

LESSONS ON THE UCCP VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

A Sunday School Guide for ADULTS

Lesson 1: The Church as the People of God

Trinity Sunday

First Sunday after Pentecost

June 16, 2019

General Concept: The Church is the people called and chosen by God.

Biblical References: Romans 5:1-5, John 16:13a

Age –Level Concepts

- We are the Church.
- The Church is the people called and chosen by God.

Learning Objectives

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

- Articulate their understanding of the Church.
- Cite experiences and situations wherein God calls and chooses people for a purpose.
- Declare their commitment to participate in doing Christ’s mission as part of the Church.

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

Biblical Background

Romans 5:1-5

It is evident that when Paul wrote this letter, he is addressing a demanding, educated readers. To the people in Paul’s day, Rome was the center of the world in every way: learning, power, law and culture.

With this in mind, Paul obviously tries to deliver a polished and well- expressed discussion about the Christian faith. In fact, Paul’s letter to the Romans is considered a highly theological book that sets down the whole Christian doctrine. Paul wanted to convince his readers that Christ hold the answers to all of life’s important questions.

Paul intends to remind how Christians should live being “justified by grace through faith”. The church as a community of believers ought to have peace and new hope in life through Christ. Being “justified” means that Christ’s death has fulfilled God’s salvific intention in the world and brought back people into a relationship with God. One can only understand the gift of God’s grace

through faith. This faith makes every believer build virtues and character that transcends sufferings and bring hope for a life with God.

John 16:13a

The Gospel of Jesus Christ according to John is quite different from the three synoptic gospels. It is highly literary and symbolic. It begins with a magnificent prologue that proclaims Jesus as incarnate Word of God who has revealed God's will and purpose in the world.

The text is part of the Farewell Discourse of Jesus Christ which particularly illustrates the role of the Holy Spirit - leading believers to see and know the truth and empowers them to speak with boldness. This concept of the Holy Spirit is rooted in the Old Testament witness of the Spirit of God who comes upon the prophets to inspire them to speak God's Words. But the New Testament teaching of the Holy Spirit, it is poured forth not only on specific chosen witnesses but on all the faithful believers and followers of Jesus Christ.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Ang Iglesia nga Tinawag sa Dios" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 315
(The Church that is Called By God)

Ang Iglesia nga tinawag sa Dios, nagakatigum makasasala, balaan,
Madasigon sa panahong tanan, si Jesukristo ang nagahari kanila
Hiniusa sa lunsayng gugma Nya.

Chorus: Daygon ta ang Ginoo atong Dios, Manluluwas sa tanan
Himayaon nato sya. Maghiusa katawhan nga tanan
Mag-ambahan Kaniya, mag-ambahan kanunay.

Ang iglesia nga tinawag sa Dios, masinugtanon sa pag-alagad kaniya,
Ug buhaton ang kabubut-on Nya, sa kasayon ug sa kalisud magpadayon
Kay si Kristo magmando sya gayud. (Chorus)

In the Church that is called by God where the believers come to worship
God with joy and gladness in their hearts; For Jesus Christ is the Lord that
Reigns in their lives binding them in the pureness of his love.

Chorus: Praise you God, you are Lord of humankind, You are Savior of the world
You are Savior of us all; Let all people their voices raise to the Lord,
Eternal praise, to the Lord eternal praise.

In the church that is called by God where the believers strive to obey
And to serve and to do the will of the Lord; In times of ease and in times
Of great need, all would follow Christ's command. (Chorus)

Opening Prayer

O God who calls people, create in us a spirit that values continuous learning despite the barriers of age, time and physical capacity. Enable us O Lord to further understand our Church through study of its Vision, Mission and Goals. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Read the Biblical Text. Ask a participant to read the Old Testament text: Psalm 8:4 and another participant to read the New Testament texts: Romans 5:1-5, John 16:13a.

- DRAW OUT IMPORTANT WORDS. Ask the learners to mention the words which they find significant to the lesson at hand. Let them explain in their own words their understanding of the words picked out.

Example:

Romans 5:1-5 – “we have gained access by faith into this grace”; “we have been justified”

John 16:13a - “will guide you into all truth”

- Questions. Encourage the learners to express their thoughts on the following:
 1. What accounts in the Bible can you recall that tell about God calling or choosing people or individual person for a purpose?
 2. How would you describe the relationship between God and the people/ person being called?
 3. What could be God’s purpose in calling people/person?
 4. What do you think are God’s expectations from the people/person being called or chosen?

Lessons Learned

1. Groupings. Divide the learners into two groups. Let each group pick statements which they strongly believe in:
 - a. The Church is not called by God but the people in it.
 - b. Being chosen or called by God is a privilege not so much a responsibility.
 - c. The Church is called only to praise and worship God.
 - d. The Church is called to participate in doing Christ’s mission in the world.
 - e. The Church should be the concrete manifestation of God’s presence in the world.
 - f. The Church is the community of believers who actively live out their faith in God.

- g. The Church as God's chosen people holds a special place above others.

Let each group share their choices and ask them to explain. Allow questions for clarifications.

The facilitator should see to it that the following points should come out in the discussion:

- The church is God's people and belongs to God's household.
- It is the whole community of persons reconciled to God.
- The church, being called, has God-given tasks to do.

Applying the Lessons Learned

- Synthesize the discussion based on the sharing. The facilitator may refer the learners to the basic confession of beliefs about the Church.
"We believe that the Church is one body of Christ, the whole community of persons reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and entrusted with God's ministry."
- Let the learners finish the statement, "We are the Church. I am part of the Church. Being called and chosen by God, I need to _____."

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn

"God's Call for Today" Children Praise God, 217

From many places we have come,
With burning hearts and minds,
To share to all what we have seen and heard,
As God's call in our lands and seas.

We have seen the struggles of the poor,
We have seen our bonds of unity,
We have heard God calling us today,
Pray for peace, work for justice
And restore creation's dignity.

Closing Prayer

We firmly believe O God that you called and chose the Church to become your people with whom you establish a relationship wherein everybody participates in establishing a community as you will it to be. Empower us O Lord so that we may become helpful and effective helpers in doing your work. This we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Lesson 2: The Church as an Organic and Dynamic Movement

Second Sunday after Pentecost

June 23, 2019

General Concept: The Church has life: growing, developing and evolving.

Biblical Reference: Galatians 3:26-28

Age Level Concepts

- The church is organic and dynamic.
- The Church should constantly grow, develop and evolve.
- The people should also grow and develop with the Church.

Learning Objectives: By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Cite examples and experiences that show how the Church evolves, develops and grows.
- Describe how they feel when changes happen in the Church.
- Share their participation in the development of the Church and how it helps them grow as a person and as a believer.

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

Biblical Background

Galatians 3:26-28

It is evident in this letter that Paul is angry to the Christians in Galatia because of the growing discord among believers that threatens the unity of the church. Paul was made aware of the innate tendency of people of Jewish background and beginnings to look down on people coming from different cultures and inferior background.

These converts from paganism were being enticed by other missionaries to add the observance of the Jewish law including the rite of circumcision, to the faith of Jesus Christ as means of salvation. There is danger that the gospel will be perverted. However Paul stressed out that law has a limit and its jurisdiction is only within Judaism. Thus, he emphasized that in Jesus Christ all are sons and daughters of God through faith. Human beings' relationship to God is defined by their humble and obedient openness to Jesus Christ and His teachings and live by it. Paul insisted that Jesus Christ came down to tear down walls between people, not to build them. In him there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (Galatians 3:28) Faith in Jesus Christ not anyone's set of laws opens the door to acceptance, unity and growth of the church.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Ji-du, Jiao-hui Shen Suo Li" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 238
(God Has Formed the Church To Be)

God has formed the Church to be sign if Christ throughout the world,

Many peoples, many tongues, in one body reconciled,
One Lord is our unity, one faith is our only rock,
Baptized fully into Christ, his life flows out through us all.

All are called to do God's will, faith grows strong when proved by works,
People sharing myriad gifts find one love, one peace in Christ,
One Lord is our unity, one faith is our only rock,
Baptized fully into Christ, his life flows out through us all.

Opening Prayer

O God who is ever present in the lives of people, be with us today as we look into the life of our church. May your Holy Spirit enable us to see that which makes us alive, vigorous and grow. Accompany us Lord today in our study. Amen

Learning time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Instruct the learners to read the biblical text responsively. Ask the women to read the first verse and the men to read the next verse and so on and so forth. (Galatians 3:26-28)

Let the learners answer the following questions:

1. How would you describe God's people based on the texts?
2. How do you think the Church should be like?
3. How do we understand the words "organic" and "dynamic"?

- PICTURE THIS. The facilitator will mention a situation of the church. Learners will be asked to describe or picture out the given situation.
 - a. Picture this.... A dying church.
 - b. Picture this.... A young church.
 - c. Picture this.... A vibrant church.
 - d. Picture this.... A growing church.
 - e. Picture this.... A progressive church.
 - f. Picture this.... Our UCCP.

Lessons Learned

- SHARING OF STORIES. Guide the learners in sharing experiences related to the life and work of their local church.
 - a. Stories of how their church started.
 - b. Stories of the pioneers.
 - c. Stories of how the church grew and developed.
 - d. Stories of how the members participated in the growth of the church.

- e. Stories of how the members reacted to changes in the church.

Question:

Do you think that your local church possesses the characteristics of what a Church should be? Why?

Applying the Lessons Learned

1. What are your contributions to the growth and development of the Church in general and your local church in particular?
2. What are the effects of your participation in the growth of the Church to you as a person?
3. What would you commit to the Church to help in its continuous growth and change?

Synthesize the discussions by pointing out the following points:

- The Church is constantly changing, growing and developing.
- The Church manifests its organic and dynamic character by responding to the conditions and changes in the environment.
- As the Church develops and grows, the people should also grow with it.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn “A United and Uniting Church” HFJ, 244

Refrain: A united and uniting church, that we may all be one
Reformed and transforming in mission and in faith
Onward UCCP, building God’s kingdom of peace.

Come dreamers, visionaries, examples of true witnesses
Leaving the trace of footprints, for people to tread on
With a burning faith and commitment
Proclaiming the message of love. (Refrain)

Closing Prayer

We strive to become a Church that is growing and transforming, Lord. In order to become one, we see the need for all parts of the body to commit themselves to the faith, life and mission of Jesus Christ. Stir us O God from being content of what we were and what we have now. Empower us to move, be alive and not afraid of change. For in You and with You, anything is possible. Amen.

Lesson 3: The Church as an Institution and Organization

Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 30, 2019

General Concept: The Church has evolved as an institution and organization to be effective and relevant.

Biblical References: 2 Kings 2:9-10, Ephesians 4:11-13

Age Level Concepts

- The Church as an organization is composed of different sub-groups.
- The Church chooses leaders to lead the whole community in its faith-praxis and work.
- The Church plans out programs that enables it to be relevant and effective in doing its mission.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are able to

- Identify the different judicatories and organizations of the Church and locate them in the whole structure of the Church.
- Name the different leadership positions in the judicatories and organizations and the corresponding people assigned to these positions.
- Mention the different programs the Church is engaged in.
- Express appreciation for being a member of the Church.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]) song chart, offering plate or basket, bond papers cut into half lengthwise, pentel pen, box

Biblical Background

2 KINGS 2:9-10

The book of 2 Kings is a continuation of the stories of the Divided Kingdom during the Monarchy period. Even at this point of the people's history, the prophets played an important role in the life and journey of both Judah and Israel. The intent of the writer of this book is to instill into the hearts and minds of the people fidelity and faithfulness to Yahweh. The most familiar character here is Prophet Elisha who succeeded Prophet Elijah. Prophet Elisha is introduced as a successor of Elijah's spirit – he receives not only Elijah's mantle with its mystic powers but also the legacy of a firstborn son, a double portion of his spirit.

Elijah and Elisha were together before Elijah disappeared. The two prophets walked from Gilgal down to Bethel, to Jericho and to Jordan. Elisha did not for a moment separate himself from Elijah because he knew that Elijah would soon be taken away from him. It shall be noted that he wanted to have the double portion of his spirit. And it will only be granted to him if he will witness Elijah's disappearance.

Elisha being the successor of Prophet Elijah wanted to inherit his spirit of prophecy in the degree befitting his task as a prophet of God. He depends on it for he knows that being a prophet is not easy. God's spirit is his only hope and will always be his greatest armor.

Ephesians 4:11-13

Next to Rome, Ephesus is believed to be an important city for Paul. He had stayed in this city for a long time that believers are better prepared to hear and understand the gospel truth. The letter of Paul discussed about the church as a body of Christ is endowed with gifts. Among these valuable gifts are the people – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They played important roles to build up Christians in order for them to do the work of God.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn “You Are the Salt for the Earth” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 246

You are the salt for the earth O people, Salt for the Kingdom of God
Share the flavor of life O people, life in the Kingdom of God.

Refrain: Bring forth the Kingdom of mercy, bring forth the Kingdom of peace
Bring forth the Kingdom of justice, bring forth the city of God.

Opening Prayer

God of order and purpose, from whom we draw out our strength and hope. We thank you for the opportunity to look into our life as a community through our collective study and reflection. Be with us today as we continue to learn and draw lessons from our experiences and from each other. In Jesus 'name we pray. Amen.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Ask a learner to read the Old Testament text (2 Kings 2:9-10) and another to read the New Testament text (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Questions:

1. What was the conversation between Elijah and Elisha all about?
2. How would you compare the two characters in terms of their roles and significance in the life of God's people?
3. To whom was the letter of Paul addressed?
4. What could be the situation in the church of Ephesus that prompts the writing?
5. What could be the motive of Paul for writing his letter?
6. What lessons can we draw out from Paul's advice in relation to the life, relationship and work of the people in the church?

Lessons Learned

Say, "All members need to acknowledge that the Church as God's people should be governed by rules and laws to ensure its order and unity; choose people that plays important roles and functions; employ systems and mechanisms to ensure its sustainability and plan out programs to express its

faith and mission. We need to familiarize ourselves with the things related to the life of the Church.”

Game: TRIVIA. A simple game may help lighten up the atmosphere of the class. The facilitator should make the preparations beforehand.

What to Prepare:

- Cut out bond papers into one- half lengthwise.
- In each paper cut out, write a question for the learners to answer. Place the papers into a box.

The facilitator may use the following questions:

1. Who is the General Secretary of the UCCP?
2. How many jurisdictions do our Church have? Who are the bishops assigned to each jurisdiction?
3. What are the Church Recognized Organizations of UCCP?
4. To what jurisdiction do you belong?
5. How many conferences do UCCP have?
6. What is the name of the bishop assigned to your jurisdiction?
7. Who is your Conference Minister?
8. How many members do our Church has?
9. How many members do your conference has?
10. Who is our National Treasurer?
11. Who is the president of your church organization?
12. What are the programs our Church is engaged in?

- Ask each learner to get a piece of paper from the box and answer the question written on it.
- Copies of the profile/directory of the different judicatories and organizations may be distributed to the learners for information purposes. (see UCCP Calendar Planner)

Applying the Lessons Learned

a. Emphasize the following points for the learners:

- The Church as an organization and institution is governed by laws, policies and rules to ensure the unity, harmony and order of the body.
- The Church is composed of different organizations that caters to the different needs of different groups of people.
- The Church needs to have leaders to lead, oversee and make sure that the life and practice of the whole organization is within the bounds of its faith and mission.
- The Church expresses its faith and mission through various programs responsive to the needs of the people and the call of times.

b. Let the learners respond to the question:

How do you feel being a member of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines?

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "A Common Love "

A common love for each other, a common gift to the Savior,
A common bond holding us to the Lord.
A common strength when we're weary,
A common hope for tomorrow,
A common joy in the truth of God's word.

In God's family, we can meet each one's need,
We can light each one's path,
We can bear each one's grief.
As God's children, we can comfort each care
We can build each one's faith,
We can work, we can share.

Closing Prayer

How wonderful it is to know O God that your people can live together in unity despite the differences and diversities. We pray that your Holy Spirit may continue to inspire us to live out our faith by doing the mission of Christ in the world. Help our leaders and the people we entrust with certain responsibilities so that they may be able to do their tasks with sincerity and humility. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

Lesson 4: **The Church Has a Structure**

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

July 7, 2019

General Concept: As an institution and organization, the Church needs a structure for efficient and systematic implementation of its work.

Biblical Reference: Luke 10:1-2

Age Level Concepts

- The Church needs a structure for efficient and systematic implementation of its work.
- The structure of the Church involves people as the work- force that implements the programs and plans.
- Every person involved within the structure should function according to her/his mandated task and responsibilities.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to:

- Discuss the major parts of the church structure and its corresponding tasks and functions.
- Explain why there is a need for a Church to have a functional structure.
- Share their experiences in line with their participation in making the work of the Church efficient and systematic.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]) song chart, offering plate or basket, copies of the UCCP Structure and Constitution and By-Laws

Biblical Background

Luke 10:1-2

The biblical text tells us about an analogy about how Jesus looks at his ministry. It also tells us about how Jesus see to it that the work of spreading the Gospel will reach as many places and touches as many lives as possible. Through the life and work of Jesus, God planted the seeds of the Word. Jesus recognizes that there should be some way of collecting the “harvest”. There seemed to be an urgency in his words when he declared that the “the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few”. Thus, to call and send laborers was an appropriate response to the demand.

Jesus uses the analogy to let the hearers understand that the proclamation of the Gospel and gathering of those who believe is first and foremost God’s work – the “Lord of the harvest”. To work in the harvest as a “laborer” is a privilege and honor. The ‘laborers’ are to become part in God’s work. Therefore, the “laborers” in the harvest are people that are called and commissioned by the Lord of the harvest.

Sending the seventy disciples separating them by twos was one of the efficient ways to achieve the goal of spreading the Gospel. Jesus saw the need to send them in pairs so that they may encourage and strengthen each other for the task is not that easy.

The Church as a body has a structure through which its mission can be efficiently carried out. But it has to recognize that its role in doing mission is like that of the “laborers” in the harvest. The Church has to recognize that its mission is God’s work through Christ and shares in the privilege and honor to be part of God’s workforce. The Church as community of faith is called and commissioned by the “Lord of the harvest” to take part in the work.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn “Worship and Work Must Be One”

Refrain: Worship the Lord, worship the Maker, the Spirit, the Son

Raising our hands in devotion to God who is One.

Praying and training that we be a blessing,

And by our workmanship daily expressing,
We are committed to serving humanity,
Worship and work must be one.

Called to be partners with God in creation,
Honoring Christ as the lord of the nation,
We must be ready for risk and for sacrifice,
Worship and work must be one.

Opening Prayer

We continue to understand what we are as a Church, O Lord through our collective study and learning. Continue to be with us as we share our experiences and as we try to find the significance of each part in the whole body we call the Church. Amen.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Bible Reading. Ask a learner to read the New Testament text (Luke 10:1-2)

Luke 10: 1-2

- What do we mean by the word “appointed”?
- Why were the seventy being summoned by Jesus?
- Why do you think they were they sent in pairs?
- What were their main tasks of the seventy people when they were sent out as mandated by Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus needs to appoint people to do tasks and not do it by himself?

Lessons Learned

- **WORD FAMILIARIZATION.**
The word **“STRUCTURE”** refers to the arrangement of particles or parts in a substance or body; something that is built by putting parts together and that usually stands on its own.

The word **“TASK”** refers to a usually assigned piece of work often to be finished within a certain time while the word **“FUNCTIONS”** refers to the action for which a thing or purpose is specially fitted or used like in a person with an official position.
- **THE CHURCH STRUCTURE** (insert)
Ask the learners to look at the structural flow chart of the UCCP.
- **TASKS AND FUNCTIONS.** As you go along each important part of the structure, it would also be appropriate to discuss its function and tasks.

(The facilitator may refer to the UCCP Constitution and By-Laws for guidance in discussion)

- QUESTIONS:
 1. What is your impression on the structure of the Church?
 2. What are the parts and features of the church structure that you are most appreciative of? Why?
 3. What are the parts and features of the church structure which you think need changing? Why?
 4. Why do you think the Church should have a structure?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- a. Emphasize the important points of this lesson the learners should embrace:
 - The Church should have a functional structure to make sure that all parts of the body functions effectively and efficiently according to its mandated tasks.
 - The Church should see to it that the people involved in the structure should function within the bounds of its mandate and the laws of the organization or institution.
 - The structure of the Church expresses the flow of implementation of its programs, ministries and plans.
 - The Church structure ensures that the needs of the constituents are given attention and care.
- b. Ask them to locate themselves in the structure.
 - What positions in the Church have you taken?
 - What were the decisions/ actions you have done to make the work of the Church efficient and successfully implemented?
 - What can you suggest to make our structure be more functional?

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn “To the Work” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 324

To the work! To the work! We are servants of God
Let us follow the path that our Master had 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.

Closing Prayer

We are proud and glad O Lord, to be part of this church – the UCCP. We now see the necessity to have a structure that is functional, efficient and

empowers its members to participate in its life and work. May we look at positions not as a seat of power but a privilege and opportunity to serve people and express our obedience to Your will. Help us perform our task and functions with joy and humility. May all that we do be pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

*United Church Of Christ In The Philippines
Strategic Plan*

Figure 1. UCCP ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

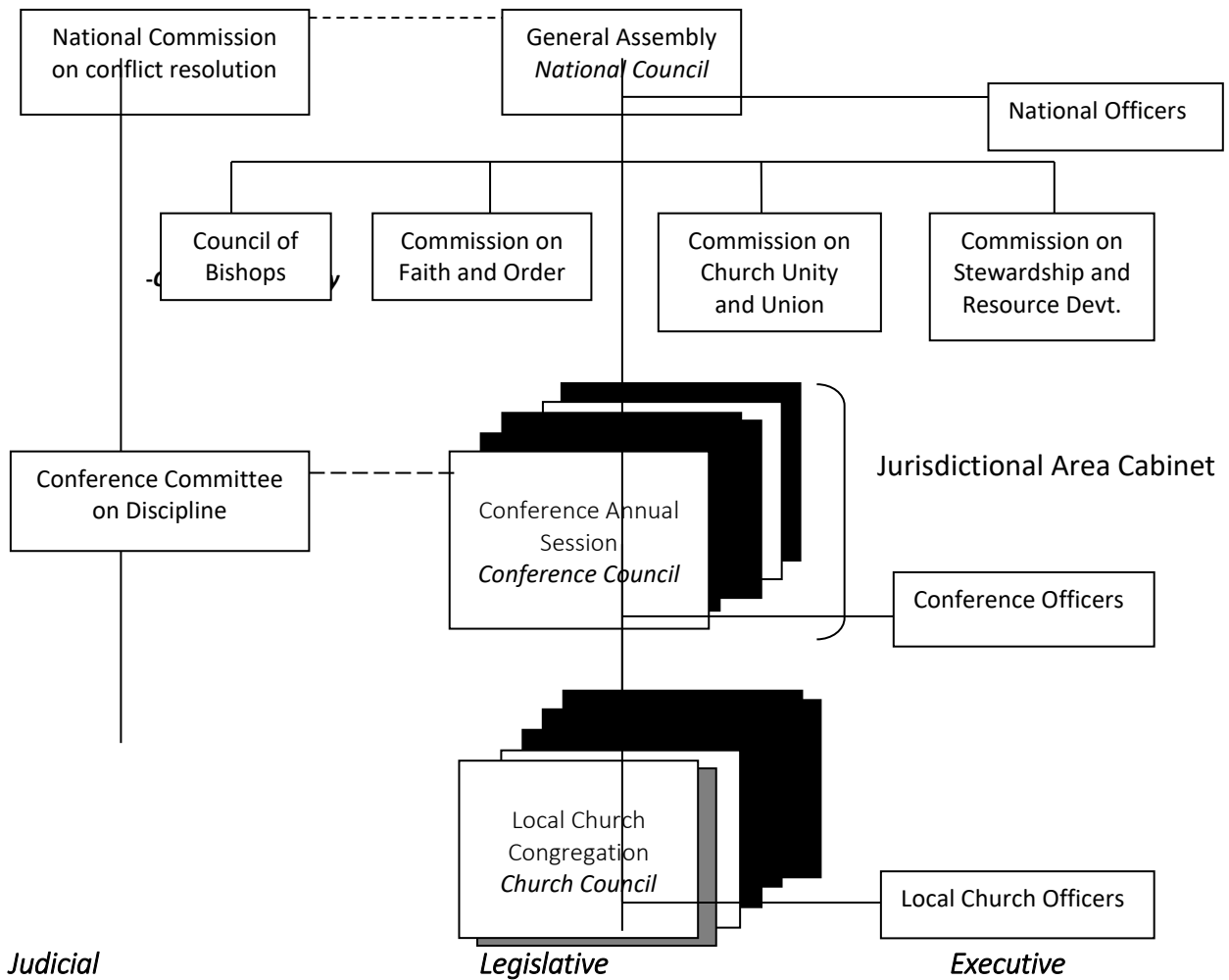


Figure 2. The Local Church Structure

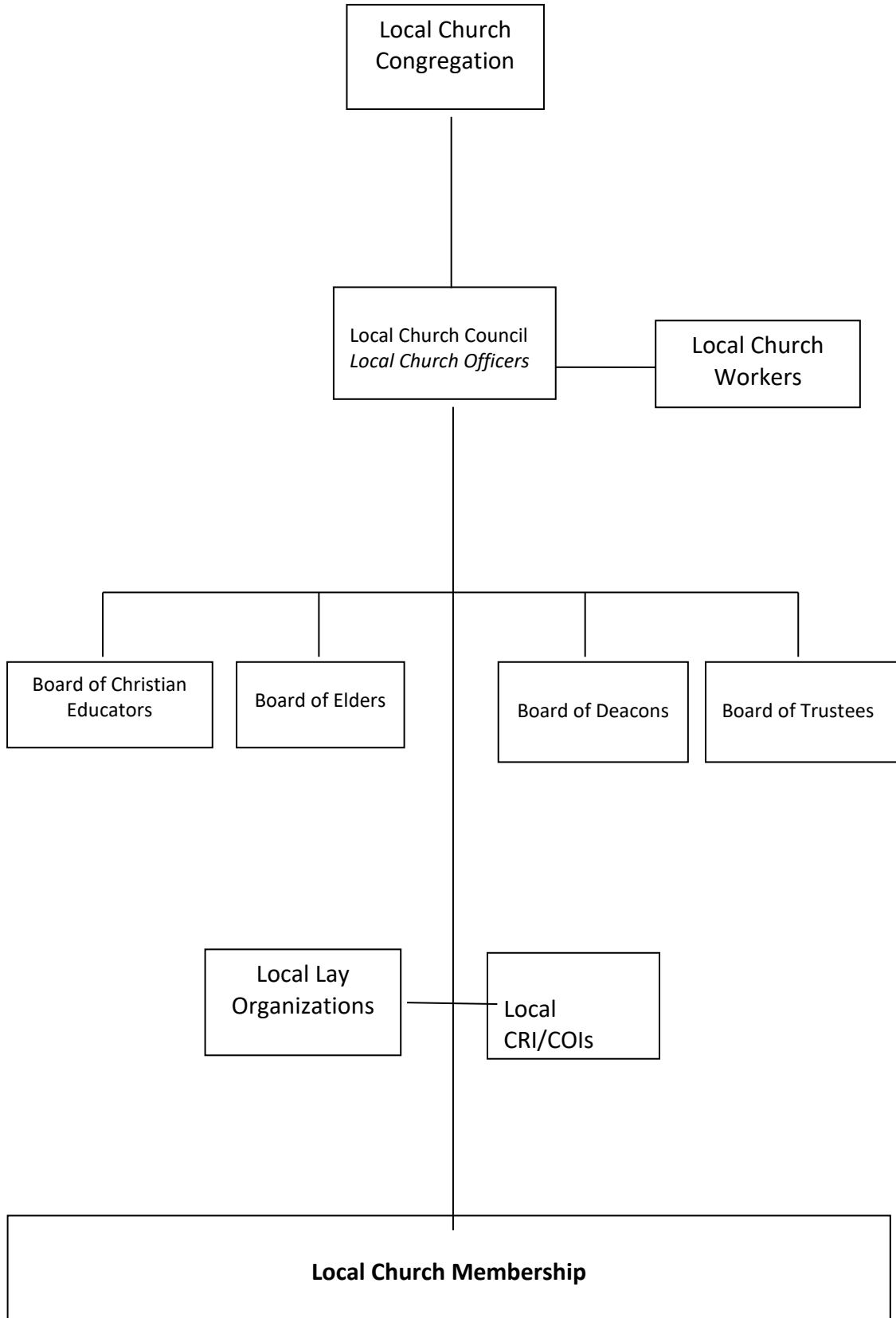
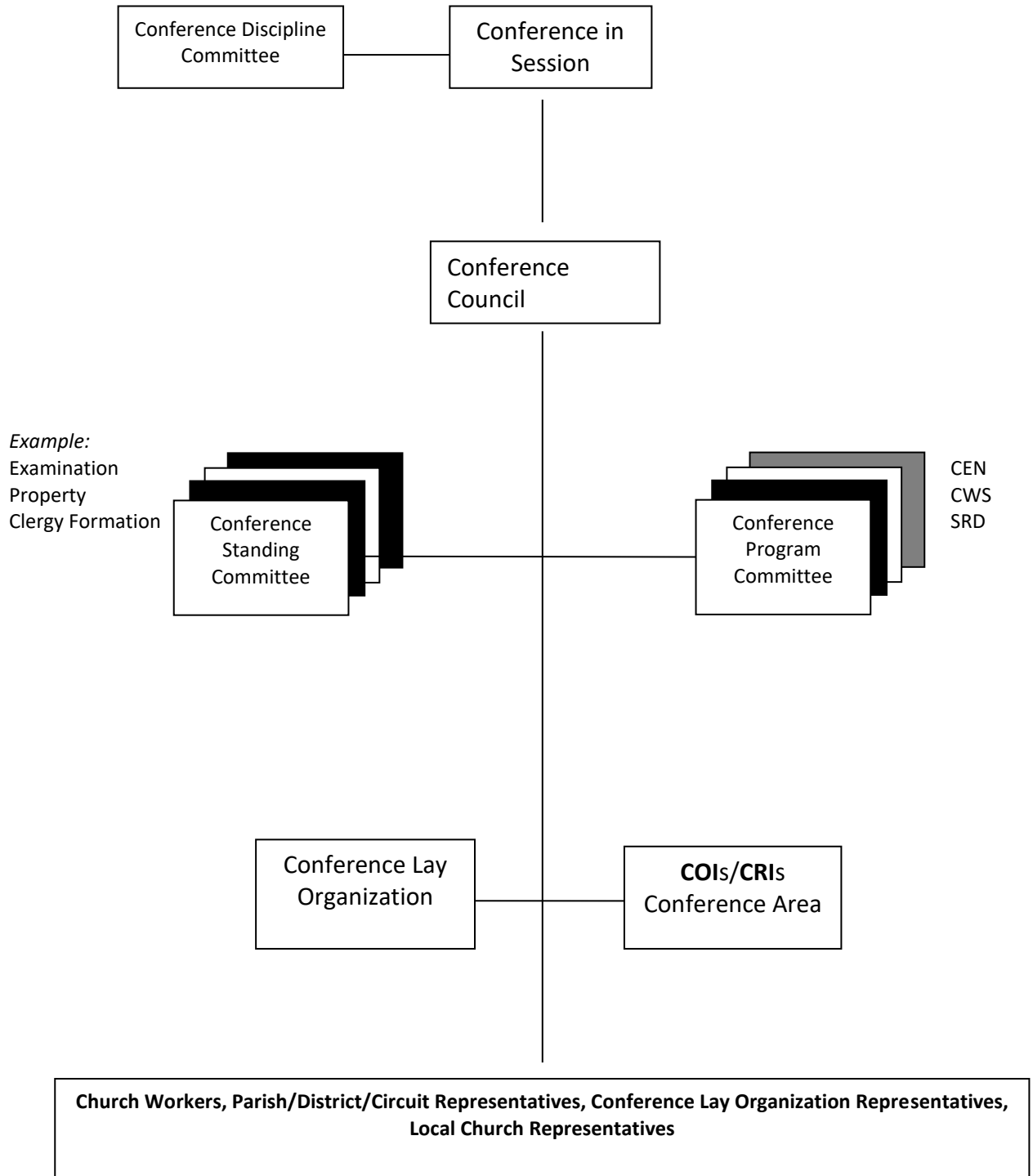


Figure 3. Conference Structure



Lesson 5: The UCCP has Vision, Mission and Goals

Trinity Sunday

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 14, 2019

General Concept: The purpose and direction of the UCCP is expressed in its Vision, Mission and Goals.

Biblical References: Amos 7:15a-16b, Luke 10:25-37

Age Level Concepts

- The Church's intended direction and purpose as a body and an institution can be best understood within its laid-out framework and principles of the Vision, Mission and Goals.
- As members of the Church, we need to embrace, own and internalize our Vision, Mission and Goals.
- As members, we need to participate in the realization of our purpose and direction as a Church as expressed in our Vision, Mission and Goals.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Discuss the function of the Vision, Mission and Goals as a tool to unite the Church.
- Explain why there is a need to unite the community of faith to one purpose and direction.
- Express their commitment to help and participate in the realization of the Vision, Mission and Goals of the Church.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]) song chart, offering plate or basket, bond paper, scissor, handkerchief, manila paper, paste, colored paper

Biblical Background

Amos 7:15a-16b

Amos was a simple herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. Listening to his words, one can recognize that he is familiar with the life of farming. He came as a prophet during the time when the monarchy has already been established. Uzziah reigned as king of Judah and Jeroboam II as king of Israel. Though Amos came from Tekoa, a town of Judah, but his pronouncements and concern were not exclusive only for Judah. In fact, he went to Bethel and proclaimed his serious warnings and prophecies. But Amaziah, the priest instead of listening to Amos, he convinced the king otherwise and urged him to return to Judah.

The people of God- Israel thought that no evil nor harm can come to them since they are God's people. They thought despite their unfaithfulness to the covenant with Yahweh by worshipping idols and other gods introduced to them by their kings. The people have turned their backs on God and therefore no longer deserves God's mercy. For so long they lived in selfishness, immorality, excessive lifestyle. The poor were oppressed and justice has become worthless. Though Amos told the people about the coming judgment, he also proclaimed God's mercy and

faithfulness towards the unworthy people. Amos spoke about the glorious future, a vision of restoration of God's people.

The text is like telling the readers that God's people need to envision a life reconciled to God; a life restored to the covenant; a nation that thrives in justice, mercy, love and faithfulness; a life of service and obedience to God's will.

Luke 10: 25-28

Jesus has his own creative ways of conveying his messages. Sometimes, he uses parables to answer questions or directly confront them with questions. In this instance, a teacher of the Law came to test Jesus with a question about eternal life. It seems that this person thought that eternal life can be achieved by doing something special or just knowing the law. But Jesus taught that eternal life is something that is not separated from how people lived their daily lives. Jesus wanted the hearers to understand that if one put God first and love their neighbors before themselves, one can have no assurance of eternal life.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Forward Through the Ages" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 267

Forward through the ages in unbroken line,
Move the faithful spirits at the call divine;
Gifts in differing measures, hearts of one accord,
Manifold in service, one the sure reward.

Refrain: Forward through the ages in unbroken line,
Move the faithful spirits at the call divine.

Wide grows God's dominion, reign of love and peace,
For it we must labor, till all strivings cease.
Prophets have proclaimed it, teachers testified,
Poets sung its glory, martyrs for it died. (Refrain)

Opening Prayer

We are grateful O Lord for giving us this day to gather together with our brothers and sisters in faith, for worship and fellowship, for study and breaking of bread.

Be with us today as we unite our spirits and minds in discerning your Word for us today. Amen

Getting Ready

Game: HIT THE TARGET. Ask a volunteer from among the learners.

- Place a circle made out of a manila paper on the board. Color the center of the circle with black. Cut out a circle from a red colored paper.

- Blindfold the volunteer and instruct to paste the red circle to the center of the target. Other learners will help guide the blindfolded volunteer where to go and where to paste the red circle.
- After the exercise, ask the following:
 - Would it easier if the red circle is pasted anywhere the circle?
 - Were the other learners of great help to the volunteer?
 - What realizations can you draw out from the exercise?

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask someone to read the texts:

- Amos 7:15a-16b
 - Who was Amos?
 - Why do you think God called him?
 - What were God's specific instructions to him?
- Luke 10:25-28
 - Why do you think Jesus
 - What do you think was Jesus trying to teach the listeners?

Lessons Learned

COMPARE AND REFLECT.

- Divide the learners into two small groups or as many as you see fit.
- Post the Vision, Mission and Goals where everyone can see it. If the learners are elderly, provide a copy of the UCCP Vision, Mission and Goals.
- Ask the groups to compare their realizations from the texts to the Vision, Mission and Goals of UCCP:
 - How would you compare our Vision, Mission and Goals to the teachings/lessons we draw out from the texts?
 - What do you think is the use or function of our Vision, Mission, and Goals?
 - Do you believe that the Church needs to have a Vision, Mission and Goals? How would you justify it?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- Emphasize the following points to the class:
 - The Vision, Mission and Goals sets the direction and purpose of the Church.
 - The Vision, Mission and Goals is the Church's expression of its faith and obedience to God and unites all believers to a common direction.

- Through the Vision, Mission and Goals of the Church, all members will be able to involve and commit themselves in the life and journey of the Church.
- **DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT**
 Ask each learner to reflect on how they can participate or help in the realization of the Vision, Mission and Goals of the Church. Let them write on a paper their pledge of commitment by saying, "I commit my _____ to help realize the UCCP's VMG.
 Tell them to offer their commitment during the worship service.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "I Offer My Life"

All that I am. All that I have
 I lay them down before you O Lord
 All my regret, all my acclaim
 The joy and the pain, I'm making them yours.

Chorus: Lord, I offer my life to You
 Everything I've been through
 Use it for your glory
 Lord I offer my days to You
 Lifting my praise to You
 As a pleasing sacrifice
 Lord, I offer you my life.

Things in the past, things yet unseen
 Wishes and dreams that are yet to come true.
 All of my hopes, all of my plans,
 My heart and my hands are lifter to You. (Chorus)

Closing Prayer

Accept our limitations and weaknesses O Lord so that through Your mercy and grace we may overcome all that hold us back from committing ourselves to participate in your work. Grant that our direction and purpose as your people be consistent to your will. Help our Church realize its Vision, Mission and Goals. May we be united with a common faith and journey. Amen

Lesson 6: What is a church's vision?

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

July 21, 2019

General Concept: A Vision is a church's aspiration, which is aligned with God's intention.

Biblical References: Isaiah 65: 17-25, Joel 2: 28

Age Level Concepts

- A Vision reflects the Church's aspiration and is aligned with God's intention.
- The Church's aspiration should not only be for itself but also for others, the world and the rest of creation.
- We need to live out the aspirations of the Church and actively participate towards its realization.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Express their understanding of the Church's Vision.
- Give reasons why the Church should include other people, the world and the rest of God's creation in its aspirations.
- Cite examples of how the Church's Vision can be lived out and the ways one can actively participate in its realization.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]) song chart, offering plate or basket, manila paper or tarpaulin, pieces of paper, scissor

Biblical Background

Joel 2:28

Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Joel speaks to the readers in a time when the Land of Israel has been infested with locusts. Prophet Joel sees this as a national disaster. It has destroyed Israel's production of wine and grain which is pertinent in their growth as a nation. There is a possibility however that Joel only uses the imagery of locust infestation to describe how Babylon had invaded and crushed them. Their leading and able citizens were brought in as exiles and slaves to Babylon. The whole book of Joel can be divided into two parts: the call to repentance, and the age and time when the Spirit of God would fully reign. Joel emphasized that true repentance results in a divine transformation that would usher in the receiving of spiritual gifts which are manifestations of God's presence in the lives of persons and communities.

Isaiah 65: 17-25

Isaiah lived and worked in a difficult time. Though King Uzziah (Azariah) of Judah had a good start he later lifted up his heart against Jehovah. Uzziah's son Jotham was a god-fearing king to a certain measure but his son Ahaz was a worshipper of idols. Hezekiah however brought about a great revival of the people. During this time enemies distressed the kingdom of Judah: Edom, Syria, Israel and the Philistines. The ungodly kings of the northern kingdom of Israel had allied himself with Syria and continued to attack Judah ([2 Kings 15:37](#); [2 Kings 16:5-6](#); [2 Chronicles 28:5-6](#)). Instead of putting their trust in Jehovah the kings of Judah looked for refuge with Assyria

([2 Kings 16:7](#); [2 Chronicles 28:16](#)) but never got real help ([2 Chronicl28:20](#); [2 Chronicles 32:1](#)).
(Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

It is within this context of war and conflict that Isaiah prophesied about the “new heaven and the new earth”. His pronouncements about this new life contrasted the life that the people have endured for a very long time. It is not an improved version of the life in Israel nor that of Judah but a vision of an entirely new life. In this new creation, the quality of life will be totally different from what people are experiencing. Instead of grieving, there will be rejoicing. People will not go weary nor hungry; people will enjoy life as God intended it to be. In this vision of new creation, people and the rest of creation will live in peace and harmony and in perfect fellowship with God.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn “Forward Through the Ages”
(Tune: St. Gertrude, “Onward Christian Soldiers”)
Forward through the ages in unbroken line,
Move the faithful spirits at the call divine.
Gifts in differing measures, hearts of one accord,
Manifold the service, one the sure reward.

Refrain: Forward through the ages in unbroken line
Move the faithful spirits at the call divine.

Wider grows the vision reign of love and light
For it we must labor, till our faith is sight
Prophets have proclaimed it, martyrs testified
Poets sung its glory, heroes for it died. (Refrain)

Opening Prayer

Our most loving God, we come together to manifest our longing and need to connect with you and our fellow believers. We are grateful for the opportunity of making this day meaningful through worship and study. Be with us today. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

Getting Ready

GAME: CHARADE. Ask two volunteers to act out the word which is written on a piece of paper. Let the other learners guess the words.

- a. Vision
- b. Dream
- c. Hope

- d. Future
- e. Fantasy
- Can you distinguish the similarities as well as the differences between the words that were acted out? Mention them.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read the text in Joel 2: 28

- To whom was the prophecy addressed?
- Who were to see vision according to the prophecy? Why so?
- Who were to dream dreams? Why so?
- Who were to speak prophesies? Why so?
- How would you respond to the prophecy of Joel?

Read the text in Isaiah 65: 17-25

- What is the vision the prophet Isaiah proclaimed?
- How would you describe the kind of life people will have if the vision is realized?
- Do you think the people in Isaiah's time need such vision? Why

Lessons Learned

THE UCCP VISION. Post the Vision of the UCCP written on a Manila paper or tarpaulin for everybody to see.

Questions:

- How do you feel about our vision?
- What is your opinion of our church's vision?
- Why should we include others, the world and the rest of creation in our aspirations as a church?
- Suppose you are given an opportunity to change a statement or any part of the church's vision, what would it be?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- Ask the learners to suggest ways in which they can help or participate for the realization of the church's Vision.
- Have them share it to the whole class.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn

“One More Step ”

One more step along the world I go,
 One more step along the world I go,
 From the old things to the new
 Keep me travelling along with you.

Chorus: And it's from the old I travel to the new,
Keep me travelling along with you.

As I travel through the bad and good,
Keep me travelling the way I should,
Where I see no way to go,
You'll be telling me the way I know.

Closing Prayer

We offer to you our vision as a church, O God. Though it seem hard to realize but we believe with your power and grace, we can accomplish anything. May it be worthy of your blessing and guidance. Move us all O Lord to participate in its realization, as it is our expression of obedience to your will and promise. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

Lesson 7: **Why does a church need to have a vision?**

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 28, 2019

General Concept: The church needs a vision to set the direction of its journey towards the fulfillment of God's work.

Biblical References: Proverbs 29:18, Acts 2 and 4

Age- Level Concepts

- The Church needs a vision to set the direction of its journey towards the fulfillment of God's work.
- The Church needs to have a basis for uniting all its members to participate in its life and work in the world.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Watch a video documentation of the Church's journey.
- Share stories of their journey of faith as a church.
- Commit to continue to be part of the Church's journey and actively participate in the realization of the Church's Vision.

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

Biblical Background

Proverbs 29:18

The prophets in the Old Testament times are believed to be bearers of God's message, may it be a pronouncement, announcement or denouncement. Nevertheless, they proclaimed not what people wanted to hear but what God wants to say. Prophets bring words of destruction, a call for

repentance and visions of hope and restoration. The intended hearers of these prophetic pronouncements might as well listen to avoid loss and suffering and act according to God's will in order to have life as God intended for the people to live.

Acts 2: 42-47, Acts 4: 32-35

The Early Christian community manifested a different kind of life that attracts other people around them. They exuded a strong sense of unity, fellowship, worship, study and care for those in need to the point that they brought their money and possessions together from which help can be extended according to the needs of people. This kind of community life inspired other believers from different places to emulate and live out. Our church today looked at this early church experience as something that believers need to look forward to and work on .

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Spirit Embracing Daughters"

Spirit embracing daughters, embracing sons
Pour out your power and peace
Help us accept with joy your promise of life
Grant that our rivalries cease.

Refrain:

We are called, we are free to declare God's wonderful grace,
We are called, we are free to proclaim good news in this place.

Spirit inviting elders, inviting young,
To dream of how we might live,
Send us a holy vision filled with Shalom,
Deepen the care that we give. (Refrain)

Opening Prayer

Pour out your spirit O Lord on us as you've done it with the early believers who have gathered in Your name. May our gathering bring us closer to you and our fellow believers. May our continuous study and learning unites us to journey in faith towards a common direction. Come, Holy Spirit, come. Amen

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read the text in Proverbs 29:18

- a. Why do you think a church or people should have a vision?
- b. What does the psalmist mean by "perish"?

Read the text in Acts 2: 42-47, Acts 4: 32-35

- a. How would you describe the life of the early Christians?
- b. What kind of a life did the early believers envision to build?
- c. How did the early believers live out their vision?

Lessons Learned

- A Video Documentation. UCCP History (Trekking the Road Less Traveled, Retelling our History). It would be very helpful if the video will be played to give our learners a glimpse of what the church had been through and where it aims to go and achieve.
- Questions:
 - What were the aspirations of the Church after it was established?
 - What were the challenges encountered by the Church as it journeys towards realization of its vision?
 - Can you say that from the beginning, the church's vision was already clear? How and Why?
 - What do you think are the reasons why the Church needs a vision?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Emphasize the following important points:

- The Church needs to have a vision to unite its members towards a common direction and purpose.
- The Church's vision will guide its people to a kind of life they are to live out – a life that is expected from those who received Jesus Christ.

Ask: "How would you unite others to participate in the Church's journey towards the realization of its vision?"

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "My Boat of Life Sails On an Angry Sea"

Hymnal of Faith Journey, 52

My boat of life sails on angry sea
The weather changes with each passing day.
Sometime it brings such happiness and joy,
Sometimes there's nothing but great anxiety.
There was a time when things were simply bad
The obstacles I faced were like a storm,
The sail was ripped, my rudder broke in two,
It didn't look like I'd made it safely home.

But in a raging wind I heard a voice
It said, "Don't be afraid, your faith is strong,

I am your pilot you won't lose your way,
You know I'll help you when everything goes wrong".
So now the wind can come, the wind can go,
I am no longer frightened by the sea,
When waters roar and dark clouds fill the sky,
I say, "It's alright, the Lord will be with me."

Closing Prayer

God of history and future, we commit ourselves to be part of our Church's journey towards the realization of its vision. We rely on your faithfulness and generosity to reach our intended direction. Bless us O God and grant us your favor. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

Lesson 8: What does it mean to be a responsible church?

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

August 4, 2019

General Concept: A responsible church can be trusted to actively do its mandated tasks for the realization of its vision.

Biblical References: 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 11: 23-30

Age Level Concepts

- A responsible church can be trusted to actively do its mandated tasks.
- A responsible Church can be trusted to work for the realization of its vision.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Discuss the manifestations of a responsible church.
- Share experiences of how the Church actively and responsibly performs its mandated tasks.
- Make a resolution to support the endeavors of the Church and become responsible in doing their tasks as members.

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

Biblical Background

1 Corinthians 15:58

This text is related to the discussion on resurrection. Questions were raised as to the importance of the teaching on resurrection to the life and faith of the believers. This issue caused doubt and hesitation among members of the community of faith. To ease their doubts, Paul explained the significance of resurrection by using the analogy of the seed that died on the ground and sprung up into a new life. Christian believers need to understand that though our earthly bodies die, we

look forward to a new life with God. With this knowledge, all believers should have no reason to be doubtful and hesitant but rather have confidence and purpose in their lives and work.

2 Corinthians 11: 23-30

Paul was prompted to write a letter the second time to the Christian believers in Corinth. This letter is different from the first one he sent. While in the first letter, he asserted his authority and discussed doctrines, the second one expresses more of his personal feelings and testimonies of his service for the Lord. Paul seemed to stress that he has rendered service and worked harder also as any of the apostles that came out. He even suffered more in the work of spreading the gospel to the point of death, again and again. More than all these, Paul even suffered an inner suffering that constantly ails him and caused him anxiety – his concern for the churches because he carry with him the problems of the church as if it was his own.

Paul’s letter is like telling the Christian believers that a responsible believer or community of faith for that matter, should never falter in doing its work nor faint in its faith despite sufferings and trials. And that no one should claim she/he has suffered more that anyone while doing God’s work.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn “You Are the Salt of the Earth” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 246

You are the salt for the earth O people, Salt for the Kingdom of God
Share the flavor of life O people, life in the Kingdom of God.

Refrain: Bring forth the Kingdom of mercy, bring forth the Kingdom of peace
Bring forth the Kingdom of justice, bring forth the city of God.

You are a light on the hill, O people, light for the city of God
Shine so holy and bright O people, shine for the Kingdom of God. (Ref.)

Opening Prayer

You blessed us this day O God and for that reason we come to you with grateful hearts. Bless our gathering today as we further discern our life as a church. Teach us O Lord to listen and speak the truth. Teach us your way through the study of your Word. Amen.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read the text in 1 Corinthians 15:58

- a. What could be the problems in the church of Corinth that prompted Paul to write?
- b. What was he trying to encourage the Christian believers to do?
- c. How would you explain “our labor in the Lord will not be in vain”?

Read the text in 2 Corinthians 11: 23-30

- a. What are the forms of sufferings Paul endured while doing his work?
- b. Why did Paul mention in his letter the trials he met?
- c. What do you think Paul tries to tell believers in his letter?

Lessons Learned

Our Church envisions to become a responsible church. A responsible church is a body of believers trusted to do its mandated tasks and work for the realization of its vision.

Questions:

1. How would you assess your local church in terms of its efforts in doing its tasks as a responsible church?
2. Can you share experiences of how the Church responsibly do its task?
3. What are the trials your church endured while doing responsibly its task?
4. Can you say that you belong to a responsible church?
5. How can we say that your church is responsible?
6. What can we do to show that we are responsible members of the church?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- One way of showing that we are responsible members of the Church is to commit ourselves to perform our mandated tasks and express support to the Church's efforts to realize its vision.
- Ask the class to make a resolution/ statement to this effect.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "Living for Jesus" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 289

Living for Jesus wherever I am
Doing each duty in his Holy Name
Willing to suffer affliction or loss
Deeming each trial a part of my cross.

Refrain: O Jesus Lord and Savior, your humble child I'll be
For you in your atonement, You gave yourself for me.
I have no other Savior, God's love to me you've shown
My life, my all, I'll give for you, O Christ for you alone.

Closing Prayer

You called us O Lord as your people not to be complacent and arrogant but to humbly serve and become trustworthy of your mission. Move us O Lord through your empowering spirit so that we may be able to manifest our support and commitment to participate in the work of the Church to reach its aspirations. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

Lesson 9: Why do we need to become a responsible church?

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

August 11, 2019

General Concept: We need to be a responsible church to express our love, obedience and accountability to God and God's people.

Biblical References: Isaiah 1: 16-17, Luke 12:32-40, Matthew 25: 14-30

Age Level Concepts

- We need to be a responsible Church because we have mandated tasks to do.
- We need to be a responsible church to express our love, obedience and accountability to God and God's people.

Learning Objectives

- By the end of the session, the learners should be able to
- Identify the mandated tasks of the Church for which the whole community of faith is accountable.
- Discuss how being responsible expresses our love for and obedience to God.
- Enumerate the consequences when the Church holds no accountability to the people and God.

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

Biblical Background

Isaiah 1:16-17

Isaiah's ministry happened during Judah's age of economic prosperity. Isaiah saw, however, that this prosperity was limited to the few and was not for all. Indeed, it was sham prosperity. At this time, Assyria rose to become a super power, thereby making Judah very vulnerable to invasion. But for Isaiah, the real threat to the nation was not Assyria but Judah's disobedience to God. Isaiah proclaimed that if they continue to disobey God, it would lead to doom and destruction. In verses 16-17 Isaiah reminds the people of Israel of the imperatives that they ought to follow as God's chosen people. They are to refrain from doing evil, strive to do good, seek justice, and care for the widows and orphans. This is their calling and task as followers of God, but they failed to do it. But, God always gives chances for people to change and eventually transform when God said "wash yourselves; make yourselves clean...." As the Church, the same call is meant for us. We are to transform ourselves in the way God wants us to. If the Church fails to fight against all forms of injustice, then it ceases to be a Church of God.

Luke 12:32-40

The Kingdom is God's gift to God's people. It is God's intent for people to dwell in God's Kingdom where peace and prosperity is experienced and shared by all. Yet, the receiving of this gift requires accepting great responsibility. In these verses, Jesus extols two significant important virtues: generosity and vigilance. We are called to give and be charitable to others

not only because we have much but because we are aware of the afflictions of others. Though it was meant to be a lesson for his followers, Jesus' words were also seen as a challenge for Rome; for Herod and their cohorts to divest themselves of riches that they have gotten at the expense of the people. This was also a challenge to the disciples. Even Peter asked, "Lord, was the parable for us, or for everyone?" Wealth is alluring but generosity is more valuable in the sight of God.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Ang Buluhaton sa Imong Ginghamarian"

"Work In Your Kingdom" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 302

Ang buluhaton sa imong ginghamarian

Magapadayon bisan sa kalisdanan

Sa taliwala sa among kaluyahon

Gamita O Dios Imong ulipon.

Way buluhaton dili namo mahimo

Kon igasalig tanan diha Kanimu

Himoa O Dios kaming magmakugihon

Magmalampuson katuyuan Mo.

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.

Opening Prayer

We continue to be grateful O God for the blessings we receive from You. The breaking of a new day comes with a promise of hope and challenge us to seek you in the lives of people around us. Thank you for this opportunity to speak, to listen and learn. Thank you for this chance to connect with you. Amen

Learning time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Ask somebody to read Isaiah 1: 16-17
 - To whom was the prophecy addressed?
 - What was the prophecy all about?

- What seem to be wrong with the people?
- How could the people prevent the prophecy from happening?
- What were the mandates God gave to the people through the prophet?
- Why should the people take heed of the prophecy?
- Let someone read Luke 12:32-40, : Matthew 25:14-30
 - Who was Jesus’ audience when he uttered these words?
 - What concern or issue that Jesus was trying address to?
 - What were Jesus’ mandates for people to do?
 - Do you believe that people should listen and follow Jesus’ words?

Lessons Learned

Ask the learners to fill in the table below.

God’s/ Jesus’ words (based on the texts)	Church’s mandated tasks	Results for doing the tasks	Consequences for not doing the tasks

Applying the Lessons Learned

- How would you justify the idea that being a responsible church is our expression of obedience and accountability to God and the people?

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn

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.

Closing Prayer

We strive to take heed of your call and do the tasks you commanded us to do not to show how responsible we are but to express or desire to follow and obey your words. We know that following your will requires us to take up our cross, but with your abiding presence, we are assured that our burden will be light. Make us O Lord worthy to be your presence in the world. In Jesus’ name. Amen

Lesson 10: What does it mean to be an empowered church?

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 18, 2019

General Concept: An empowered church is enabled and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Biblical References: Joshua 1:9; Galatians 5: 22-23

Age Level Concepts

- The Church is a community of believers empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- An empowered church is enabled and inspired by the Holy Spirit to do its tasks and live out its faith in the world.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Share stories and experiences of how the Holy Spirit empowers the Church.
- Discuss what an empowered Church can do.
- Commit to manifest the Holy Spirit's enabling power in the lives of the people and the Church.

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

Biblical Background

Joshua 1:9

Going through difficult circumstances and subjected to hostilities, Israel look forward to the land promised by God – the land flowing with milk and honey. But having seen Canaan from a distance and realized that they have to fight to take the land, the people seem to lose faith and confidence in God and in their strength as a people.

God's command to Joshua was brief and final: he was to take the land of Canaan. As the leader of the people, Joshua received the assurance of God's presence whatever they may do. In a way, the people were empowered to pursue and make God's promise a reality in their lives.

Galatians 5: 22-23

On the second missionary journey of Paul, he visited them and got sick. While he was unable to travel, Paul preached to them. They gladly accepted his teaching and a church was born. The church was doing well when Paul left them, but when the Jewish teachers came in troubles and issues arose affecting the faith of the believers. These Jewish teachers of the Law insisted that obedience of the Law is a must to receive salvation and that all believers should be circumcised. They even question the credibility of Paul being an apostle.

The letter of Paul to the Christians in Galatia was intended to correct the wrong teachings that prevailed among believers and to establish his apostolic authority. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul mentioned that if believers allow God's Spirit to take control of their lives, they would manifest virtues that goes beyond what is written in the law. Believers who lived by the Spirit are empowered and enabled by the Spirit.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Come, Holy Spirit, Come" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 175

Come, Holy Spirit come, show us your way
Through nightmare alleys of our history.
Entrust our children with builder's vision,
Empower them to soar above hate barriers,
For they shall lead us all together
To shape your new city in our time.

Come, Holy Spirit come, link arms and hearts
Unite us in our stand for truth and justice,
Entrust our children with builder's vision,
Empower them to soar above hate barriers,
For they shall lead us all together,
To break evil dens and prison cells.

Opening Prayer

Our most loving God, we thank you for this day of rest and learning. You brought us out from our daily undertakings and gave us this opportunity to affirm our faith through sharing of your words. Be with us today. In Jesus' name, we pray.
Amen

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read the text in Joshua 1:9

- a. What difficult circumstances do the people of Israel faces?
- b. What are the inner struggles does Joshua has?
- c. How did the people know that God is with them?

Read the text in Galatians 5: 22-23

- a. What could be the problems in the church that prompted Paul to write?
- b. What are the visible signs that the Spirit is present in the community of faith?
- c. Why should believers be mindful of the Spirit controlling their lives than following the letter of the Law?

Lessons Learned

- Sharing of Stories. Group the learners into small groups of 3. Ask them to share within their small group the following:

- Share experiences/ stories of how the Holy Spirit empowers them personally.
- Share experiences/stories of how the Holy Spirit empowers the local church.

Applying the Lessons Learned

- We believe that the Holy Spirit is a gift to the Church. Jesus made sure that when he leaves, the believers would remain steadfast in their faith and live it out in their daily lives.
 - What can an empowered church do?
 - What can we do as individual believers to show the work of the Holy Spirit in us?

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn “Breathe on Me, Breath of God” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 183

Breathe on me, Breathe of God
 Fill me with life anew
 That I may love what you do love
 And do what you would do.

Breathe on me, Breathe of God
 Until my heart is pure
 Until with you I will one will
 To do and to endure.

Closing Prayer

Pour out your Spirit in us so that we may live a life that is faithful and obedient to your purpose and will. Empowered by your Spirit, may we manifest our faith in service to your will. In Jesus’ name, Amen