

First Sunday after Christmas

31 December 2023

Morning Worship at 10:30 a.m.

(*: Congregation stands)



APPROACH

PREPARATION SONG “Lead Me Lord”

– Composer: S M Wesley

Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness,
make thy way plain before my face.

For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord only,
that makest me dwell in safety.

--||--

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

**L: Praise God in the heavens! Praise God among us!
Praise the Holy One!**

**All: Praise God who vindicates us! Praise God
who sustains us!**

**Praise God from the depths! Praise God in all
circumstances!**

**Praise Creator who made us! Praise God who
shapes us!**

Let all praise the name of the Holy One!

The glory of God reigns in heaven and on earth!

Praise the Holy One!

* **HYMN** “Hark The Herald Angels Sing”

– Music: F Mendelssohn, Words: C Wesley

Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ, by highest Heav’n adored;
Christ the everlasting Lord;
Late in time, behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th’incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.

Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail the heav’nly Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,

Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”
--||--

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of rhythms, we confess:
our faith would not be what it is without rituals.
Unlike you, we depend on bread and water.
We have to return to this space again and again
to hear old, familiar stories.
For if we stopped, we know it would not take long
before we lost our way.
Forgive us for our fragility, and thank you for
giving us ordinary rituals and rhythms to hold
onto.
With grateful and humble 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.**

HYMN “Who Would Think That What Was Needed”

– Music: R. Pritchard, Words: J Bell

Who would think that what was needed
To transform and save the earth
Might not be a plan or army,
Proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision,
That a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day.

Shepherds watch and wise men wonder,
Monarchs scorn and angels sing;
Such a place as none would reckon
Hosts a holy helpless thing;
Stable beasts and by-passed strangers
Watch a baby laid in hay:
God surprises earth with heaven
Coming here on Christmas Day.

Centuries of skill and science
Span the past from which we move,
Yet experience questions whether,
With such progress, we improve.
While the human lot we ponder,

Lest our hopes and humour fray,
God surprises earth with heaven
Coming here on Christmas Day.

--||--

SCRIPTURE READING

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

A light to our path.

Luke 2: 22 – 40 (N.T.)

22When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23(as it is written in the law of the Lord,

“Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), 24and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

25Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him.

26It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.

27Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law,

28Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

29“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; 30for my eyes have

seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

33 And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed 35 so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

36 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 then as a widow to the age of eighty-four.

She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

39 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Lord, may Your Word live in us.

And bear much fruit for Your glory.

HYMN “See Him Lying on a Bed of Straw”

– Composer: M Perry

See him lying on a bed of straw:
a draughty stable with an open door;
Mary cradling the babe she bore
the prince of glory is his name.

O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
the prince of glory when he came.

Angels, sing again the song you sang,
sing the glory of God's gracious plan;
Sing that Bethl'em's little baby can
be the saviour of us all.

O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
the prince of glory when he came.

Mine are riches, from your poverty,
from your innocence, eternity;
mine, forgiveness by your death for me,
child of sorrow for my joy.

O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
the prince of glory when he came. --||--

FAMILY TALK

SERMON “The Ways to Perfect Faith”

*** 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

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”

– Composer: B McGhee

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
His name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us,
His name is called Emmanuel.

--||--

OFFERTORY

THE PEACE

* **HYMN** “Meekness and Majesty”

– Composer: G Kendrick

Meekness and majesty
Manhood and deity
In perfect harmony
The Man who is God

Lord of eternity
Dwells in humanity
Kneels in humility
And washes our feet

Oh what a mystery
Meekness and majesty
Bow down and worship
For this is your God
This is your God

Father's pure radiance
Perfect in innocence
Yet loves obedience
To death on a cross

Suffering to give us life
Conquering through sacrifice
And as they crucified,
pray's "Father forgive"

Oh what a mystery
Meekness and majesty
Bow down and worship

For this is your God
This is your God

Wisdom unsearchable
God the invisible
Love indestructible
In frailty appears

Lord of infinity
Stopping so tenderly
Lifts our humanity
to the heights of His throne

Oh what a mystery
Meekness and majesty
Bow down and worship
For this is your God
This is your God
This is your God
--||--

*** COMMISSION and BLESSING**

**May we go,
ready to see God at work in the world,
open to hope for God's ways in the world,
and holding God's love in our lives.**

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

God does nothing except in response to believing prayer.

– John Wesley

Please remember as you pray. . .

- As we gather for the last service of this year on 31 December, let us take a moment to reflect on the journey we've shared as a church community in the past year. Through joys and challenges, we have stood together, strengthened by our faith and fellowship. As we bid farewell to 2023, let's also look ahead to the promises and possibilities that the new year holds. In 2024, our beloved church will celebrate its centenary, a milestone marking a century of spiritual growth, community service, and shared devotion. Let us embark on this special year with renewed purpose, fostering unity, kindness, and love within our church family. May our collective efforts in the coming year be a testament to the enduring spirit of our community, and may we continue to be a beacon of hope and inspiration for generations to come.
- Seven high school girls have started a cultural renaissance in the heart of the northwestern African country of Mali. Their impactful play 'ET ON SE RACONTE!' is playing in the 'Les Praticables' theatre festival and addresses the harsh realities of forced marriages and the pervasive influence of jihadist threats in their region. These young playwrights use art to raise awareness and challenge

societal norms. Amidst personal and communal challenges, their narratives shed light on the complex interplay of violence and familial ties. The girls' storytelling emerges as a powerful expression of resilience and creativity, emphasizing the urgency of confronting societal issues. As we reflect on their inspiring journey, let us offer collective prayers for peace, understanding, and strength for communities worldwide facing similar challenges.

- The Sri Lankan President has granted amnesty to over 1,000 convicts as a Christmas gesture, releasing them from overcrowded jails across the country. Among those freed were individuals imprisoned for the inability to pay fines. The amnesty comes on the heels of a military-backed anti-narcotics drive that led to the arrest of nearly 15,000 people. With the nation's prisons chronically overcrowded, holding almost 30,000 inmates in facilities designed for 11,000, the presidential amnesty aims to alleviate the strain on the penal system. The country's economic challenges, exacerbated by longstanding structural weaknesses and various shocks, have plunged it into a crisis. Issues such as poor governance, a restrictive trade regime, a weak investment climate, and fiscal indiscipline have resulted in high deficits and substantial financing needs. In the spirit of unity and well-being, let us fervently pray for Sri Lanka's economy, seeking stability, prosperity, and equitable growth for all its citizens amidst these challenging times.

- Chinese police have intensified efforts this year to combat fraudulent schemes involving fabricated government documents to lure investments into fake national projects. According to state media, over 260 cases and 180 criminal groups related to these scams, amounting to HK\$1.6 billion in investor funds, have been dismantled. These frauds, often conducted online and with operations based overseas, exploit individuals by convincing them to pay initial capital or membership fees, with fake poverty alleviation projects being a common guise. As China seeks increased domestic and foreign investment to stimulate its slowing economy, online fraud poses a significant challenge, with global asset managers also grappling with scams using their brands and logos illegally. Let us pray for the Government of China in its efforts to tackle crime and corruption, particularly in the online sphere, fostering a secure environment for genuine investment and economic growth that benefits the people.
- Hong Kong's captivating natural landscape, adorned with lush mountains and picturesque coastlines, faces a threat from the environmentally damaging practice of concretizing hiking trails. Concerns raised by environmental groups and NGOs, such as the Concern Group on Concretisation and Green Earth, highlight the adverse impact of widespread concrete usage on these trails and advocate for sustainable trail management, engaging citizens and the government in awareness and conservation campaigns. Despite the challenges posed by rapid

construction and urban projects, the Concern Group collaborates with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to promote alternative materials like wood and gravel, fostering a more eco-friendly approach to trail construction. Recognizing the urgency of conservation, the Concern Group also conducts education programs and volunteer training initiatives, emphasizing the importance of "Leave No Trace" principles. As Hong Kong's natural beauty faces the threat of concrete intrusion, let us pray for the success of these efforts, seeking harmony between urban development and the preservation of the city's unique natural heritage.

For the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

We lift up in prayer the churches and people of all faiths in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine.

We are **thankful** for:

- lands and monuments sacred in the origins of Judaism, Christianity and Islam
- those who unceasingly work for peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land
- the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel
- those who continue to welcome the multitudes of refugees in their lands.

We pray for:

- ending the violence racking this region that the people might live together in peace, security and respect for each other
- those who have grown weary and disillusioned in searching for solutions
- an end to religious differences being exploited to perpetuate conflict and further displacement of people
- political leaders who will courageously bring about justice and reconciliation for the sake of all.

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 thank God that Paul Wong has come through his first hip replacement surgery well and is now in recovery and will prepare for the second hip to be done. May the Lord strengthen Paul as he faces recovery and a second major surgery.

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 Brother Aimé, for sharing the word of God with us this morning.

New Year Appeal From the Peacemaking Team -

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.

2023 Christmas Donation

It is our custom here in KUC to combine the offerings from both the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship services (except the promissory offerings) and present them to a local organisation or appeal. This year, the donation will be given to the 'Ethnic Minority Cleaning Workers Union,' a local Grassroots organisation.

Dates For Your Diaries:

Want to contribute to the KUC Centenary Book?

Join the creative writing workshop being organised by KUC on **January 14 (Sunday)**, 1 PM, Lower Fellowship Hall. All written creations resulting from the workshop will be received by the Centenary

Committee. Our KUC friend, Yvonne Yu, will be our resource person and facilitator. See you all there!

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.



	TODAY 31 December
Liturgist:	Maggie Mathieson
Preacher:	Aimé Girimana
Pianist:	Eva Kwan
Lector:	Paul Cooper
Intercessory Prayers:	Journaliz Badon
Family Talk:	Maggie Mathieson
Greeter:	Lucy Lim , Edith San Juan
Offering:	Stephanie Mumbi, Ching So
Offering Counting Team:	Robert Lam, Ramon Bultron
Sunday School Leaders:	Mary Adesina, Jailyn Tomitis
I.T. Team:	Venus Cheng, Bervinder Kaur
<p>Free will offering last week: HK\$ 16,619.30 Promissory offering last week: HK\$200 Special Christmas Offering: HK\$8377-</p>	

