

Fourth Sunday in Advent

24 December 2023

Morning Worship at 10:30 a.m.

(*: Congregation stands)



APPROACH

ADVENT LITANY

How does a weary world practice love?

By sending cards, and picking up the phone.

By practicing empathy, and assuming the best in others. By learning people's stories and finding common ground.

By advocating for justice, and saving a place at the table.

There are a million ways to practice love. So today we light the candle of love as a reminder and a charge.

With God's help, may we bring love into a weary world. Amen.

PREPARATION SONG "Light of Hope"

– Music: T Chan; Lyrics: M Mathieson

Light of love ignite in us ,

Flood our life with Your pure love.

Serving one an- o- ther embracing old and new.

Light of Love come dwell in us. --||--

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

How does a weary world rejoice?

We sing songs of hope

We allow hope to change us, to strengthen us.

We tell the stories of what could be.

We listen for God's word.

We resist the temptation to give up or give in.

We remember Mary's song.

We gather for worship.

We hope.

We hope.

Against all odds, we hope.

Friends, this is the day that the Lord is still making.

Let us worship holy God.

*** HYMN "Light of the World" - Composer: Tim Hughes**

Light of the world

You stepped down into darkness

Opened my eyes let me see

Beauty that made this heart adore You

Hope of a life spent with You

And here I am to worship

Here I am to bow down

Here I am to say that you're my God

You're altogether lovely

Altogether worthy

Altogether wonderful to me

King of all days
Oh so highly exalted
Glorious in heaven above
Humbly you came to the earth you created
All for love's sake became poor

Here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me
--||--

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Holy God,
More days than not, hope feels like the rain.
We try to hold onto it with cupped hands,
but eventually, it slips right on through.
Forgive us for holding hope so loosely.
Forgive us for allowing the realities of today to
define tomorrow.
We know that this world needs people of hope, so
today we pray:
turn us into those people.**

Teach us how to sing Mary's song of hope for the world.

With open hearts we pray, amen.

ALL RESPOND "Kyrie Eleison" (Lord, have mercy)
– Trad. Orthodox Chant

Kyrie Eleison

Kyrie Eleison

Kyrie Eleison --||--

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

THE WORD OF GOD

Lord, open our lips.

**And our mouths shall show forth Your
praise.**

KUC SINGERS

"Christmas Song of Joy" – Composer: J M Martin

SCRIPTURE READING

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

Luke 2: 1 – 20 (N.T.)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be registered.

4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”

Lord, may Your Word live in us.

And bear much fruit for Your glory.

HARAMBE “Sizalelwe Indodana”

‘JESUS IS BORN - A VERY SPECIAL CHILD’

HYMN ‘Star Child’ - Music: C Gibson, Lyrics: S E Murray

Star Child, earth Child, go-between of God,
love Child, Christ Child, heaven’s lighting rod,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone
alive!

Street child, beat child, no place left to go,
hurt child, used child, no one wants to know,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone
alive!

Grown child, old child, memory full of years,
sad child, lost child, story told in tears,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone
alive!

Spared child, spoiled child, memory full of years,
wise child, faith child, knowing joy in store,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone
alive!

Hope-for-peace Child, God's stupendous sign,
down-to-earth Child, Star of stars that shine,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone
alive!

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*** AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

We believe in God the Father, creator of heaven and earth.

**The one who is full of patience,
who is not afraid of silence,
who does not need to fill each moment with activity and noise.**

**The one who is beyond bluster and flurry,
and who does not jostle for attention**

**We believe in God the Son, Saviour of creation,
who slipped into Bethlehem one night, mostly unnoticed,**

**who lived thirty years without headlines or hurry,
who frequently took time alone with his patient Father,**

who waited for the right time to become the suffering servant,

**who stood quietly before the noise of his accusers,
whose silence overpowered their words,**

who died, then rose again on a quiet Sunday morning.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,

**who strengthens, empowers, renews and refreshes,
sometimes arriving with obvious power,**

sometimes with the quiet breath of a whisper.

We believe in one God

who patiently waits for us,

and who longs for us to do the same.

THE OFFERTORY
CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.**

ALL RESPOND “Emmanuel, Emmanuel”

– Composer: Bob McGee

Emmanuel Emmanuel

His name is called Emmanuel

God with us revealed in us

His name is called Emmanuel --||--

OFFERTORY

DUET ‘ Like a Candle Flame’

– Composer: Graham Kendrick

THE PEACE

* **HYMN** “When Out of Poverty Was Born”

– Tune: Kingsfold; Lyrics: K Galloway

When out of poverty is born
a dream that will not die
a landless, weary folk find strength
to stand with heads held high,
it's then we learn from those who wait
to greet the promised day:
'The Lord is coming; don't lose heart Be blest: prepare the
way!'

When people wander far from God,
forget to share their bread,
they find their wealth an empty thing,
their spirits are not fed.
For only just and tender love
the hungry soul will stay.
And so God's prophets echo still:'Be blest: prepare the
way!'

When God took flesh and came to earth,
the world turned upside down,
and in the strength of women's faith
the Word of Life was born.
She knew that God would raise the low,
it pleased her to obey.
Rejoice with Mary in the call:'Be blest: prepare the way!'

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*** COMMISSION and BLESSING**

Let us go to be the gift another needs,
sharing God's blessings of love and grace,
running to tell the Story we heard from the
shepherds.

Let us go to be the comfort which can swaddle
others,
sharing Jesus' compassion with the poor and
needy,
welcoming the holiness offered by the most
vulnerable we meet.

Let us go to kindle the lives around us,
sharing the Spirit's peace with all the broken,
learning the language of hope from the children
in our midst.

Concerns of the Church

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

- As we come together on this sacred Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us open our hearts to the spirit of love, compassion, and preparedness. Amidst our joy, we acknowledge the challenges faced by children in many regions of China still grappling with an outbreak of respiratory illnesses. Our thoughts and prayers extend to them, and may the healing touch of Christ's love be upon each affected child. The ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic underscores the profound impact infectious diseases can have on humanity. On this International Day for Epidemic Preparedness, we pray for global well-being and the strength to face the challenges of infectious diseases. As we welcome the birth of Christ into our hearts, may His spirit guide us towards compassion, resilience, and a commitment to the health and well-being of all.

- Amid the prospect of 2023 being the hottest year on record, a beacon of hope emerges from new research in traditional architecture. Indigenous communities, known for their adaptive building techniques, are inspiring a new generation of Pacific Islander architects. Recognizing the urgent need for climate adaptation, these architects blend traditional wisdom with modern principles to design energy-efficient, climate-resilient buildings. Projects in Fiji showcase the fusion of local materials with innovative cyclone-resistant features. This uplifting research signifies a shift towards sustainable and resilient construction, offering hope for a brighter, more environmentally friendly future. Let us celebrate these endeavors and pray for continued inspiration, wisdom, and collaboration to protect and heal our precious planet.
- A new deal has been reached at the UN climate summit in Dubai, marking a significant step forward as it calls on all nations to transition away from using fossil fuels, acknowledging the urgent need for deep and rapid reductions to limit temperature rises to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels. While not committing to the phase-out that many governments sought, the agreement represents a crucial acknowledgement of the challenges posed by burning fossil fuels and the imperative for change. In light of this positive development, let us offer a thanksgiving prayer, expressing gratitude for the collective efforts of world leaders to address the climate crisis. May their commitment to move away from fossil fuels foster global solidarity and inspire further decisive actions for the well-being of our planet.
- In the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in northwest China on Wednesday, survivors in Yangwa village are grappling with the destruction, mourning the loss of at least 134 lives and enduring frigid temperatures in makeshift shelters. The earthquake struck Gansu and Qinghai provinces, causing houses to collapse and leaving over 900 injured. In the remote mountains, residents face the daunting task of rebuilding their lives, with nearly 15,000 homes collapsing in Gansu. The harsh conditions, including freezing temperatures, add to the challenges for those affected. Rescue efforts are ongoing, with landslides complicating searches in Qinghai, and the death toll is the highest in China from an earthquake in nine years. The predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in this poor, rural area emphasize the immediate need for sustenance and warmth in the wake of this tragic event. In

heartfelt prayer, we seek solace for the departed, strength for grieving families and success in the ongoing rescue efforts. May hope shine through the darkness, bringing comfort to the afflicted and healing to the wounded.

- The national security trial of Hong Kong's renowned activist publisher, Jimmy Lai, has commenced this week. Lai, 76, faces potential life imprisonment under Beijing's national security law, accused of colluding with foreign forces and conspiring to publish seditious materials. His trial, linked to the now-closed pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily, is viewed as a crucial test for press freedom and judicial independence in Hong Kong. The decision on the timing of the sedition charge is expected by the end of the week, with the trial projected to last around 80 days without a jury. We pray for justice and the upholding of the rule of law, seeking fairness and protection of civil liberties in the face of sedition charges, and that the legal proceedings reflect a commitment to judicial independence.

For the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

We lift up in prayer the churches and people of all faiths in Japan, North Korea, and South Korea.

We are **thankful** for:

- the distinctive temples, art and cultures in the region
- the education and economic developments that have improved the lives of many in Japan and South Korea
- how the Council of Churches in Japan has promoted reconciliation with the rest of Asia
- the prophetic witness of Christians in Japan and South Korea
- the persistent witness to justice for “comfort women” from the Second World War
- the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula, which, with others, has sought to reunify Korea, defend human rights, and work for peace and justice.

We **pray** for:

- an end to repression of people and to threats of military confrontation, especially on the Korean peninsula
- the reunification of Korea, that peace and justice might prevail

- women and other marginalized groups, and the inequalities they experience
- greater acceptance of immigrants that they might make a positive contribution
- new hope and meaning for the young amid pressures of competition and consumerism.

For the Congregation

- Pray for those facing health challenges that require body strength restoration: Edna Lai, 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 mother of Alex Melwani. May God heal the sick and give strength to those caring for loved ones at home and in care facilities.
- We remember all in our community travelling at this time. May the Lord bless them and refresh and renew relationships with family and friends. We also remember those facing this time of the year alone, apart from loved ones and family.

Announcements

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

Thank you to all who have participated in leading our worship this morning, and a special thank you to our children and the Sunday School team 😊

Christmas Day in KUC

25/12 Christmas Day Service with Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by pot-luck lunch.

New Year Appeal from the Peacemaking Ministry

As we enter the new year, the peacemaking ministry is appealing to you all for donations of supermarket vouchers. These vouchers will enable us to provide for families and people in need within our community. For more details, please get in touch with Katie Ho.

Dates For Your Diaries:

English Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

This year, the worship materials for the Unity gathering have been shared by the people and churches of Burkina Faso.

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" (Luke 10:27)

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 first Sunday after worship in the Upper Fellowship Hall. Please scan the QR code for more details of the schedule.



	TODAY 24 December
Liturgist	Maggie Mathieson
Pianist:	Lucy Lim
Lector:	Blessing
Intercessory Prayers:	Favor
Drama	Faith, Michael, Jenet, Precious, David, Divine, Bright
Greeter:	Angeline, Favor and Bright
Offering Rota:	Daddy, Divine
Counting Rota	Ramon Bultron,
Sunday School Leaders:	Mary Adesina, Gabi Baumgartner, Jailyn Tomitis
I.T. Team:	Amber Tong, Bervinder Kaur
Freewill offering last week: HK\$2,276- Promissory offering last week: HK\$2,450- Wefare Fund: HK\$5,000-	