



FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN INGATHERING SERVICE 2017

Theme: "Stand up for Human Dignity"

Texts: Genesis 1:27; Luke 8:43-48

Preparation: For creative reading of the text, a local CWA group may be requested to dramatize Luke 8:43-48.

Voices from different regions may be assigned early before the date of the Ingathering Service and each voice reader may wear a costume from that region.

Entrance Music

Silent Prayers

Opening Sentences

Words of Welcome and Greetings

***Call to Worship** **Psalm 8:1, 4-5, 9** *Psalms Anew*

Leader: O God, our God,
How glorious is your name over all the earth!
Your glory is praised in the heavens.

People: Who are we that you should be mindful of us, that you should care for us?
You have made us little less than the gods and crowned us with glory and honor.

Leader: God, our God, how glorious is your name over all the earth!

***Hymn of Adoration** *Let's Worship and Praise God* *Hymnal of a Faith Journey, 10*
[Words and music: Lucio D. San Pedro; English translation: Reuel Norman O. Marigza]

Let's worship and praise God with joyful songs for the blessings that God has bestowed
Let's praise God and worship the Lord with songs for the blessings that God has bestowed.

Chorus: God's grace unfathomed and free, flowing on through the night, through the day

Let's praise God with singing, let's praise God in service;
Together let's praise the Lord.

Let's worship and praise God with joyful songs for Christ Jesus, God's gift to the world
Let's praise God and worship the Lord with songs for Christ Jesus, the Living Word. *[Chorus]*

Let's worship and praise God with joyful songs, praise and off'rings to Yahweh belong.
Let's praise God and labor in service true, for the blessings so fresh, so new. *[Chorus]*

Prayer of Humility and Repentance

Leader: "Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love; According to your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions." (Psalm 51: 1 NRSV)

Together: We would ask for Your guidance and wisdom
As we strive towards justice and peace,
For repentance, forgiveness and freedom,
That oppression and bondage might cease.

Leader: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness." (Psalm 115: 1)

Together: So instill in our hearts greater love, Lord,
And strengthen our faith, as we join.
To earnestly pray for Your blessing
On the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

Silence

Retelling the story of FLC (*See below. This may be read or dramatized.*)

Special Song

Scripture Reading **Genesis 1:27**
Dramatize Luke 8:43-48

Message

Silence

Prayers for Human Dignity

Leader: Today, we hear the voices of our sisters from different regions of the world. We join them in prayers to our merciful God and set aside our least coins to help them in their work for peace, justice and reconciliation.

Voice from South Sudan, in Africa: My name is Agnes Wasuk from South Sudan. South Sudan is the world's newest nation. It has experienced decades of civil war. We need our women to effectively engage in peace building, psychological support and national reconciliation. We are building the capacity of women for effective leadership in the community and decision making, to engage meaningfully in the peace negotiation processes leading to National unity and peaceful coexistence of communities. Please pray with us for peace and reconciliation in South Sudan.

Congregation: Have mercy, O God, have mercy.

Voice from Japan, in Asia: Since 2012, we KCCJ-Research Action Institute of Korean in Japan aim at helping immigrant women to overcome challenges they face in their homes and communities. These include practical Japanese language classes for non-Japanese mothers. We teach heritage language and culture classes for their bi-racial children. We have advocacy on behalf of non-Japanese residents who have difficulty accessing government services in the wake of the 2011 triple disaster. We have advocacy on behalf of women encountering violence or other abuse at home. We have cultural programs to facilitate relationships and self-respect among isolated immigrant women. We have also been providing convalescence programs to non-Japanese mothers and their children, and occasionally also to spouses, to relieve the constant stress that weighs heavily upon non-Japanese women living in Fukushima with limited financial means. Please pray with us for the dignity of immigrant women in Japan.

Congregation: Have mercy, O God, have mercy.

Voice from the Philippines, in Asia: I am Luzviminda Davis. Since the super typhoon Yolanda/Hainan struck Tacloban in 2013, many women are still struggling psychologically and economically. The UCCP Tacloban Church Women's Association identified 60 women in need and decided to conduct skills training for livelihood projects which they can choose and implement with provision of small capital. Please pray with us for the dignity of survivors of disasters.

Congregation: Have mercy, O God, have mercy.

Voice from Armenia, in Europe: I am Marianna Apresyan, from Armenia. In the traditional Armenian family, a boy was considered an heir of a generation and must maintain the honor of the family. He must work and take care of parents and inherit the father's property, while a girl's role was subordinated and she is considered a temporary member of the family, as she would leave her father's family after she got married. Thus, she would work and make her husband's family prosper. Therefore, they did not "put their hope" on girls. Moreover, because of their historical and geographical position, Armenia has conducted war against foreign invaders for many centuries. Thus, they need soldiers to save Armenia's borders and Christian belief. Consequently, a boy's birth is considered as a birth of one more soldier and defender of Armenia. Based on these facts, the Christian Women's Forum wants to raise public awareness on the issue of sex-selective abortion in Armenia, stressing and explaining in detail its damaging consequences in the spiritual, demographic, social, legal, medical and psychological points of view. Please pray with us for the dignity of girl babies.

Congregation: Have mercy, O God, have mercy.

Voice from Syria, in the Middle East: I am Esther of Lebanon, representative of the Middle East Churches to ICFLC. During the five years of internal war in Syria, children have experienced tough times whether they come from areas of direct fighting and violence that led them to be displaced to safe areas, or whether they come from relatively safe areas but they experience the consequences of war in a secondary level such as losing jobs, becoming poor, leaving schools, facing hunger and fear, and having to watch crimes and explosions on TV and the internet. The National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Latakia aims to support the displaced and war-affected children in Latakia in their mental, physical, and spiritual development by

providing programs and activities that will help them grow in love, fellowship and peace. Please pray with us for peace in Syria and for the rights and dignity of children.

Congregation: Have mercy, O God, have mercy.

Voice from the United States of America: I am Amy Mesirov of Hyannis Supporting Our Youth (HySOY). We work to build a positive community with the youth of Hyannis. We focus on the most socio-economically disadvantaged youth, the vast majority of whom live in single parent/grandparent households headed by women. Through our three programs: Mentoring, Early Literacy, and Enrichment Opportunities, we assist these mothers and grandmothers in raising self-confident children who feel cared for, who value education, and are able to pursue their passions. Please pray with us for the dignity of our youth.

Congregation: Have mercy, O God, have mercy.

Voice from Vanuatu, in the Pacific: I am Ruth Dovo, Gender Coordinator of the Vanuatu Council of Churches. After the destruction of Tropical Cyclone Pam, our Government set up a Gender and Protection Cluster led by the Department of Women's Affairs to coordinate all Gender and Protection programs of Vanuatu. We recognize that it is very important that women are empowered with knowledge and resources in order to effectively participate in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) planning in the communities. Gender is an issue in our communities and it is very important that we promote gender and human rights awareness to the people so that resources and opportunities are shared equally among men and women and other vulnerable groups. Women have always been neglected in DRR planning in the communities. Building women's capacity increases their participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Please pray with us for women's empowerment.

Congregation: Have mercy, O God, have mercy.

Voice from Chile, in Latin America: Fundacion Mesias, has served and accompanied women and children living with HIV, for almost 20 years. This is a service to about 30 families affected by the pandemic, with work focused mainly on care. However, the growing demand for care in more complex areas, among women and their families, has forced us to take a series of activities and initiatives which often differ from the original approach. The current reality makes clear and necessary a work of psycho-spiritual accompaniment of women who, exhausted physically and emotionally, need to renew their strengths in order to continue facing personal and family situations. Please pray with us for the dignity of women and children living with HIV.

Congregation: Have mercy, O God, have mercy.

Offering of the Least Coins

Leader: As a symbol of our sincerity, our love for church women's work all over the world, and for the least of our women and children in the name of God who first loved us, let us offer our least coins.

(Least coin contributions are put in the basket at the center)

***Prayer of the Fellowship of the Least Coin (Unison)**

O loving Creator, we present ourselves in your divine presence to thank you for all the bountiful gifts of

life. We are especially grateful for the Fellowship of the Least Coin which binds us together in love and forgiveness around the globe. Free us from all doubts and prejudices, we pray. Inspire us to live in solidarity with humankind that we may know the joy of giving and receiving. Dear God, accept the least coin "token of love." Make us mindful of the miracles of these coins. Let us honor your creation with love, as shown through the life and resurrection of your son, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

***Closing Song**

To the Work

Hymnal of a Faith Journey, 324

[Words: Fanny J. Crosby; Music: W. H. Doane]

To the work! To the work! We are servants of God,
Let us follow the path that our Master has trod;
With the balm of his counsel our strength to renew,
Let us do with our might what our hands find to do.

Refrain:

Toiling on, toiling on, toiling on, toiling on,
Let us hope, let us watch, and labor till the Master comes.

To the work! To the work! Let the hungry be fed;
To the fountain of life, let the weary be led;
In the cross and its banner our glory shall be,
While we herald our tidings, "Salvation is free!"
[repeat refrain]

To the work! To the work! There is labor for all,
For the kingdom of darkness and error shall fall;
And the name of Jehovah exalted shall be,
In the loud-swelling chorus, "Salvation is free!"
[repeat refrain]

To the work! To the work! In the strength of the Lord,
And a robe and a crown shall our labor reward;
When the home of the faithful our dwelling shall be,
And we shout with the ransomed, "Salvation is free!"
[repeat refrain]

***Closing Prayer and Benediction**

Postlude

FLC Introduction to Circle of Prayer, Volume 24

Prepared by Rev. Dr. Lydia Mwaniki, PhD

Director, Theology, Family Life and Gender Justice, All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC).

Theme: Stand up for Human Dignity

Suggested texts: Genesis 1:27, Exodus 1:15-22, Proverbs 31:8-9; Luke 4: 18-19, Psalm 8:4-6; Micah 6:8, Luke 8:43-48

The term 'dignity' comes from the Latin noun *decus*, meaning ornament, distinction, honour, glory. 'Human Dignity', refers to the status of human beings entitling them to respect. It is an individual or group's sense of self-respect and self-worth. Human Dignity is the highest value of a human being. Each and every person has value, and is worthy of great respect. In this case, it is the most important Human Right from which all Human Rights derive. From a biblical perspective, humanity's unique dignity flows from our creation in God's image (Genesis 1:27). It therefore follows that human beings, have equal standing, equal status, equal worth and equal dignity.

The call to "Stand-Up for Human Dignity" in Volume 24 of the Circle of Prayer, is therefore a call to respect the dignity of the image of God in every human being; it is a call to promote unity in diversity of race, gender, class, appearance, age, mental capacity, ability or disability, just to mention a few. How we manage our diversity in order to find unity in our relationships as human beings is very important.

Paul uses the human body as a metaphor to illustrate this unity in diversity in 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31. The human body is a unity in itself, but with different parts. This diversity does not lead to enmity among the different parts—they do not fight each other. Instead, each part recognizes the need for the other. Hence, diversity itself creates unity, in that all of them work together for the good of the whole body.

Unfortunately, this has not always been the case in the world today. Human beings have used their diversity to divide, rather than to unite. There is lack of respect for human dignity and value for human life. We for example live in a world where peace is unknown by many. In countries like Iraq, Syria, South Sudan, Burundi, DRC Congo, and among other parts of the world, peace is very fragile. Women are on the receiving end as they are sexually harassed since rape is used as a weapon of war. Cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) not only on women but also on men and children; human trafficking; power wrangles among political and religious leaders, and family crisis are among some of the problems that serve as evidence of how far human beings are estranged from respect for human dignity.

The situation in the world today calls women in the Circle of Prayer to "Stand-Up" for human dignity. This does not necessarily mean physical standing. It rather means to do everything possible, with God's help, to promote human dignity. This could be through prayer, teaching, engaging leaders on issues that violate human dignity, showing love for all, preaching and speaking out against acts of violence against women, men, youth, children, and all vulnerable people. We therefore invite women to identify areas where human dignity has been violated within their own contexts, and use the guiding texts to address the issues. The little you do individually or as a group to "Stand-Up" for human dignity, will go round and round like the least coin and bear much fruit, for God's glory. Amen.

**Do what you can,
with what you have,
where you are.**