

# LESSONS ON THE UCCP STATEMENT OF FAITH

## A Sunday School Guide for Adults

### WE BELIEVE

That the Church is the one Body of Christ, the whole community of persons reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and entrusted with God's ministry.

#### Reign of Christ

Fourteenth Sunday in  
Kingdomtide

November 25, 2018

### Lesson 27: THE CHURCH

**General Concept:** The Church is the people of God, anticipating the fulfillment of God's Reign.

**Biblical References:** 2 Samuel 23:5; Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35

*List of Lectionary Readings for the Week:* 2 Samuel 23:1-7; Psalm 93; Revelation 1:4b-8; John 18:33-37

### Age-Level Concepts

- The church is a gathered people of God responding to God's goodness.
- We are called to build a harmonious relationship with each other and the whole of creation.
- The church is a manifestation of God's reign.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the session the learners are expected to:

- Describe the church as people of God
- Mention ways to foster harmonious relationship with each other

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket, journal, pens

### Suggested Lesson Outline

#### *Expressing Praise and Thanks to God*

Visit the tree the class planted and make sure it is doing well. Give it the care it needs.

Opening Hymn "Come, We Who Love God's Name" (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. 265)

Come, we who love God's name, and let our joys be known;  
Together God's great love proclaim, and thus surround the throne.

Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God,  
But we our thanks and praise will bring for love so deep and broad.

God's grace on earth is found, the seeds of glory sown—  
Celestial fruits on earthly ground from faith and hope have grown.

The hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred sweets

Before we reach the heavenly fields or walk the golden streets.

Then let our songs abound, and every tear be dry;  
We're traveling through Emmanuel's ground to greater worlds on high.

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Prayer (Also pray for the birthday celebrant[s], if there are any.)

### **Learning Time**

#### *Discovering the Biblical Truth*

- Read the biblical texts.
- Encourage the participants to write on their journals or notebooks words or concepts from the texts that are important to them.
- Discuss the texts using the following guide questions.
  - What do you understand about church when you read 2 Samuel 23:5?
  - What are the key words that you get from this text?
  - Emphasize that being a church is about having a covenant with God, of being God's people, especially a people who God loves and who love God.
  - Describe the early church (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35) in terms of their:
    - Service to each other and the community
    - Worship
    - Witness to the community
    - Harmony—how was it maintained?
  - What could have motivated them to be such a kind of fellowship?
  - What came out as a result of their kind of practice?
- Further discuss the passages using the Biblical Background for these texts as guide.

#### *Lessons Learned*

- Was the believers' way of serving and witnessing to the community and the way they worshipped and lived together in harmony help to keep them together and attracted people to join their group each day?
- Do you think the churches today can practice the same? If not, what could the church do so that it could truly manifest God's reign?

#### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

- Discuss some practical and effective ways of serving and witnessing to the community.
- Each member of the church has his/her own distinct weaknesses and shortcomings. How can the church maintain its harmonious relationship in the midst of all the differences and weaknesses of the members?

### **Closing Worship**

Let the group read together or maybe memorize the key verse from Acts 2:

<sup>43</sup>And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>And all who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook



of food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Offertory and Closing Hymn "We are God's Church" by David S. Winkler

Through all these years God's hand has guided us,  
Provided us with blessings innumerable and kind;  
Every test, like a fire, refines our desire  
To serve God with all our strength and mind.

Lord, as we face the days before us,  
Restore us, and fit us a blessing anew;  
We will stand firm, believing, God's power receiving,  
And praise God for all that God will do.

We are God's church, we are God's people;  
We have been planted here by God's design  
To bear God fruit, to bring God glory;  
God has chosen us, we are God's church.

Closing Prayer

Assignment: Read: I Corinthians 12:12-27

### First Sunday of Advent

December 2, 2018

#### LESSON 28: THE CHURCH IS THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST

**General Concept:** The Church belongs to God, redeemed by God through Christ, welcoming, affirming and accepting everyone.

**Biblical References:** Jeremiah 33:14-16; I Corinthians 12:12-27

*List of Lectionary Readings for the Week:* Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

#### Age-Level Concepts

- The church is the body of Christ.
- The church is composed of people from all walks of life.
- The church manifests God's all-embracing nature in celebrating each person's uniqueness.

#### Learning Objectives

By the end of the session the learners are expected to:

- Compare the church to the human body and how each part is expected to function
- Describe church membership in terms of capacity to contribute to the ministry of the church
- Identify attitudes/behaviors that contribute to the building up or breakdown of the body of Christ



**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket, journal, pens

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### ***Expressing Praise and Thanks to God***

Visit the tree the class planted and make sure it is doing well. Give it the care it needs.

Opening Hymn "Come to the Savior" (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. 382)

Come to the Savior, come near to God, this is the Word for each one to hear;  
Lovingly calling, tender and clear, "Come near to God today."

Refrain:

What a gladsome gathering to be, when from sin we're purified and free;  
And there we gather in God's abode, with God eternally.

God's Word for us we keep and obey, the path of Jesus we gladly tread,  
We choose to live in Christ to be free; "Come near to God today."

Here, God is ever-present with us; enabling us, in Christ, to obey;  
Lovingly calling, tender and clear, "Come near to God today!"

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Prayer (Also pray for the birthday celebrant[s], if there are any.)

Recite a portion of the UCCP Statement of Faith:

"We believe that the Church is the one Body of Christ..."

### ***Learning Time***

#### ***Discovering the Biblical Truth***

- Read the biblical texts.
- Discuss:
  - In your own words, what are the texts saying?
  - What do you understand about the text and the concept of church?
  - What do you remember about our last lesson's discussion on church?
    - What is church? (the people of God, especially a people whom God loves and who love God)
    - What is it that God made with the people of God? (a covenant)
- Using the analogy of a body, how can the church be the body of Christ?
- Further discuss the passages using the Biblical Background for these texts as guide.

#### ***Lessons Learned***

- Use the following guide questions:
  - How should we help a fellow member who fails to function as expected?



- How about those who take all the responsibilities and decide alone for everything, without consulting the other members of the body, are we going to tolerate them? If yes, is it right? If not, why?
- If the feet do not function, can the eyes function as feet? (Like deacon functioning as elder) If yes, how? If no, why not?

*Applying the Lessons Learned*

- What common attitudes contribute to the building up of the body of Christ?
- What common attitudes cause the breakdown of the body of Christ, and how can we eliminate such attitudes?
- How can the other members of the body help the weaker members so that they can also do their tasks effectively?

**Closing Worship**

Offertory and Closing Hymn “Blessed be the Tie that Binds” (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. 268)

Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;  
The sharing of a common life is like to that above.

Before our God we come and pour our ardent prayers;  
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts, and our cares.

We share each other’s woes, each other’s burdens bear;  
And often for each other flows a sympathizing tear.

When we are called to part, it gives us inward pain,  
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

Closing Prayer

**Second Sunday of  
Advent**

December 9, 2018

**LESSON 29: THE CHURCH IS A COMMUNITY OF PERSONS**

**General Concept:** The Church is a redeemed community of persons having God in their midst; each member possessing different gifts, each equally important, everyone working together.

**Biblical References:** 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; Ephesians 1:7-8; 4:11-17; Philippians 1:3-6  
*List of Lectionary Readings for the Week:* Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

**Age-Level Concepts**

- The Church is a redeemed community of persons.
- Each member is unique and equally important to the community.
- Each member is endowed with different gifts useful for the work of the Church.



- We work together to serve God and the people.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Explain how the church becomes the redeemed community of persons
- Make an inventory or list of all talents and skills that the members have
- Appropriate each member's talents or skills for the fulfillment of the church's ministries

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket, journal, pens

### Suggested Lesson Outline

#### *Expressing Praise and Thanks to God*

Visit the tree the class planted and make sure it is doing well. Give it the care it needs.

Opening Hymn "Great is Your Faithfulness" (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. 49)

Great is Your faithfulness, O God, Creator,  
With You no shadow of turning we see,  
You do not change, Your compassions they fail not;  
All of your goodness forever will be.

Refrain:

Great is Your faithfulness! Great is Your faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Your hand has provided—  
Great is Your faithfulness, God, unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Your great faithfulness, mercy and love. (Refrain)

Pardon for sin and a peace so enduring,  
Your own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! (Refrain)

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Prayer (Also pray for the birthday celebrant[s], if there are any.)

Recite a portion of the UCCP Statement of Faith:

"We believe that the Church is the one Body of Christ, the whole community of persons...."



**Learning Time**

*Discovering the Biblical Truth*

- Read the biblical texts.
- Encourage the participants to write on their journals or notebooks words or concepts from the texts that are important to them.
- Discuss the passages using the Biblical Background for these texts as guide.
- Guide questions for discussion:
  - What is the significance of redemption to us as individual believers and as a church?
  - As a community of persons with different gifts, how can the Church work together in building up the body of Christ, and in doing service and witness?

*Lessons Learned*

- As redeemed people of God, we, individually and as a church continue to manifest that redemption in our everyday life, in the way we live for others, and in the way we function as members of the body of Christ.
- The act of redemption has power over our lives for as long as we believe and have faith in God. The moment we stop believing in God, redemption loses its power and people will continue to live in sin.
- Our concern and involvement in the affairs of the body of Christ is a clear manifestation of our redemption.

*Applying the Lessons Learned*

- Allow the learners to list down the skills and talents they observe from each other as members of the church.
- Group the members according to their individual capacities.
- Assign each group to a certain ministry of the church where they can use their talents/skills more effectively.

**Closing Worship**

Offertory and Closing Hymn “With Gifts that Differ by Your Grace” (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. 245)

With gifts that differ by Your grace, Your spirit fits us all,  
That Christians in each time and place may answer when you call.  
You strengthen some to take a stand, to prophesy or preach,  
While others give with open hand, or heal the sick, or teach.

And yet, because our faith is frail, we bury gifts you give;  
Afraid to risk, afraid to fail, we are not free to live.  
At times, we use your sacred gifts for only selfish ends;  
Our purpose fades, our focus shifts, and conflict soon attends.

Come, Spirit, build your Church anew, that all may do their part,  
Together finding life in You, diverse yet one in heart.  
So may Your people seek Your will, transformed in all our ways;  
We offer body, mind and skill, a sacrifice of praise.



Closing Prayer

Third Sunday of  
Advent  
December 16, 2018

**LESSON 30: THE CHURCH IS RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST**

**General Concept:** Being a reconciled community, the Church becomes an agent of reconciliation in the world.

**Biblical References:** Zephaniah 3:14-20; II Corinthians 5:18-20

*List of Lectionary Readings for the Week:* Isaiah 12:2-6; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

**Age-Level Concepts**

- The Church is a community bound together with a common experience of being reconciled to God, to fellow human beings and creation through Jesus Christ.
- As a community reconciled to God, we become agents of reconciliation in the world.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Share their stories of when and how they have wandered away from God
- Mention experiences of how people are being separated from each other
- Explain how Jesus reconciled humanity and the whole creation back to God
- Cite ways of reconciling with others, and fostering and nurturing relationships

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket, journal, pens

**Suggested Lesson Outline**

***Expressing Praise and Thanks to God***

Visit the tree the class planted and make sure it is doing well. Give it the care it needs.

Opening Hymn "When Morning Gilds the Skies" (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. 60)

When morning gilds the skies, my heart awaking cries:  
May Jesus Christ be praised! Alike at work and prayer,  
One purpose I declare: may Jesus Christ be praised!

New strength come night or day when from the heart we say:  
May Jesus Christ be praised! Let sin and evil fear,  
When this sweet chant they hear: May Jesus Christ be praised!

Discordant humankind, in this your concord find:  
May Jesus Christ be praised! Let all the earth around  
Ring joyous with the sound: may Jesus Christ be praised!

Be this, while life is mine, my canticle divine:  
May Jesus Christ be praised! Be this the eternal song,





Through all the ages long: may Jesus Christ be praised!

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Prayer (Also pray for the birthday celebrant[s], if there are any.)

Recite a portion of the UCCP Statement of Faith:

“We believe that the Church is the one Body of Christ, the whole community of persons reconciled to God through Jesus Christ....”

### ***Learning Time***

#### *Discovering the Biblical Truth*

- Read the biblical texts.
- Encourage the participants to write on their journals or notebooks words or concepts from the texts that are important to them.
- Discuss the passages using the Biblical Background for these texts as guide.
- Guide questions for discussion:
  - How are people estranged from God?
    - Have the learners cull out from the texts how the people mentioned in the texts were possibly estranged from God.
    - Allow the learners to share their own experiences based on the forms of estrangement presented.
  - How can the truth of being reconciled to God keep us together as a church?
  - After having been reconciled to God, what is our responsibility individually and as a church?

#### *Lessons Learned*

- Each moment we forget about following God intentionally or not, and we question God’s will for us and consider only our own personal affairs, we have estranged ourselves from God. But God, by God’s grace and mercy through Jesus Christ, has called us back in reconciliation, so that we in turn may also be reconciled to others, and with the whole of creation, making us ambassadors of God’s message of reconciliation.
- How well are we fulfilling our commission as Christ’s ambassadors?

#### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

- As a Church, the reconciled people of God, mention ways or activities to foster and nurture the following relationships (The outcome of this discussion may be integrated in your church’s Ministry of Reconciliation)
  - Church with God
  - People with other people (among church members)
  - Church with creation

### ***Closing Worship***

Offertory and Closing Hymn “In Christ There is No East or West” (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. 271)

In Christ there is no east or west, in Him no south or north,



But one community of love throughout the whole wide earth.

In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find;  
His service is the golden cord, close binding humankind.

Join hands, disciples of the faith, whate'er your race may be!  
All children of the living God are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west, in Him meet south and north;  
All loving hearts are one in Him throughout the whole wide earth.

Or "Ang Hinanakit sa Puso" (Tune: "Dwelling in Beulah Land", *Mga Awitin sa Pagsamba*, p. 217)

Ang hinanakit sa puso'y h'wag panatilihin,  
Iyan ay uod na sa buhay mo'y kikitil;  
Bakit di mo siya kausapin ng taimtim  
Kapayapaan ay s'yang hanapin.

Koro:

Sakaling kapatid mo ay nagkakamali man,  
Bigyan ng panahon na makapagnilaynilay;  
Pakatantuin mong ikaw ma'y madalas ding masinsay  
Sa tuntunin ng kabanalan.

Hindi ba malimit na makapagsalita ka  
Masakit sa damdamin ng iyong kasama;  
Ngunit si Jesus bukal ng tunay na pagsinta  
Pinatawad ka sa iyong sala.

Bakit hindi ka makapagpatawad sa kanya  
Na iyong kasama sa loob ng Iglesia;  
S'ya'y lapitan mo't agad makipagkasundo ka  
Nang maging marapat ang pagsamba.

Iwaksi sa puso mo ang lahat ng sagabal  
Ngayon di'y sikapin mong kayo'y magmahalan;  
Bukas ay hindi iyo, baka ikaw'y pumanaw  
Puso'y may damdaming tinataglay.

Closing Prayer



Fourth Sunday of  
Advent

December 23, 2018

**LESSON 31: THE CHURCH IS ENTRUSTED WITH GOD'S MINISTRY**

**General Concept:** The only ministry of the Church is the ministry of God, and this we must do faithfully and in unity.

**Biblical References:** Luke 4:18-22; Matthew 4:23-25; 14:13-21; Ephesians 4:11; Hebrews 10:7  
*List of Lectionary Readings for the Week:* Micah 5:2-5a; Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1: 39-45; 46b-55

**Age-Level Concepts**

- The only ministry of the Church is the ministry of God.
- We actively participate in the ministries of the Church.
- We unite ourselves with other members of the community to faithfully do God's work.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Describe the ministry of Jesus Christ as mentioned in the gospel references
- Evaluate the present ministry of the church against the ministry of Christ
- Affirm the ministry of God as the church's own ministry

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket, journal, pens

**Suggested Lesson Outline**

***Expressing Praise and Thanks to God***

Visit the tree the class planted and make sure it is doing well. Give it the care it needs.

Opening Hymn "Still, I Search for My God" (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. 22)

Still I search for my God in silence, I marvel at the universe,  
The world it contains, its beauty, its harmony!  
Creator of such perfection, who else could it be?

Come, listen to the trees, the green fields, the rivers, and the morning breeze,  
The birds of the air sing their Maker's praise!  
Creator of countless wonders, who else could it be?

Yes, I am filled with joy, and breathe in the presence of the Lord, my God,  
Your praise I will sing, your power, declare in chant,  
And when I am moved to worship, peace reigns in my heart.

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Prayer (Also pray for the birthday celebrant[s], if there are any.)



Recite a portion of the UCCP Statement of Faith:

“We believe that the Church is the one Body of Christ, the whole community of persons reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and entrusted with God’s ministry.”

### **Learning Time**

#### *Discovering the Biblical Truth*

- Assign readers to read out loud the first three biblical references.
- Have the rest of the class write down the things that Jesus has done according to the text, and have them share their notes with the class.
- The teacher/facilitator elaborates the meaning and message of the texts by sharing the biblical background presented.

#### *Lessons Learned*

- Jesus’ ministry can be summarized in the following Six-Fold Ministry of the church:
  - Worship (*Greek: Leitourgia*) – Jesus goes to the temple to perform his religious duties: to celebrate the Jewish feasts; He also tells his disciples that they should worship God in spirit and in truth
  - Preaching (*Greek: Kerygma*) – Jesus preached about the Good News
  - Teaching (*Greek: Didache*) – Jesus taught the values of the Kingdom
  - Service (*Greek: Diakonia*) – Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry
  - Fellowship (*Greek: Koinonia*) – Jesus made friends and had fellowship with all kinds of people even the “sinners” and the outcasts of the society
  - Witness (*Greek: Marturia*) – Jesus testified that He was the Christ, the Messiah sent from God, even if it meant His death on the cross
- In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul emphasized that some members are given special gifts to be apostles, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for the ministry of the church.

#### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

- Read Hebrews 10:7
- Make a list of all the things that your church is doing at present. Classify or group them together according to the Six-Fold Ministry of the church being presented.
- Are all ministries being carried out? Which ministry is strong or active?
- Which ministry is weak or not being carried out well? What could be the possible reason for the weakness of this ministry? What should be done?

### **Closing Worship**

Offertory and Closing Hymn “To the Work” (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. 324)

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 the tidings, "Salvation is free!" (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!" (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!" (Refrain)

Or "Work in Your Kingdom" (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. 302)

Work in Your Kingdom advances and continues  
Even through hard times, all odds and tribulations;  
Despite our human infirmities and weakness,  
Use us, O Savior, till the task is done.

There is no service impossible to render  
If we but trust in your strength and in your power;  
Make us, O God, to be diligent and zealous  
Until your full will here on earth be done.

Lord, all our time we now offer in your service,  
All the resources to us you have entrusted;  
Use all our knowledge, our intellect and wisdom,  
Our enthusiasm, strength and might, O God.

All of our talents which are your gifts from heaven,  
We would be careful to use these as intended  
So that your Kingdom be built up and exalted,  
O God, our Parent, source of love and light.

Closing Prayer

