behold our brothers in love; that the feet which have trod Your house may walk wherever the needs are; and that we may be restored to a new life of service, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

Minister

God said, Let there be light! And there was light, on that still night, more than two thousand years ago, the light of the world was born and give us hope...

{Each individual must have a candle, Form a big circle where everyone is included. Lights out except the altar candle (Christ’s Candle). Then the minister will hold Christ candle, standing side by side with other church workers/Council Chairperson/ elders. The church leaders will then pass the light until all candles are lit.

(Followed by the Prayer for the New year)

A Prayer for the New Year

ALL: Our Creator, our God, as we stand at the beginning of this new year we confess our need of Your presence and Your guidance as we face the future.

CHURCH COUNCIL: We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us, but You alone know what it holds for us, and only You can give us the strength and the wisdom we need to meet its challenges. So help us to humbly put our hands into Your hand, and to trust You and to seek Your will for our lives during this coming year.

UCM: In the midst of life's uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of Your unchanging love.

CWA: In the midst of life's inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to You for the stability and comfort we will need.

CYF: In the midst of life's temptations and the pull of our stubborn self-will, help us not to lose our way but to have the courage to do what is right in Your sight, regardless of the cost.

CYAF: And in the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and injustices of our hurting world, and help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need. May our constant prayer be that of the ancient Psalmist: "Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end" (Psalm 119:33).

ALL: We pray for our nation and its leaders during these difficult times, and for all those who are seeking to bring peace and justice to our dangerous and troubled world. We thank You for their commitment to defend our freedoms. Be with their families also, and assure them of Your love and concern for them. Bring our divided nation together, and give us a greater vision of what You would have us to be. Your Word reminds us that "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12).

UCWO: As we look back over this past year we thank You for Your goodness to us-far beyond what we have deserved. May we never presume on Your past goodness or forget all Your mercies to us, but may they instead lead us to repentance, and to a new commitment to make You the foundation and center of our lives this year.

ALL: And so, our God, our Redeemer, Our Sustainer, we thank You for the promise and hope of this new year, and we look forward to it with expectancy and faith. This we ask in the name of our Lord and Savior, who by His death and resurrection has given us hope both for this world and the world to come.

†HYMN OF DEDICATION

♪ “HYMN OF OUR FAITH JOURNEY” ♪ HFJ#1

WORDS & MUSIC: Helen S. Tejero

Arr.: Grace R. Tabada | Hymn of Faith Journey #1

†BENEDICTION

Minister: May the Lord guide our hearts in the way of faith and fill us with the gifts of the Spirit.

People: MAY GOD GIVE US STRENGTH TO BE BEARERS OF THE MORE ABUNDANT LIFE IN CHRIST.

All: MAY OUR HEARTS BE OPEN TO GOD'S CALL TO LOVE OTHERS AS WE LOVE OURSELVES.

Men: May the love of Christ equip us to serve.

Women: May the joy of the Spirit lead us to celebrate life with others

Minister: May the power of God come upon us. May the wisdom Of Jesus Christ encourage us, May the witness of the Holy Spirit accompany us, so that we may continue sharing the Good News that we are all one in Christ.

All: SO BE IT! AMEN!

†Response

♪ “ Jude Doxology with Seven-fold Amen” ♪

Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and to make you stand in His presence blameless and with great joy, To the only God our Savior, to Jesus Christ our King, Be the Glory and the majesty, dominion and authority, both now and evermore, Amen!

†POSTLUDE

References:

The Work of Christmas begins by Michael Dougherty, a variation on [Howard Thurman](#)'s 'When the Song of the Angels is Stilled'

Doxology by Kurt Struckmeyer

Prayer for the New Year Billy Graham

UCCP Hymnal of Faith Journey

Thee liturgy was prepared by Pastor Julie Anne Valle-Quiros of LCSMC-MLJ

Theme: "Heralding Jesus as the Bread of Life"

Biblical Text: Matthew 6:11 "Give us this day our daily bread"

John 6: 27, 35-36

"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life"

"Jesus said to them," I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall be hunger, and he who believes in me shall never be thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe"

Notes for Worship Preparation

REFLECTION

Our biblical text in John tells us of Jesus putting his command in one sentence, " Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life. another version of the text states, "...that which lasts forever and gives eternal life." A similar statement was spoken by a prophet before Jesus' time. Isaiah had asked," Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which does not satisfy?" From these declarations, we could say that there are two kinds of hunger. There is physical hunger which physical food can satisfy and a spiritual hunger which food cannot satisfy.

The luxury of life lived by the Roman society was unparalleled. They take great pleasure in lavish feasts and extravagant lifestyles which seem to have reflected a life of unquenched thirst and hunger- a deep dissatisfaction that nothing can satisfy.

Jesus' declaration, "I am the bread of life" is one of the great passages in the New Testament from which we draw these several points:

1. Bread sustains life. it is that without which life cannot go on. According to Christianity.com, "BREAD is one of the essential foods of many cultures all around the world; it is a staple in many diets, and for centuries it would have been one of the most accessible foods for people of all wealth and social statuses". In short, bread is a food that gives satisfaction when we are hungry.

2. But what is life? Clearly by life is meant something far more than mere physical existence. Real life is the new relationship with God, that relationship of trust and obedience and love - a relationship which is made possible only by Jesus Christ. Apart

from him, no one can enter into it. That is to say, without Jesus there may be existence, but not life.

3. Therefore, if Jesus is the essential of life, he may be described as the bread of life. The hunger of the human situation is ended when we know Christ and through him know God. The hunger is satisfied. Life in Jesus is ours for the taking- or refusing. The last thing that defeats God is the defiance of the human heart.

As we celebrate the coming of another year and the Eucharist at the same time, we partake of the bread - the symbol of Christ body that which offers a new life. As we face the new year, let us take the invitation of Christ which is life in time and life in eternity. We cheat ourselves of this great opportunity when we refuse Christ's invitation.

THE LITURGY

PRELUDE INTROIT

“Holy, Holy, Holy”
(The Hymn Book #582)

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Host,
Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory:
Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High.

PROCESSIONAL LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

+CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Come, let us celebrate new beginnings.

People: Let us celebrate the new year of hope and restoration.

Leader: Come, let us celebrate the table of life

All: Let us accept the invitation to partake and celebrate life in Christ.

+HYMN OF PRAISE “ O God, Our Help In Ages Past” HFJ#348

Words: Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Music: William Croft, 1708

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever rolling stream, soon bears us all away;
We fly forgotten, as a dream fades at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Still be our God while troubles last, and our eternal home.

+INVOCATION:

Leader: Generous and gracious God, we thank you for another year that you gave us.
We come to praise and celebrate your kindness with renewed energy. We are so
grateful for the gift of life, knowledge and of your spirit with us. By opening
ourselves to You now, we can see in our eyes your glory. Lead us to commune
with you so that our faith may be deepened. To you, be all honor and praise.
Amen

Response:

“Come, Holy Spirit”

(Words and Music: William and Gloria Gaither)

Come, Holy Spirit, I need Thee
Come sweet Spirit, I pray
Come in Thy strength and Thy Power
Come in Thine own gentle way.

Come like a spring in the desert
Come to the withered of soul
Lord let Thy sweet healing power
Touch me and make me whole.

LITANY OF CONFESSION

Leader: We tremble in God’s presence when we become aware of who we are,
We tremble in God’s presence when we become aware of who God is,
We tremble in God’s presence when we become aware of what God expects
from us.
So, we come before God in humility and awe acknowledging our unfaithfulness.

People: God of majesty and power, we tremble before You knowing that You reveal to
us in concrete ways. Who are we that you should visit us or expect something
from us? We confess our preference for the predictable. We admit our
resistance to your spirit. Forgive us, O Lord. Draw us back into a right
relationship with you, and with one another. Amen.

SILENT MOMENT OF CONFESSION

SONG OF CONFESSION

“Lord, Look into My Heart”

Words and Music: Roderick Raut, 1996

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. Amen

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S PARDON

Pastor: God has reached out to us once again, offering salvation, making us whole, drawing us into community where life is integrated and filled with meaning. The spirit comes to us, making holy the common place. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven.

SONG OF ASSURANCE

"Blessed Assurance" HFJ #385

Words: Fanny Crosby, 1873; alt.

Music: Phoebe P. Knapp, 1873

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the long;

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

***GREETINGS**

Minister

CHURCH CONCERN ANNOUNCEMENT

Minister

PASTORAL PRAYER

Song Response

"Hear Our Prayer" HFJ#85

Psalm 134:1; Music: George Whelpton, 1987

Hear Our Prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God;
Incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

+Scripture Reading

Message Through Song

Message Through Words

CALL TO OFFERING (Liturgist)

We walk, give, and live by faith. In this offering, we have the opportunity to give back to God the blessings that are continuously showered on us. We give back our gratitude for having gone through another year of pain and joy, of fear and hope, of suffering and abundance. Now, let us offer to God the tokens of our gratitude- our tithes, pledges, thanksgiving, and love offering to show how much we thank God for coming to our lives and save us by grace.

OFFERING OF TITHES, PLEDGES, AND OTHER GIFTS

OFFERTORY MUSIC

*DOXOLOGY

“Praise God from Whom All Blessing Flow” HFJ #94

Words: Thomas Ken, 1674 alt.

Music: Louis Bourgeois, 1551

Praise God the Source of life and birth,
Praise God, the Son who came to earth;
Praise God the Spirit, Holy Flame
All glory, honor to God's name. Amen.

OFFERTORY PRAYER ((Unison))

As you should transform our doubts and set us free from our fears, so we pray these gifts we offer might bring hope to those whose despair, feed those who hunger for hope as well as food, and gather them into your community of wonder and joy. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Song of Preparation. **“Let Us Break Bread Together” HFJ #258**

Words and Music: African-American spiritual, 19th century

Let us break bread together on our knees,
Let us break bread together on our knees,
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord have mercy on me.

2. Let us drink wine together....,

3. Let us praise God together....,

Words of Remembrance

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Pastor: We believe that all people are the children of God, and therefore have worth and dignity.

People: All are welcome to share in this holy meal, without regard for human divisions of race, sex, sexuality, class or creed.

Pastor: As we prepare to follow the example of Jesus in sharing this bread and wine, let us affirm our faith:

Sisters and brothers, let us dedicate ourselves anew to live in such a way that justice may roll like waters, that peace may become real, that the dignity of all persons may be manifest.

People: Let us make a covenant with one another and seek to make a new beginning.
We unite to resist the powers of death.
Before us today are set life and death.
We choose life that we and our children may live.

Words of Consecration

Sharing of the Bread and Wine

Prayer of Thanksgiving (Elder)

Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, may we overflow with thanksgiving for who you are, for all you have done, and for all you have yet to do. May we remember the taste of this meal in our mouths-how nourishing and sweet it is- in both good and difficult times. With your breath in our lungs, you have prepared us to be your witnesses in this world. To you be all the Glory. Amen.

HYMN OF DEDICATION

“Now Send Us, Lord” HFJ#105

Words: Danilo C. Sanchez; Eng. Transl. Arnel Faller, 2002

Music: Eliseo M. Pajaro

Now send us, Lord, our God, scattered we will be
After we have worshipped dismiss us with your grace,
And may your blessings, Lord, be showered unto us,
Empower us all throughout the days of our lives.

With joy now in our hearts, we are blessed and refreshed,
Your true love embraces to heal and mend your ways,
Pour out your spirit now that we go to proclaim,
The Good News of your love that your will may be done.

O God, may our desire be together in pray'r,
Praise your name divine and united in one mind,
Reveal to us your will, in us your spirit fill,
We praise you forever all the days of our life.

***BENEDICTION**

Pastor: You go out from this place, scattered but not divided
wounded but healed, broken but forgiven.
Go out into the world and proclaim the Good News.
Go in peace and live your life in Christ.

***Song Response**

“Five-Fold Amen”

MOMENT OF SILENCE

POSTLUDE

RECESSIONAL

References:

UCCP Hymnal of Faith Journey

The Hymnbook

The liturgy was prepared by Jebert Arabe Sarsonas, CYF- CEN National Chairperson

Biblical Texts: *Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10: 34-43; Matthew 3: 13-17*

For Preparation: *Place a large bowl of water on the altar*

REFLECTION “Baptism of the Lord”

The baptism of Jesus is considered a revelation of God. This is another “epiphany” for us. Jesus is proclaimed as God’s own Son with whom God is well pleased. Jesus’ baptism revealed to us the mystery of the Son of God becoming one of us.

As a human person, Jesus identified with the people not only in their strength but also in their frailties. He experienced the feelings and emotions every human being experienced. He was hungry, and thirsty and wept at the death of his friend.

Jesus’ baptism marks the beginning of his public ministry of healing, preaching, teaching, and freeing people. Some responded, some turned away but to those who believed he brought new life - a life exemplified by loving others. Without love, there can be no meaning or purpose in life. Without love, there can be no mission. Jesus came to save us by showing God’s love for us. God’s love is shown in our love for one another.

“Those who encountered Jesus then, and today, are changed so radically that an individual can say, “It is no longer I who lives; it is Christ who lives in me”. This transformation compels us to work to bring about justice where everyone has what they need to have, where their dignity is respected and affirmed, and where all live in right relationship.” (*Reflections: Baptism of the Lord*)

In this, we are also reminded that at our baptism, together with Christ, we are confirmed as God’s beloved. In our baptism, we commit to living out the kind of life that Jesus exemplified. We respond to the needs of others because we need to share that new life in Christ. In doing so, may we hear those wonderful words, “ These are my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

THE LITURGY

Meditation:

And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17

Preparation/Processional Hymn

“Joyful, Joyful We Adore You” HFJ#9

Words: Henry van Dyke, 1907;alt.

Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824

(1st and 2nd stanzas only)

Joyful joyful, we adore You God of glory, God of love,
Hearts unfold like flowers before You opening to the sun above,
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the storms of doubt away,
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All Your works with joy surround You,
Earth and heaven reflect Your rays,
Stars and angels sing around You, center of unbroken praise,
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain, teach us what our praise should be.

Lighting of Christ's Candle
Greetings and Welcoming of Visitors
Church and Community Concerns

Song of Joy

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You” HFJ#9

(3rd and 4th stanzas of “Joyful, Joyful...”)

You are giving and forgiving, ever blessing ever blessed
Wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest,
Loving Spirit, Father Mother all who love belong to You,
Teach us how to love each other, by that love our joy renew.

Mortals join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began,
Boundless love is reigning o’er us, reconciling race and clan,
Ever singing move we forward, faithful in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us onward in the triumph song of life.

Call to Worship (Quoted from Psalm 29)

Liturgist: Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength,

People: Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name, worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

UCM/CWA: The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord over many waters.

Liturgist: The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire,

CYAF/CYF/Children: The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

People: The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as ruler forever.

Liturgist: May the Lord give strength to the people! May the Lord bless all people with peace!

Hymn of Praise

“Come Let Us Worship Our God How” HFJ# 7

Words and Music: Elena G. Maquiso, 1971

Harm.(1971)& english Transl.: Grace R. Tabada, 2001

Come let us worship our God now, with our joyful songs of praise,
Strength and power ascribing, to the great and eternal God.

Draw near with praise to the Lord God, let us raise our voices in song,
Loudly clearly resounding, to acknowledge our loving God.

Let all our hearts be united, to feel the presence of God,
In the act of worship, drawing near to our loving God.

All life on earth is created, by the great and creating One,
In God's love we are molded, let us glorify our God.

Invocation (All)

O God our parent, You are the source of all that we have and the creator of all that we are; we praise You and bless You for what You are. Be with us now as we gather in Your name. Help us in our feeble attempts to feel Your presence and be filled with Your spirit. In Christ's name, Amen.

Choral response: (5th stanza of “Come Let Us.....”)

**O Loving God in heaven, we do worship You here and now,
All of our lives we offer, and we plead, accept us, O God.**

The Confession of Sin

Liturgy: Let us confess our sins to the God who loves us so much.

People: And open ourselves to God's abundant mercies that could make us whole.

All: Merciful God, we have kept on justifying ourselves through our deeds. We compare ourselves with obvious sinners. And congratulate ourselves for being good. We exaggerate our own faithfulness and overlook the goof things others have done by what we do and by what we neglect. We fail to live out the meaning of being baptized in Your name and set aside the true essence of being called “your beloved”. Our doings and shortcomings displease you. We fail to live as Your faithful followers. We pray, O merciful God, for Your pardon.

All (singing)

“Lord, Look Into My Heart” HFJ#89
Words and Music: Roderick Raut, 1996
Eng. Transl.: Grace Tabada, 2000

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 heart, Amen.

(People in silent confession with soft music)

Affirmation of God’s Forgiveness

(Pastor)

Psalm 103:11-13

Response

“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” HFJ#111
Words: Charles Wesley, 1740; alt.
Music: Carl G. Glaser, 1828

O for a thousand tongues to sing
Our great redeemer’s praise,
The glories of our God and King
The Triumphs of God’s grace, Amen

The Church at Prayer

Choral Response: “Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God”

Ask and it shall be given unto you,
Seek and you shall find,
Knock and the door will be opened for you,
Allelu-Allélulia, Alléluia (3x), Allelu –
Alléluia

The Reading of the Word of God

The Message thru Song

The Meditation

Call to Offering

Luke 19-8-9

Liturgist: “Zacchaeus said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much. Then Jesus said to him, “Today, salvation has come to this house.” Let us offer to God our time, talents, and treasures with thanksgiving.

(Bringing our offering while a song offering is sung)

Doxology/Prayer of Thanksgiving

Pastor

Hymn of Trust

“My Hope is Built on Nothing Less” HFJ#203

Words: Edward Mote, c. 1843;alt.

Music: William B. Bradbury, 1863

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus love and righteousness; I dare not trust this earthly frame but wholly lean on Jesus name.

Cho: On Christ the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand.

When shadows veil my Savior's face, I rest upon unchanging grace, In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds within the veil.

Christ's oath and covenant and blood support me in the rising flood; when all around my soul gives way, Christ then is all my hope and stay.

When Christ shall come with trumpet sound oh may I then love be found, dressed in God's righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne.

Prayer of Commitment (Pastor)

We give You thanks, Eternal God for Your nourish and sustain all living things by the gift of water. In the beginning of time, Your spirit moved over the watery chaos calling forth order and life.

In the time of Noah, you destroyed evil by the waters of the beloved, giving righteousness a new beginning. In the waters of Jordan, Jesus was baptized by John and anointed with Your Spirit. By the baptism of His own death and resurrection, Christ set us free from sin and death, and opened the way to eternal life.

We thank You, O God, for the water of baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in His death. From it we are raised to share in the Lord's resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(The minister may touch the water while giving the Benediction)

The Benediction

Send Your Spirit to move over this water that it may be a fountain of deliverance and rebirth.

Wash away the sin of all who are cleansed out Your Holy Spirit, that they may have power to do Your will, and continue forever in the risen life of Christ. To you, O God, Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit, be all praise, honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

Choral Response

“My Joy I Give Unto You...”

My joy I give unto you,
It's the joy that the world cannot give,
It's the joy that world cannot understand,
Joy to know, joy to share
My joy I give unto you.

Postlude/ Recessional

References:

Hymnal of Faith Journey

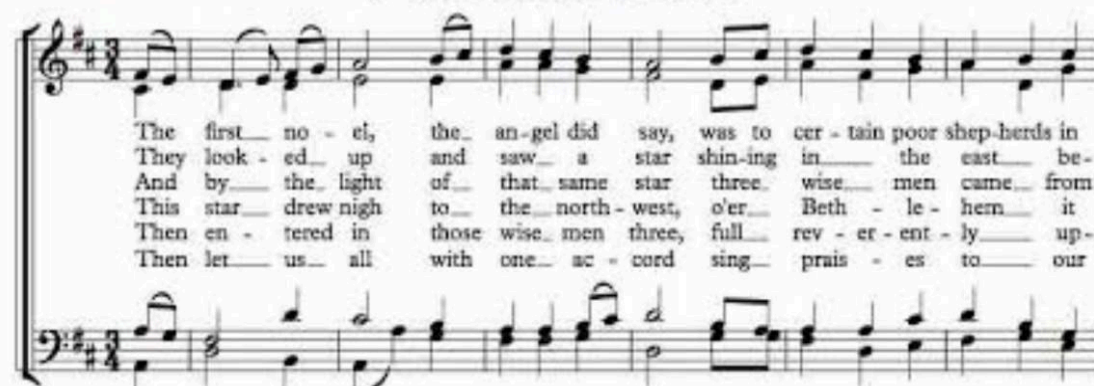
The Book of Common Worship

The Good News Bible

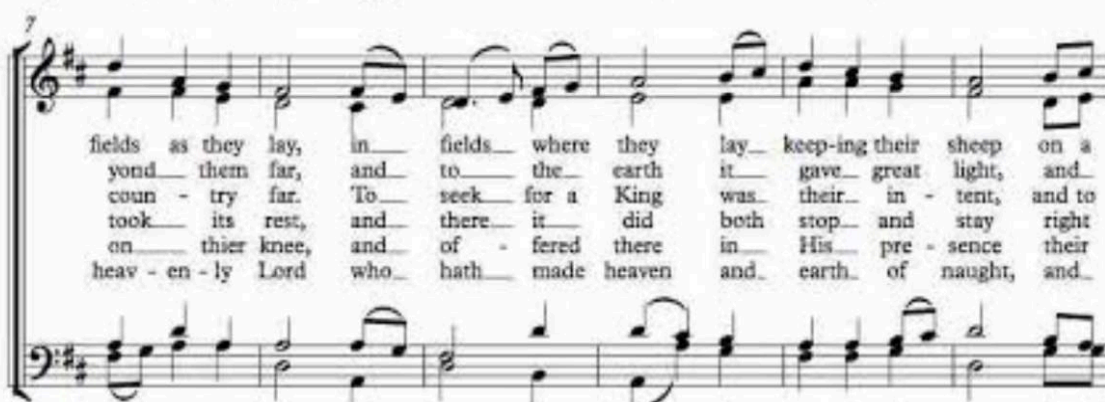
The liturgy was prepared by Pastor Ella Joy F. Echin of SDDC-SEMJA

The First Noel

Traditional



The first no-el, the an-gel did say, was to cer-tain poor shep-herds in
 They look-ed up and saw a star shin-ing in the east be-
 And by the light of that same star three wise men came from
 This star drew nigh to the north-west, o'er Beth-le-hem it
 Then en-tered in those wise men three, full rev-er-ent-ly up-
 Then let us all with one ac-cord sing prais-es to our



fields as they lay, in fields where they lay keep-ing their sheep on a
 yond them far, and to the earth it gave great light, and
 coun-try far. To seek for a King was their in-tent, and to
 took its rest, and there it did both stop and stay right
 on thier knee, and of-fered there in His pre-sence their
 heav-en-ly Lord who hath made heaven and earth of naught, and



cold win-ter's night that was so deep, No-el, no-
 so it con-tin-ued both day and night.
 fol-low the star where-ev-er it went.
 o-ver the place where Je-sus lay.
 gold and myrrh and frank-in-cense.
 with His blood hu-man-kind hath bought.



-el, no-el, no-el. Born is the King of Is-ra-el.

O Come, All You Faithful

1 O come, all you faith-ful, joy-ful and tri-um-phant, O come
 2 God of true God.. Light of true Light... born
 3 Sing, choirs of an-gels, sing in ex-ul-ta-tion, sing,
 4 A - men, Lord, we greet you, born this hap-py morn-ing; Je -

now, O come now to Beth - le - hem. Come and be - hold the
 of the Vir-gin's womb in hu - man form; Tru - ly our God, be -
 all you mes-sen - gers of heaven - ly love: "Glo - ry to God, all
 sus to you shall all glo-ry be given; Word of our God..

refrain
 rul - er of all an - gels: O come in ad - o - ra - tion O
 got-ten, not cre - at - ed:
 glo - ry in the high - est":
 now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

come in ad-o-ra-tion, O come in ad-o ra-tion: Christ is Lord!

Angels We Have Heard on High

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see Christ whose birth the an - gels sing;
 4 See the babe in man - ger laid whom the choirs of an - gels praise;

And the moun - tains in re - ply, ech - o back their joy - ous strains.
 Say what may the ti - dings be, which in - spire your heav - en - ly song.
 Come a - dore on bend - ed knee, God, our world now en - ter - ing.
 Mar - y, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.

Refrain
 Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o, Glo - ri - a

Words & Music: Traditional French carol; Transl. St. 1-3, "Crown of Jesus Music II", 1862; alt;
 St. 4, "Carols Old and Carols New," 1916; alt.

GLORIA
 7.7.7.7. with refrain
 (LES ANGES DANS NOS CAMPAGNES)

JESUS: Birth

ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o.

Maglipay Kita

Rejoice, Everyone

122

Mag-li-pay ki-ta kay Pas-ko ka-ron, Ang
Re-joice, eve-ry-one, it's Christ-mas a-gain, For

a-tong Gi-no-o hu-man na ma-ta-wo, Ka-
God gave us the Son, a gift to the whole world, So

rong gab-hi-o-na ang a-tong ka-sa-kit, sa a-to i-bi-
let's set a-side our prob-lems and pain, For God gave us

1 2

We Are the Reason

Recorded by David Meece

Words and Music by
DAVID MEECE
Arranged by Bryce Inman

Slowly ♩ = 60

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It features a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Slowly' with a metronome marking of ♩ = 60. The score is divided into four systems, each with a measure number (1, 3, 5, 7) at the beginning. The first system (measures 1-2) includes the lyrics '1. As lit - tle'. The second system (measures 3-4) includes the lyrics 'chil - dren we would dream of Christ - mas morn, and all the gifts and (2.) years went by we learned more a - bout gifts, the giv - ing of our -'. The third system (measures 5-6) includes the lyrics 'toys we knew we'd find, but we nev - er re - a - selves, and what that means. On a dark and cloud - y'. The fourth system (measures 7-8) includes the lyrics 'lized a Ba - by born one bless - ed night day a Man hung cry - ing in the rain gave us the be - cause of'. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: F7sus, F7, Bb, Bb, Am7(b5), D7, Gm, Fm7, Bb7, Eb, Bb/D, Cm, Dsus, D/F#, Gm, Gm/F, and Em7(b5).

1. As lit - tle

chil - dren we would dream of Christ - mas morn, and all the gifts and
(2.) years went by we learned more a - bout gifts, the giv - ing of our -

toys we knew we'd find, but we nev - er re - a -
selves, and what that means. On a dark and cloud - y

lized a Ba - by born one bless - ed night
day a Man hung cry - ing in the rain gave us the
be - cause of

9 E \flat maj7 Cm7 F \sharp sus F C/D D

great-est gift of our lives.
love, be-cause of love.

12 G2 Am/G D7sus

We are the rea-son that He gave His life, we are the rea-son that He

15 C/G G G2(sus)G D/F \sharp Fm Fm7/D Cmaj7 Am

suf-fered and died; to a world that was lost He gave all He could give to

D.S. al Coda Φ

18 D7sus D7 1. G E \flat /F

show us the rea-son to live. 2. As the

21 G E♭ B♭/D

live. I fin - 'ly found a rea - son for liv - ing, _____ it's in giv -

24 $B^b m/D^b$ A^b/C $A^b m/C^b$

- ing ev - 'ry part of my heart to Him. In all that I do, ev - 'ry word


27 E^b/B^b Cm7 F7

— that I say, — I'll be giv — ing my all — just for Him, —

29 *A♭/B♭* *B♭* *C/D* *D* *D.S. al Coda* *Φ*

just for Him. And

Coda



31 D7sus Am C/D G

show us the rea - son, the rea - son to live.