

Kowloon Union Church  
**First Sunday in Advent**  
**3 December 2023**  
**Morning Worship at 10:30 a.m.**  
**Holy Communion Service**  
(\*: Congregation stands)



## APPROACH

### ADVENT LITANY

How does a weary world hope?

**By telling stories of hope,  
by lighting candles in the night,  
and planting seeds in the winter that  
will bloom in the spring.**

By praying for children as they grow, and  
picking up trash on the sidewalk.

**By insisting that small acts can make a  
difference.**

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

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

## **PREPARATION SONG “Light of Hope”**

– Music: T. Chan, Lyrics: M Mathieson

Light of Hope ignite in us,

Flood our life with Your true light.

Reaching in the dark, as a torch against the night.

Light of Hope come dwell in us.

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### **\* CALL TO WORSHIP**

In God’s house, we can be joyful.

**We can be grateful.**

**We can be hopeful.**

In God’s house, we can be weary.

**We can be anxious.**

**We can be grieving.**

In God’s house, we can be honest—

**inspired or tired,**

**delighted or doubtful,**

**connected or curious,**

**and everything in between.**

\* **HYMN** “Be Still for the Presence of the Lord”

– Composer: David J Evans

Be still for the presence of the Lord

The Holy one is here

Come bow before him now

In reverence and fear

In Him no sin is found

We stand on Holy ground

Be still for the presence of the Lord

The Holy one is here.

Be still for the glory of the Lord

Is shining all around

He burns with Holy fire

With splendor He is crowned

How awesome is the sight

Our radiant King of light

Be still for the glory of the Lord

Is shining all around.

Be still for the power of the Lord

Is moving in this place

He comes to cleanse and heal

To minister His grace  
No work too hard for Him  
In faith receive from Him  
Be still for the power of the Lord  
Is moving in this place. --||--

## **CALL TO CONFESSION**

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Gracious God, we are weary.

For weary bodies that ache and cry out, we pray:

**Forgive us for pushing ourselves too hard.**

**Reminds us that we deserve Sabbath rest.**

For weary minds that feel overwhelmed and saturated with news, we pray:

**Forgive us for creating so many distractions.**

**Remind us that in the quiet, we can hear you.**

For weary hearts that long to feel the joy of this season, we pray:

**Forgive us for being impatient with ourselves.**

**Remind us that healing takes time, and that joy and grief can coexist.**

For the weary edges of our faith that struggle to hold onto hope,

**Forgive us. Remind us of Zechariah and Elizabeth.**

**Remind us that your good news knows no bounds.**

**Amen.**

**ALL RESPOND “Kyrie Eleison”**

– Composer: Traditional Orthodox

Kyrie Eleison

Kyrie Eleison

Kyrie Eleison --||--

**ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

Family of faith,

no matter how many times we wear ourselves thin,

no matter how many times we lose ourselves to

distractions,

no matter how many times we ask ourselves, “How can

this be?”

God’s love keeps showing up for us.

**So say this with me:**

**We are loved. We are claimed. We are forgiven.**

**Thanks be to God. Amen**

## **THE WORD OF GOD**

Lord, open our lips.

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

**HYMN “He Came Down”**

– Music and Words: Cameroon Traditional

He came down that we may have love;

He came down that we may have love;

He came down that we may have love;

Hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have joy ;

He came down that we may have joy;

He came down that we may have joy;

Hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have hope;

He came down that we may have hope;

He came down that we may have hope;

Hallelujah forevermore. --||--

**SCRIPTURE READING**

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

**A light to our path.**

Psalm 80: 1 – 7, 17 – 19 (O.T.)

1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth

**2 before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us!**

3 Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

**4 O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?**

5 You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure.

**6 You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves.**

7 Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

17 But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself.

**18 Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name.**

19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

## Luke 1: 1 – 23 (N.T.)

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

5In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. 7But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, 9he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. 10 Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying



outside. 11 Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

12 When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. 13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. 14 You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

16 He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

18 Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.” 19 The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

20 But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.”

21 Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. 22 When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary.

He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak.

23 When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

Lord, may Your Word live in us.

**And bear much fruit for Your glory.**

## **FAMILY TALK**

## **SERMON**

**\* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** — Revd. S Speed

**We believe in a God who hears our prayers,  
who knows the shape and form of our weariness.**

**We believe in a God who wants joy and delight for us,  
not just survival and existence.**

**We believe in a God who looks ahead,  
who is not done dreaming for the world —  
a God who sends hope in the form of people and change,  
movements and Spirit.**

**And so we return to this space.**

**We bring our joy and our weariness  
like two sides of the same coin,  
and we trust that God is already at work.  
Yes, we believe in a God who hears our prayers.  
Thanks be to God for a love like that.  
Amen.**

## **THE OFFERTORY**

### **CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**ALL RESPOND** “Wait for the Lord”

– Composed: Taizé Community

Wait For The Lord,  
Whose Day Is Near.  
Wait For The Lord,  
Keep Watch, Take Heart! --||--

### **OFFERTORY**

## **THE HOLY COMMUNION**

### **THE PEACE**

**HYMN** “You Are Holy”

– Composer: P.G. Harling

You are holy, you are whole.

You are always ever more than we ever understand.

You are always at hand.

Blessed are you coming near;

blessed are you coming here

to your church in wine and bread,

raised from soil, raised from dead.

You are holy, you are wholeness, you are present,

let the cosmos praise you Lord!

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah,

our Lord!

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## **INVITATION**

## **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

The Lord is with us

**We rejoice in God's Presence.**

We lift up our hearts.

**We lift our hearts to the Lord.**

We give thanks to God,

**who creates and sustains all things.**

Loving God

In the fullness of time you gave us Jesus Christ,

Who entered into the world as your servant,

**To heal,**

**To liberate,**

**To proclaim the Good News of your kin-dom.**

As a sign of God's presence among us, our Lord

Jesus prepared a meal of bread and wine, a

celebration,

**of life over death**

**of love over fear**

**of union over separation.**

Christ lives in us,

**and we in Christ,**

In Christ we are set free :

**a new creation.**

Confirmed for us in bread and wine,

**a meal of jubilation.**

With all your Church throughout the world

we offer you our praise and lift our voice

to join the everlasting song of heaven:

## **SANCTUS**

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of pow'r and might  
Heaven and Earth are full of Your Glory;**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

## **PRAYER FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT**

## **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.**

## **DISTRIBUTION**

## **POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

**God of grace, thank you for this bread and wine,  
and for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ.**

**God of hope, fill us with your Spirit today.**

**that we might have the wisdom to understand the  
mystery of this Table,**

**and the depth and height and breadth and length of  
your love for us.**

**Through this meal, strengthen us to be followers of  
Jesus,**

**a community of peace in a broken world.**

**\* HYMN “O Come, O Come”**

- Music: Anon, Words: M Tirabassi v.1&2;v3 Trad

O Come, O come Emmanuel

make true the stories prophets tell –

so all those chained by fear find release,

and, war forgotten, bring a world of peace.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel

is come to birth where all God’s children dwell.

O Come, Love's-season, to our lonely days,  
and guide us in our words and ways  
to be the ones whose Advent begins  
with healing earth and all that live within.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel  
is come to birth where all God's children dwell.

O come, Desire of Nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind;  
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;  
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel  
is come to birth where all God's children dwell.

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**\* COMMISSION and BLESSING**



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

- Today is the start of the Advent season which marks the beginning of the liturgical year in church. While many families and shops prepare for the Christmas season of presents, parties and feasts, let us prepare our hearts in anticipation for both the First Coming of Christ at Christmas and the expectation of His Second Coming, and reflect on the dual nature of Christ's role as Savior and Judge. As we embark on this season of reflection and hope, let our hearts be open to the messages of Advent, inviting peace, love, and joy into our lives.
- Yesterday was the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Let us reflect on the persisting challenges of modern slavery, encompassing trafficking in persons, child labor, forced marriage, and exploitation. Despite global efforts, these heinous practices endure, taking various forms, from traditional slavery rooted in discriminatory customs to contemporary manifestations such as forced labor and child exploitation. We fervently pray for the eradication of all forms of slavery. May governments, organizations, and individuals unite in their commitment to protect the vulnerable, combat human trafficking, and ensure the rights and dignity of every person. May justice prevail, and may our collective efforts contribute to a world where no one is subjected to the chains of exploitation.
- In northern India, all 41 construction workers trapped in a collapsed mountain tunnel for 17 days have been successfully rescued. After multiple rescue attempts faced obstacles, the workers were finally pulled out through a narrow steel pipe in a delicate operation. The low-wage workers from impoverished states had been stuck in the 4.5-km tunnel in Uttarakhand since its collapse on 12 November. The tunnel is part of a significant infrastructure project aiming to connect Hindu pilgrimage sites through an 890-km network of roads. Some experts express concerns about such projects' environmental impact and safety in the fragile Himalayan region. As we celebrate their safe rescue, let us offer a prayer for the well-being of these workers and express gratitude for the successful efforts of the rescue teams. We also pray that all future infrastructure projects undergo proper environmental impact study to protect both the workers and the locals affected by such projects.
- In Myanmar, ethnic minority armed groups, including the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, Ta'ang National Liberation

Army, and Arakan Army, have intensified coordinated attacks against the ruling junta. The conflict has resulted in the rebels claiming control of a key trading post, displacing tens of thousands of people in the border region. The rebellion poses a significant challenge to Myanmar's military since the 2021 coup. The United Nations reports 335,000 people displaced since the rebel offensive, adding to the 2 million already affected by the 2021 coup. Let us offer a heartfelt prayer for the people of Myanmar, especially for their safety and well-being and for the restoration of democratic values in their nation.

- China is grappling with a surge in respiratory illnesses, particularly among children in northern regions, prompting concerns and calls for information transparency. Clusters of undiagnosed pneumonia have been reported, with hospitals overwhelmed by sick children exhibiting high temperatures and pulmonary nodules. As we reflect on the well-being of these affected children, let us pray for their health and effective treatment. We also pray that the Chinese government, having learned from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, share crucial information promptly with the global community to foster collective understanding and response in the face of emerging health concerns.
- A recent study by the New Youth Forum, analysing the general household survey of the Census and Statistics Department from 2017 to 2022, revealed that the median monthly salary for graduates during this period was HK\$17,424, reminiscent of the level in 1997. Moreover, concerns arise as the research consultant notes the "depreciation" of university degrees in Hong Kong, with over half the population born between 1998 and 2002 holding such degrees. The study also highlights a rise in fresh graduates taking up low-skilled jobs, prompting a call for government support in continuing education and fostering emerging industries. As we reflect on the challenges the youth in Hong Kong face, we pray for their well-being, resilience, and the support they need to navigate the evolving economic landscape.

### **For the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**

We lift up in prayer the churches and people of all faiths in Myanmar and Thailand

We are **thankful** for:

- the beauty of these countries and their people and their many distinctive Buddhist temples
- those who long have struggled that these countries might become more democratic
- the faithful witness of churches, which have advocated with others for greater justice
- efforts to protect the environment and resources in these countries.

We **pray** for:

- minority ethnic and religious groups who continue to experience discrimination, persecution or even genocide (such as the Rohingyas), and for greater interfaith understanding and tolerance for ethnic and religious diversity
- those victimized by sex tourism and exploitation and those who perpetuate such acts
- political stability and progress toward democratic rule
- economic justice for all people and environmental protection as these countries undergo development.

### **For the Congregation**

- We continue to pray for the renovation of the church and the safety of the workers.
- 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 and Pastor Maggie. 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.

### **Announcements**

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

### **Christmas Services**

24/12 Sunday Worship at 10:30am; Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 pm  
25/12 Christmas Day Service with Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by pot-luck lunch.

### **Guitar lessons for beginners – organized by the Peacemaking Ministry**

The lessons will cover basic chord sharps, simple songs, and self-study handouts. Please contact Katie for inquiries and registration at 9623-1976. Tutor: Mr Cephas Shek, a professional guitarist from Worship Nations Every Friday, 8/12/2023 to 26/1/2024; 1:30 – 2:30 pm @ KUCspace Fee: HK\$900 for eight sessions.

	<b>TODAY 3 December</b>	<b>NEXT WEEK 10 December</b>
Liturgist:	Maggie Mathieson	Phyllis Wong
Preacher:	Phyllis Wong	Judy Chan
Pianist:	Lucy Lim	Jessica Tso
Lector:	Jennifer Chan	Caden Lam
Intercessory Prayers:	Robert Lam	Paul Cooper
Family Talk:	Mayson Fung	No Family Talk
Greeter:	Kevin Ng Tory Caplan	Lucy Lim Jacob
Offering Rota:	Rose Muiriri Ronald Chui	Thapa Samjhana Susan Babasa
Counting Rota	Edwina Antonio Hope Antone	Jennifer Chan Robert Lam
Sunday School Leaders:	Mayson Fung, Katie Ho Mary Adesina	Jailyn Tomitis Mary Adesina
I.T. Team:	Venus Cheng Bervinder Kaur	Venus Cheng Bervinder Kaur
Freewill offering last week: HK\$2,816- Promissory offering last week: HK\$1,350- Welfare Fund: HK\$5,000-		