

Third Sunday after Epiphany
21 January 2024
Morning Worship at 10:30 a.m.
(*: Congregation stands)



APPROACH

PREPARATION SONG “Bless the Lord”

– Composer: Taizé

Bless the Lord, my soul,
and bless God's holy name.
Bless the Lord, my soul,
who leads me into life. --||--

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Blessing and Woe.

All : Found and Lost

One: Near and Far

All : Filled and Empty

One: All of us have a place here,

All: and we gather in it now.

One : A place where all we are is found in God

All: who redeems, renews and calls us back into life.

*** HYMN “Gather Us In”**

– Composer: Marty Haugen

Here in this place, new light is streaming,
now is the darkness, vanished away,
see, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.

Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery;
we are the old, who yearn for your face,
we have been sung throughout all of history,
called to be light to the whole human race.

Gather us in, the rich and the haughty;
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven light years away,
but here in this space, the new light is shining,
now is the kin-dom, now is the day.

Gather us in, and hold us forever;
gather us in, and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

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CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God,

**we would rather proclaim death to our enemies,
than see them forgiven and redeemed.**

**Forgive our hardness of heart, O God,
and our reluctance to see your divine image
in those who hate and despise us.**

**Teach us to love our enemies,
that our lives may proclaim your truth—
that love is stronger than hate,
and mercy is greater than vengeance.**

We ask this in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

ALL RESPOND “Kyrie Eleison” (Lord, have mercy)

– Trad. Orthodox

Kyrie Eleison

Kyrie Eleison

Kyrie Eleison

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ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Now, after we confess, we hear the good news proclaimed:
God hears our words, God sees our changed hearts, God's
steadfast love is poured out upon us!

We will trust in God, in whom our salvation rests.

Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

Lord, open our lips.

And our mouths shall show forth Your praise.

HYMN “In Great Thanksgiving”

– Music: M L Solis; Words: M.M. Solis

In great thanksgiving, O Love Divine,
who from our sorrow redeemed us all,
Cleansed of regretting, relieved of fear,
we come rejoicing for new life here.

In celebration of power bestowed,
we who were sinners are followers bold,
Forgiving enemies, we sing Your praise,
with jubilation love’s banner raise.

In dedication, we give our lives,
to heed Your bidding to seek the lost,
To all the hungry bring food for feasts,
to fear-bound people strength for life’s tests.

In exaltation of Christ, our Lord,
who for the faithful true life ensured,
We laud him Savior, we teach his way
of peace with justice, hope for today
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SCRIPTURE READING

Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet.
A light to our path.

Psalm 1 (O.T.)

1 Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;

2 but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night.

3 They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.

4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

6 for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Luke 6: 20 - 31 (N.T.)

20 Then he looked up at his disciples and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

22 “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.

23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

24 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

25 “Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. “Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep.

26 “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

27 “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

29 If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.

30 Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Lord, may Your Word live in us.

And bear much fruit for Your glory.

HYMN “Let There Be Love Shared Among Us”

– Composer: Dave Bilbrough

Let there be love shared among us

Let there be love in our eyes

May now Your love sweep this nation

Cause us O Lord, to arise

Give us a fresh understanding

Of a love that is real

Let there be love shared among us

Let there be love

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FAMILY TALK

SERMON

*** AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

THE OFFERTORY

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

KUC SINGERS “THE LORD’S PRAYER”

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in
heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our
sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

OFFERTORY

THE PEACE

*** HYMN “God in Your Grace”**

– Music: Per Harling; Words: Shirley Murray

Love is Your way
Love is Your nature
Blessing each creature
Lighting each day
Grace is Your sign
Gift of forgiveness
Chalice that changes
Water to wine

God in Your grace
God in Your mercy
Turn us to You
To transform the world

Pathways we choose
Undeserved freedom
Earth as our kingdom
Still we abuse
Much we have done
Gross human error
Misuse of power
Darkness the sun

God in Your grace
God in Your mercy
Turn us to You
To transform the world

Terror and tears
Wounds without healing
Hearts without feeling
Mirror our fears
Life without trust
Greed and high prices
Conflict and crises
Grind us to dust

God in Your grace
God in Your mercy
Turn us to You
To transform the world

Let us stand still
Look at each other
Sister and brother
Thwarting Your will
Teach us good care
Grace to seek pardon
Reclaim Your garden
Riches to share

God in Your grace
God in Your mercy
Turn us to You
To transform the world
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* **COMMISSION and BLESSING**

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

God does nothing except in response to believing prayer.
– John Wesley

Please remember as you pray. . .

- Next week, on 24 January, is the International Day of Education. This year's theme is 'Learning for Lasting Peace', which is appropriate and timely amid ongoing wars and conflicts today. Education is a transformative process that empowers learners to gain essential knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and behaviours, enabling them to serve as catalysts for peace in their communities. It is supposed to be a fundamental human right, but there are still many challenges to achieving universal education.

About 244 million children and adolescents worldwide are out of school, and 617 million children and adolescents cannot read and do basic math. Let us pray for the world's leaders to prioritize education and work towards ensuring that every child has access to quality education. May education be a force for peace, justice, and sustainable development and empower learners to build a better future for themselves and their communities.

- Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu has pledged to tackle the increasing kidnappings for ransom by implementing a massive education initiative targeted at the nation's youth. Tinubu condemned the abductions as "disturbing, ungodly and sinister" and touted education as "the antidote to the troubles agitating the nation." According to a statement from a presidential spokesman, Nigeria's security forces are already battling jihadi rebels in the northeast in addition to armed groups that often carry out mass killings and abductions in remote communities across the northwest and central regions. Let us pray that the youth in Nigeria may be blessed with the resources and opportunities to receive a quality education. May they be empowered to learn and grow, and may their education lead to a brighter future and bring peace and stability to Nigeria and beyond.
- BBC News reported that 2023 was the hottest on record, with the increase in Earth's surface temperature nearly crossing the critical threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius. Climate change intensified heatwaves. The record heat made life miserable and sometimes deadly in Europe,

North America, China, and many other places last year. Scientists say a warming climate is also to blame for more extreme weather events, like the lengthy drought that devastated the Horn of Africa, the torrential downpours that wiped out dams and killed thousands in Libya, and the Canada wildfires that fouled the air from North America to Europe. For the first time, nations meeting for annual United Nations climate talks in December agreed that the world needs to transition away from the fossil fuels causing climate change, but they set no concrete requirements. Let us pray that world leaders take concrete actions to save our planet for future generations. May they prioritize the well-being of our planet and its inhabitants over short-term economic gains.

- According to Reuters, 43 prisoners remain at large after escaping prison in northern Ecuador. The inmates escaped a jail in Esmeraldas, a city close to the border with Colombia. After some 2,000 members of Ecuador's security forces conducted a search operation in the prison on Sunday, five prisoners were recaptured. The recent explosion of violence – including the storming by gunmen of a live TV news broadcast, explosions in several cities and the kidnapping of police officers – appears to be a response to President Daniel Noboa's plans to address Ecuador's severe security crisis. Let us pray for the safety of the people of Ecuador, for the situation to be resolved as soon as possible, and that the problem of drug-related crimes and gang violence can be suppressed.

- Hong Kong stocks have taken a sustained tumble, sinking below the important psychological benchmark of 16,000 on Tuesday due to concerns about China's economy. All the major indexes have dived, and the mainland Chinese CSI 300 fell to an almost five-year low after China's fourth-quarter gross domestic product growth missed estimates. The economy had enjoyed an initial post-pandemic rebound but ran out of steam within months as a lack of confidence among households and businesses hit consumption. In light of these developments, let's hope that the Government of Hong Kong will take appropriate measures to address the deep-seated issues surrounding people's, especially international investors and business people's, waning confidence in the One Country Two Systems. Let us pray for the Government of Hong Kong to have the wisdom and courage to make the right decisions for the people of Hong Kong.

For the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

We lift up in prayer the churches and people of all faiths in Cyprus, Greece, and Türkiye.

We are **thankful** for:

- the 2,000-year presence and witness of the church in Asia Minor (now Türkiye [Turkey], Cyprus, and Greece) – the region in which St Paul and other apostles first planted the seeds of the Christian faith – and for how Greek culture influenced the early church
- the Church Fathers who came from this area, along with many men and women who were Christian

martyrs, and where seven ecumenical councils were convened

- the pioneering work of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in the quest for Christian unity and the protection of the environment
- those who have reached out to assist people who have fled to and through these lands.

We pray for:

- the healing of memories and wounds inflicted by early 20th century genocides of Armenian, Greek, and Assyrian communities, and for current tensions in these lands
- enhanced respect for all minority groups and their claims,
- those who work for justice and reconciliation
- the people who struggle because of economic and political crises in these countries
- more stable democratic governments that further the good of all.

For the Congregation

- Pray for those facing health challenges that require body strength restoration: Paul Wong, Kevin Ng, Revd Bud, Jeanette Lee, Hend, Ng Kam Lee, Raymond Lau, Joy Babasa, Julianne Long and John. We continue to remember our senior members and friends: Mrs Samuel and the mothers of Alex Melwani and June Tang. May God heal the sick and give strength to those caring for loved ones at home and in care facilities.

Announcements

Today - A warm welcome to all who join our worship this morning. Please stay and join the tea and coffee fellowship after the service.

Thank you, Katie Ho, for sharing the Word of God with us this morning.

Dates For Your Diaries:

English Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Date: 23 January 2024 (Tue) Time: 8:00 pm

Venue: St. Mary's Church (5 Dyer Ave, Hung Hom)

Speaker: Revd Eden Fletcher (The Methodist Church, Hong Kong)

Theme: "You shall love the Lord your God and your neighbour as yourself."

Starting in February 2024

As part of the KUC centenary celebrations, the Christian Education Committee will launch a new study series entitled 'Discipleship: Then And Now'. Every 1st Sunday after worship in the Upper Fellowship Hall.



Human Café: Parenting for a Peaceful World

This interactive parenting workshop is suitable for all, not just people with kids. Join us to be inspired and refreshed.



Dates: 27 Jan, 2 Mar, 6 Apr

Time: 4-6 pm Venue: KUC Space

Scan the QR code for registration.

(A collaboration of EDiversity and the Peacemaking Ministry)

	TODAY 21 January	NEXT WEEK 28 January
Liturgist:	Maggie Mathieson	Phyllis Wong
Preacher:	Katie Ho	Maggie Mathieson
Pianist:	Lucy Lim	Joshua Pang
Lector:	Carol Yuen	Adam Snyder
Intercessory Prayers:	Paul Lucas	Judy Chan
Family Talk:	Chan Beng Seng	Tong Chong Sze
Greeter:	Edith San Juan Rachel Wangari	Journaliz Badon Kevin Ng
Offering Rota:	Anjenette Bolanos Ronald Chui	Daddy Susan Babasa
Counting Rota	Judy Chan Lucy Lim	Hope Antone Joram Calimutan
Sunday School Leaders:	Mary Adesina Jailyn Tomitis	Mary Adesina Jailyn Tomitis
I.T. Team:	Jen Pang Bervinder Kaur	Jen Pang Bervinder Kaur

Freewill offering last week: HK\$32,874.90-

Promissory offering last week: HK\$3,350-