



**MAKING THE  
TEACHINGS OF  
MOSES  
AND THE PROPHETS  
COME TRUE  
IN THESE  
CHANGING  
TIMES.**



**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES**

**Christian Education Month 2019**

**Celebration Guide**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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It's September once again! As we have known already, it is the month when the whole church celebrates its nurturing and educational task. During this time, we raise our concerns on how the local churches effectively carry out its responsibilities in nurturing and teaching the believers for their growth in faith and as persons created by God. Through our reflections and community worship, we engage the whole church to ponder upon the mandate of God to teach diligently God's word to generations.

As we celebrate Christian Education and Nurture Month, may we give time to listen to stories of faith from the children, youth, men and women of the church. May this guide unites us in spirit and in our service to our God – the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

We humbly express our gratitude to the people who in one way and another made this material for celebration possible. We especially mention,

- DM Jane Ella P. Montenegro – for sharing her *reflection for CEN Sunday*
- Rev. Lope B. Robin – for sharing his *reflection for Children's Sunday*
- Rev. Marcela Sacayle - for preparing the *liturgy for CEN Sunday*
- Rev. Martha Mantilla Faller – for preparing the *liturgy for Children's Sunday*
- Roka Unichu E. Camacho – who extended technical help in preparing the reflection for CEN Sunday

We praise God for the gifts bestowed upon the believers so that the Church can effectively and creatively do its nurturing and teaching task in the world. May this guide be of great in our preparation and celebration.

Bishop Melzar Labuntog

General Secretary, UCCP

# Christian Education Sunday

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## **A Reflection**

Prepared by DM Jane Ella P. Montenegro, SEMJA  
and Roka Unichu E. Camacho

## **“Will our Generation have a Living Faith?”**

**Psalm 78:1-7, Deut. 6:4-9**

### Introduction

Time and again our Biblical Faith reminds us, reprimands us, challenges and inspires us to be faithful to a Covenanting God. Our journeying foreparents from Abraham, Sarah, Hagar and Moses, Mirriam & Aaron on to the prophets, till Jesus’ time, the disciples and apostles – faced their cultures and lived their situations courageously, keeping the covenant and their faith alive.

This covenant with a living, loving God is reclaimed by every generation every time a male child is circumcised, at the dedication, christening, baptism or confirmation events, during the welcoming of the child’s existence in the mother’s womb at birthdays, pre-nuptial and wedding rites, death events, memorial services, reunions, anniversaries, including the celebration of the Holy Communion, Christmas season, the Holy Week celebration, the Easter celebration, the Pentecost season. Through all of these, we embrace again the covenant with God and intentionally pass this on to the next generation.

Tentatively, we maybe the 42<sup>nd</sup> generation plus 2000 years away from the faith-covenanting people to this present generation. Our materialistic, individualistic culture mainly imported from foreign, western lands have shaped our modern day Filipino Christians to take our faith in a living, loving God for granted despite the struggles of missionary work. The lures of greener pastures, the get-rich quick gimmicks, other worldly theologies, mediocre Biblical trainings and the importation of all kinds of theologies and ideologies, the political games of the powerful have shaped the average Filipino psyche in a condition of smug and relaxed, easy-going Christian living.

A few families or young people in the congregation may be fired up with a vibrant adoration in the name of Jesus Christ. And fewer persons still would go into soul – searching to let her/his spirit be attuned to God’s Spirit.

Now, let us look more closely into the intergenerational disparity and gaps that confront us now as Filipino Christian individuals, families and churches.

### Our Challenge

**Text: Psalms 22-23-31, Galatians 3:25-29, Romans 8:35-38**

These may be three different texts, but if we are to go deeper into the content of these texts, we could sum up the essence of these into two. First, is the assurance that our Lord God loves us so much and surely accepts us with open and loving arms if we choose to be one with God through our genuine faith and love. The second is God’s call for us to live our faith and spread the good news within ourselves, in the church, in the society, and in the world which really needs it.

Whatever way we respond to God’s call, there are reality issues which affect or even hinder us from doing the things which need to be done as our response to God’s call. There are factors which can deviate us from following God’s will and lead us to go astray at some point. And these factors can be summed up as the truths of today.

### **THE SAD TRUTHS OF TODAY:**

- 1. The first truth is that, there are still lots of Filipino Christians who claim that they believe in God but they do not give much importance anymore in going to church. This mind set is common to people from Generation X and Generation Y. before we go deeper into this reflection, let us first discuss briefly the salient features of the different generations. Let us start with the **Traditionals**, otherwise known as the **Silent Generation (1925-1945)**. This is the generation which experienced the economic crisis and terrors of World War II. Because of these, they have been living with utmost sense of discipline, Faith, and the struggle for survival due to the crises that they experienced.*

*The Traditionals were followed by the **Baby Boomers (1946-1964)** who were born after the Second World War, in the times when the economy was still down and was still struggling to get back from the destruction brought about by World War II and there was still a crisis on the inavailability of a stable source of income. However, despite these extremely difficult situations, they still had this consciousness of giving much importance on discipline and family relationships which have been passed onto them by the Traditionals. They gave much importance on strengthening of the Filipino family bond and they were still giving much regard on Faith and Christian values.*

*They were followed by **Generation X (1965-1980)** who were born at the time when the Philippine economy was now slowly yet constantly recovering and becoming more stable. Sources of livelihood were already available. However, there was still a considerable number of them who experienced the crisis since opportunities were not equally given during their time or those opportunities were only for those who could afford. Due to this, the people of Generation X gave more importance on struggling to survive and to thrive and escape from the dire situation of financial crisis. They invested so much time and effort to succeed and save their respective families from the crisis which haunted them and gave too much time on succeeding, thereby compromising the practice of going to church. This is one of the major reasons why studies show that  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the population of Generation X have no religious affiliation. Moreover, the Martial Law Regime brought unprecedented terror in the country sides. War torn communities & hamletting depleted farm income and insurgency was on the rise. Churches were split. Countless Christians stood for Jesus' Way, Truth, and Life. Church delineation was no longer effective. Ecumenism, embracing other Christians and non-Christians became the order of the day. And the Living Faith in God continued.*

*The next generation is Generation Y or the so-called "Millennials" (1981-1994) who were born during the time when the economy had slowly recovered, and they had also experienced the different evidences of development and progress. It was post-Martial Law time. The mind set of Generation X was to prioritize the accomplishment of life goals as passed on to them with the principle called "YOLO or You Only Live Once", which made them fonder of travelling and going*

*to different, beautiful places. They were also greatly influenced by the social media to the point that the term “Virtual World” was coined wherein most of the social interactions of the people were done in the virtual world and its sad effect is that it significantly minimized one’s interaction with those people who were physically and directly around them. By giving too much attention on achieving their life goals and enjoying their youth at the same time, a growing member of Millennials did not bother going to church anymore. As a matter of fact, studies show that 1/3 of the population of Generation Y have no religious affiliation anymore.*

*The present generation today, is the Generation Z or the “Post-Millennial Generation” (1995-Present) who are considered as the Digital Natives. The gadgets, and social media have really become a significant part of their lives. This Generation is very unpredictable. It seems they have a lot of going through in their minds and if we are going to look at the trend, there is a huge tendency that there will be more members of the Generation Z who will not have religious affiliation anymore at all. It may be a common knowledge for us that going to church is not the only way for us to strengthen our relationship with God and enhance our Spiritual Life. But it is also an undeniable fact that doing so essentially and spiritually does help a lot.*

- 2. There is also an emerging and alarming reality that many Christians nowadays are giving much importance on money even if it means that the common good and general welfare are being compromised. One of its major examples nowadays are the events which happened during the recent election which has now become a game of money and not of integrity and sincerity to serve the people anymore.*

*There are also other persons in positions of authority who, even if it is not necessary anymore, would still pursue mining because they will get lots of money from it ignoring the dire effects of mining to the environment at present and the growing risk that there will be nothing left for the next generation anymore. It seems that everything like handing down the resources and handing down the Faith is already forgotten in the name of money and power.*

*It can also be observed that the emergence of KAPA, Rigen, Ever Arm, Forex and other easy-money schemes simply show that people nowadays are too in love with money. In this case, easy money, which could lead to a more dependent and lazy society prioritizes money over values of sharing resources and upholding our dignity as a people of worth is lost.*

- 3. Another sad reality today is the fact that there are too many versions which claim to be the Truth. We are now living in a world of uncertainty wherein we do not know what the truth is anymore and we are caught up in the middle as to what to believe in. This confusion is not only present in the society, it is even present in our spiritual lives. There are too many people who claim that they are right, that they are the bearers of truth, but the truth is, only God knows what the truth really is.*

*Those realities which are presented have really affected us in our journey towards following the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. Despite this, we must not be discouraged because our Lord has given us the assurance through the Biblical message that we just hold onto Him with genuine faith. Then we could get through all of the trials and even strengthen our relationships with God.*

The main challenge for us now is how to really live with our faith and embody the values of Christian living in our daily lives for us to really experience the presence and love of our Lord Jesus Christ in our lives. If we have already experienced the presence and love of our Lord Jesus Christ in our daily lives, it is then our responsibility to help our brothers and sisters in experiencing the presence of our God through the way we talk, and the way we live our lives so that we may become effective messengers of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need also to be bravely strong and not be fazed by the realities of life and really live our Christian life so that we may show to the present and future generations the value and the beauty of living a life in accordance to God's will. In that way, we could meaningfully set a good example to them which they may carry as they go on with their lives; a life, which hopefully seeks God before anything else.

- *As a Community of Faith, do we have alternative routes?*

- *Are we connecting the depression, bipolarism, cancer, tumor, diabetic, stress wreaked, suicidal attempts, HIV-aids, drug addiction syndrome, early pregnancies and marital infidelities in our midst to the restlessness of our souls and spirits?*
- *Have we continued to carry on the family devotions at home, in parks, in picnics, in reunions & pre-nuptial rites, and other family gatherings?*
- *Do we have a room or a sacred place somewhere or family altars where we could kneel before God, to praise and confess, request and give thanks for salvation and assurance.*
- *Are we trying as newly-married or long-married couples, children, kasambahay, growing youth, or in any stage of development when our personalities are altered, to bridle our tongue, control our tempers, and discipline our eating/drinking habits?*
- *Have we offered to Creator God, time to be in touch with the soil, time to listen to the chirping of the birds, time to cuddle astray kitten and name her “Gentle” instead of “Naughty”?*
- *Are we “letting go” of positions and possessions so others may simply live?*
- *Are we considering the next generation following us – every time we eat fruits from the land, drink water from the mineral bottles, wash dishes with water flowing from faucets?*
- *Are we willing to stand-by with a sick parent, forego classes or career for a while and wait patiently, read the Psalms slowly, sing hymns gratefully to God as we await our loved one to breathe her last?*
- *Are we preparing ourselves with the young ones to go home to God as we await for the “Big One” – the catastrophic earth quake when the earth is removed and though the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea nurturing them not to panic, for God is our refuge and strength? (Ps.46)*

*Friends, are we willing and prepared to follow God’s will, be obedient to the covenant with God to follow Jesus’ way, in the name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit...*

*The question still is, are we really willing and prepared?*



### **Sources:**

- The Truism of Wellness by Ralph Ryback M.D. (psychologytoday.com )
- The Religious Beliefs and Behaviors of Baby Boomers, Generation X, and the Millennials: Are there Still Gender Differences? – A study by Jessica Chase of the University of Central Florida
- Data Gathering Procedure: Participant Observation and Informal Interviews
- The Holy Bible. (ERV) Bible League International

## **ORDER OF THE LITURGY**

Prepared by: Rev. Marcela Sacayle, NLJ

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### **Christian Education and Communion Sunday**

**Silent Meditation:** *The UCCP recognizes that nurturing the faith is part of its primary responsibility” - the UCCP CBL, article 11*

**PRELUDE/PROCESSIONAL:** Preacher, Worship Leader, Bible Reader, Candle lighting

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Worship Leader:** We celebrate you, Creator of all good things.

**Congregation:** God of wonder, we come together as a community of faith.

**Adults:** We worship you, Savior and Redeemer.

**ALL:** God of love, we come together as a community of faith.

**Children/CYF:** We feel your presence, Spirit of truth and knowledge.

**ALL:** God of wisdom, we come together as a community of faith.  
Bless our time together as we worship you in faith and thanksgiving.

#### **HYMN OF PRAISE**

“The Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 1

The Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, Is the Great Triune God of our lives,  
All creation finds purpose and meaning, and fulfillment in God’s wondrous plan.  
In Christ God became flesh to dwell among us, Through the Spirit we’re guided along.  
God empower us all to live out our faith, to the glory of the triune God.

We’re created to be in God’s image, Men and women in equality,  
God anointed us all for His service, and be stewards of all God’s great works.  
To live in communion of all creation, and establish a just social life,  
God created the world for us to enjoy, all the blessings that tells of God’s love.

God’s inspired instrument to instruct us, Is the Bible the great Word of God  
To illumine to guide and correct us; And to brighten our pathway to heaven  
God is working to make us new beings in Christ, and the whole world God’s Kingdom to be,

Where God's presence is felt, the hungry are fed, the oppressed and the captives are freed.

We have triumphed o'er death with our Savior; Jesus Christ is our own risen Lord.  
He will gather us all in His fullness; to inherit the Kingdom of God.  
He has given the gift of eternal life; So that all who believe may be saved  
We all look forward to His coming again. To gather us all in His fold.

### **+INVOCATION (Unison)**

Holy God, the Creator of heavens and of earth, we invoke your presence in this gathering of your people. Be with us as we turn to you for we do not know how to speak or what to ask. Send to us the wind and flame of your transforming presence to lift up the church in this day, in the kindling our friendship and fellowship. Come to us in amidst uncertainties and brokenness. Come to us and open our ears to the weeping of the world; eyes that we may see your vision of peace and justice; mouths that we may the voice for those who are silenced by fear and violence. We pray to be one with you so that the world may believe that we belong to you. Amen

### **GREETINGS AND CHURCH CONCERNS**

**Pastor**

**FELLOWSHIP SONG:** "OUR UNITY" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 264

O how beautiful to feel unity that we now share  
As we come to worship, in this house of prayer.

We are all in one accord doing service to you Lord  
Meeting all the challenge constantly abiding.

When it's time for us to part with fond mem'ries in our hearts  
Let the love that binds us keep us all with you Lord.

Now we thank you, O God for your everlasting love,  
Let us all with gladness thank you for your goodness.

### **PRAYER OF THE CONGREGATION (responsively)**

**Leader:** God of wisdom, thank you for the gifts of knowledge, understanding and wisdom you have bestowed upon those who ensure that our children and young people get the best from their schools. Reward their selfless enthusiasm with your loving guidance. Bless all the staff in our schools, from caretakers and administrators to teachers and principals. Thank you for their counsel, patience and care.

**Children & Young people:** *We light this candle as a symbol of thanksgiving for every person who helped us become who we are today. (Candle is lighted).*

**Parents:** Thank you for our children. Guide them in the knowledge of your loving presence. We pray for our young people, for the teachers: in Sunday school, in school and in our Church. God, remind us this day of the many ways we have been taught by you and the way you speak to us through our teachers and leaders. Help each one of us to share in word and deed the love and grace we received from you. Teach us to teach each other.

**Young Adults:** We open this Bible, a faithful witness that helps us believers in our practice and understanding of our faith and these Sunday school materials as instruments through which You speak to us and challenge us to do our task in our time (*the Bible is placed at the altar and with Sunday school materials*).

**ALL:** O Eternal God, bless all schools, colleges and universities that they may become lively centers for sound learning, new discovery and the pursuit of wisdom. Grant that those who teach and those who learn may find You to be the source of all truth. Amen.

**CALL TO CONFESSION:**

Leader: We are guilty of many errors and mistakes. One of those mistakes is our abandonment or neglect of our basic task and ministry – teaching and nurturing. Today, we are reminded of our mandate to teach generations after generations about God’s salvific intention for the whole of creation. Let us humbly confess our wrongdoings and failures. As a community, let us ask God for mercy and forgiveness.

**SONG OF PENITENCE**      “Have Mercy on Us, Lord” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 87

Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy on us  
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy on us  
Have mercy on us, Lord, Have mercy on us.

Have mercy on us, Christ, have mercy on us  
Have mercy on us, Christ, have mercy on us  
Have mercy on us, Christ, have mercy on us.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (Unison)

O God, you have made us your noble creatures and  
Your Son did pray that all your children may be one in you;

We come with repentance for our resistance to your purposes,  
And for the sin of our willful division one from another,  
We ask forgiveness for our secret vice of pride,  
For prejudice nourished as virtue,  
For self-will  
For scorn of others  
For indifference to those who share our life and common lot.

We look with sorrow upon the hostility and violence in our world,  
The hard bitterness of struggle within the human family  
The agony, the pain.  
As we look with sorrow upon the broken fabric of your church,  
Split by schism, indifference, apathy  
More anxious often to save a fragment of oneself  
Than the whole of humankind,  
For closed minds.

For insensitive hearts,  
For denial of the worth of others,  
For exclusiveness which has kept out persons of good will,  
And has closed our understanding to people of ill will,  
And all these for our lack of knowledge of you and your will;  
Receive our contrition  
And heal us of the sin which keeps us apart. Amen

(CEN Guide to Celebration, 1991)

### **++ AFFIRMATION OF GOD'S PARDON**

(Both sides of the congregation turn to center aisle, and face each other. Or, tell the worshippers to find a partner and face each other)

ALL: In the name of Christ, I speak His word to you: "I am one of you, I died and rose as one of you. I know who you are. I feel what you feel. I forgive your wrongs and so I give you power to change your lives and to see your worth as children of God with me.

MINISTER: "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE"

ALL: THANK YOU LORD, FOR GIVING US NEW LIFE! THAT'S REAL LIFE. AND THAT'S LIVING. AMEN

### **+SCRIPTURE READING**

Response: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. "2X.

### **MESSAGE THROUGH SONG**

### **MESSAGE IN WORD**

#### **HYMN OF PREPARATION "Sa Dulang ng Ama" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 261**

Here on the table spread, we shall make a pact of solidarity  
The cracked and broken pot we shall place them at the table of our God  
And together we shall share the grief  
And together share the nation's wounds  
In this place we need to till and sow, Plant the seed of liberating spirit.  
Here at one table build, 'stablish and erect,  
Together celebrate, upon the festive meal of truth,  
One in hope we are united; Let love and peace be celebrated  
On justice firm and solid ground.

### **THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION**

#### **CALL TO GIVING**

**Leader:** Through Christ let us continually praise God and share what we have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

### **THE GIVING OF LIFE, TALENTS AND TREASURE TO GOD**

## **+DOXOLOGY**

### **LITANY OF CELEBRATION FOR THE TEACHING MINISTRY**

Christian Education Director/ Minister: O Creator God, who bestows gifts and appointed people for different tasks and purpose. Claim us today for your service that we may glorify you. Empower us to your cause that our differing capacities and talents may be put to good use in ushering in your Kingdom.

All: We thank you Lord, with our hearts and minds!

A Sunday/ Church School Teacher: For all that we have been enabled to do, we give You thanks! For all the youth and children who have received the Word- who have learned to do certain things, who have discovered the importance of community; who learn to care for others and show concern for the whole of creation; for knowing who they are and whose they are..

All: We thank you Lord, with our hearts and minds!

A Member of CEN Committee: For all that we have been enabled to, we give you thanks! For the meetings we had and more meetings to come, we know you are with us, Lord! For the gift of good listening, planning, implementing, writing and teaching.

All: We thank and praise O God for the lives dedicated to the task of teaching. For all that we have accomplished and continue to accomplish in your name. Amen!

### **HYMN OF DEDICATION TO GOD'S SERVICE**

“Called as Partners in Christ’s Service” Jane Parker Huber, 1981

Called as partners in Christ’s service, called to ministries of grace,  
We respond with deep commitment, fresh new lines of faith we trace,  
May we learn the art of sharing, side by side and friend with friend,  
Equal partners in our caring, to fulfill God’s chosen end.

Christ’s example, Christ’s inspiring, Christ’s clear call to work and worth,  
Let us follow never faltering, reconciling folk on earth,  
Men and women; richer, poorer, all God’s people young and old,  
Blending human skills together, gracious gifts from God unfold.

Thus new pattern for Christ’s mission, in a small or global sense,  
Help us bear each other’s burdens, breaking down each wall or fence,  
Words of comfort, words of vision; words of challenge said with care,  
Bring new power and strength for action, make us colleagues free and fair.

So God grant us for tomorrow, ways to order human life,  
That surround each person’s sorrow, with a calm that conquers strife,

Make us partners in our living, our compassion to increase,  
Messengers of faith thus giving, hope and confidence and peace.

### **BENEDICTION**

**-Response:** “The Kingdom of God is where God Is” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 380  
The Kingdom of God is where god reigns  
A place of love, joy and peace.  
The Kingdom of God is where God reigns  
A place of love, joy and peace.

(Those who are able may rise at this sign  $\pm$ )

Reference: A liturgy for Christian Education Kick-off Sunday by Nancy McSpadden

## **CHILDREN’S SUNDAY**

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**A Reflection**

**by: Rev. Lope B. Robin, Th. D., N.D./N.M.D**

**“THE IMPERATIVE OF NURTURING THE CHILDREN IN THESE CHANGING TIMES”**

**Biblical Text: Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

### **Introduction**

While we equally give attention to nurturing the faith of all sectors in the UCCP in our observance of Christian Education and Nurture month, special attention is directed toward the children for obvious reason—the future of our Church lies on them. On this Children Sunday and in consonance with the UCCP’s theme in this ecclesiastical year, I wish to highlight the imperative of nurturing the children in these changing times.

### **Nurturing the Children: A Divine Imperative**

Our text in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 that is popularly known in biblical studies as the *SHEMA*, which means, “*hear you..*,”<sup>1</sup> is the core in the series of statutes and instructions from God relayed by Moses to the Israelites. In all of Moses’ instructions and teachings, it is in this section that he is very emphatic in emphasizing before the Israelites the primacy of faith in their existence. He made it clear to the Israelites that in order for them to continue to enjoy God’s favor they have to firmly hold on to their faith confession that there is only one God. Such faith has to be nurtured and strengthened through serious observance of the Law and other statutes. This faith affirmation ought to be systematically imparted to their children with exceptional diligence. The responsibility of nurturing the children in the faith was primarily entrusted to the heads of the

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<sup>1</sup> Achtemeier, Paul. Ed, *Harpers Bible Dictionary*, (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1985) p. 939.

family—the fathers. Moses strongly impressed upon them that nurturing the children can never be taken for granted since this is very essential in building up their identity as the people of God. In fact, this task should take precedence over all other things.

Learning from Moses' instructions to the Israelites, we Christian parents in particular and the Church in general have so much responsibility of nurturing our children in the faith. Indeed, it is a divine imperative that we ought to fulfill. As we can glean from Moses' instruction, being busy should never be a reason to neglect this divinely ordained task. Nurturing the children in the faith ought to be given special focus and attention in every home and in our Church so that as they grow old they will not depart from it, says the wisdom writer. That in their early years, they would be made to realize and conscious on the primacy of faith in our life. Faith is the most important navigational guide for all of us as we navigate in these changing times. In line with this, it is important to cultivate their young hearts and minds the love to grow in the knowledge of God's Word so that their faith will be deeply rooted.

### **Children Ought to be Rooted in God's Word**

Let us note that the ultimate goal of the *SHEMA* was to make the Israelites deeply rooted in God's Word. This in effect would prepare them spiritually when they finally occupy and settle in the Promised Land where idolatry also abounds. That the Israelites especially their children will not be lured to embrace the lifestyle and practices of the inhabitants of the land that run counter to the statutes of God especially the idol worship. God through Moses instructed the Israelites to hold firmly on their faith confession that there is only one God whom alone they should serve and be given their complete allegiance.

Through the theme of this ecclesiastical year, our Church acknowledges that we are living in a precarious period of our history as Filipinos wherein the culture of violence and death proliferate and at the same time we are not spared from the changes taking place in the world. These changes affect our families, church, society and the whole creation in variety of ways. And the most vulnerable sector in both the church and society are the children. Hence, our children have to be properly guided so that they will not be swallowed up by the culture of violence and the changes that are taking place especially those that destroy their values.

Most if not all of us are aware that we are now living in technological era—the rise of social media. None of us can escape its impact. Nonetheless, we cannot also discount the positive side of technology. Through technology, life has become easier wherein we can easily access to different kinds of information and we can easily connect with our families and friends around the world.

But the negative effect of social media is also terrifying especially to our children. Social media has gradually eroded the moral fiber of our society and in some degree has affected the church as well. Because they are hooked to their gadgets, family members have no more time to

communicate with each other resulting to disintegration of families. It has enticed our young people and children to consumerism, online gaming and worst—gambling. It has been used by certain individuals and institutions to destroy the reputation of people. It has also become an instrument in propagating fake news even in times of calamities. Some irresponsible individuals are also using social media for cyber bullying that has mostly victimized young people and children. The reported number of suicide among young people and children due to cyber bullying is very alarming.

The potent guide that our children need in this technological age is the Word of God. As what the Psalmist affirms: *“your word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path”* (Ps. 119:105). Inasmuch as Moses was very serious about ensuring that the children of Israel be deeply rooted in God’s statutes when they were about to enter into a new social environment, in like manner we parents in particular and the Church in general should see to it that our children are deeply rooted in God’s Word as we live in these changing times. Being rooted in God’s Word will enable our children to withstand against the lure of modernity that mostly destroys their values and character. The Word of God provides wisdom and enlightenment upon our children as they grow. Enabling them to identify and embrace the truth over falsehood. Guides them to distinguish and uphold everything which promotes life over anything which discredits it.

### **Conclusion**

The challenge before us then in these changing times is to be more intentional and aggressive in nurturing our children in the faith by teaching them the Word of God with utmost diligence. Being rooted in God’s Word enables our children to withstand against everything that lures them to deviate from the right path of life.

## **ORDER OF THE LITURGY CHILDREN’S SUNDAY**

Prepared by Rev. Martha Manilla Faller, SLJ

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### **WORDS TO PONDER**

*“I took a piece of living clay,  
And gently formed it day by day  
And molded with my power and art,  
A young child’s soft and yielding heart.*

*I came again when years had done  
It was an adult I looked upon  
You could see that early impress bore  
But to be changed – nevermore.”*



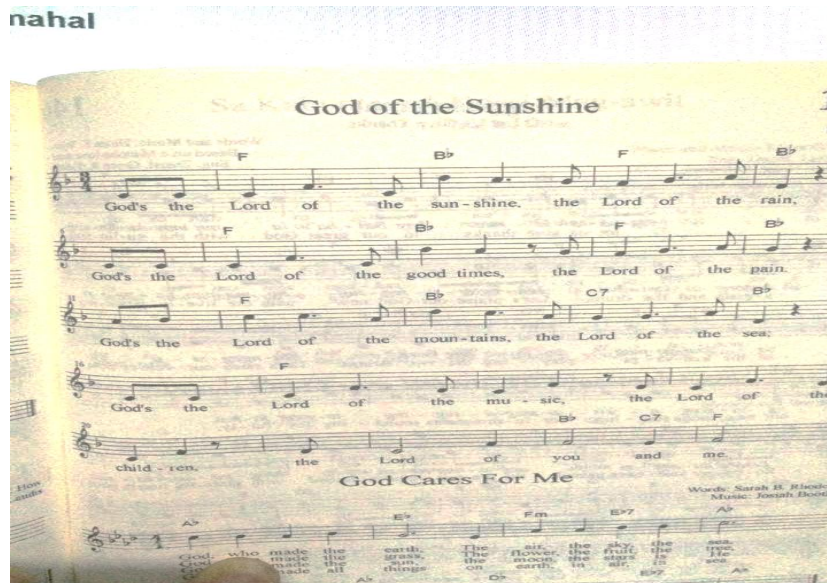
PIANO/GUITAR PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL

LIGHTING OF CHRIST CANDLE

OPENING SONG

*"God of the Sunshine"*



God's the Lord of the sunshine, the Lord of the rain  
God's the Lord of the good times, the Lord of the pain  
God's the Lord of the mountains, the Lord of the sea  
God's the Lord of the music, the Lord of the children  
The Lord of you and me.

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (to be led by one voice, several voices, or responsively)

When the disciples tried to keep children from Jesus,

***Jesus said "Let the children come to me!"***

When the disciples wanted to send hungry people away, saying there were too many to feed,

***Jesus said we can feed them!***

When a parent whose child was in terrible trouble came to Jesus,

***Jesus said he would help!***

When a woman in poverty gave what she could,

***Jesus honored her generosity.***

We gather in the name of that Jesus who welcomed the children, fed hungry people, helped children in trouble, and recognized the gifts of those in poverty. On this Children's Sunday, let us follow him in word and in deed.

## HYMN OF PRAISE

"All Things Bright and Beautiful" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 229

INGS AND HYMNS

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**ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL**  
*Carl F. Alexander, 1829-1891*  
*In unison*  
**REFRAIN**  
*ROYAL CHURCH 2:27-8 with Refrain*  
*Traditional English Melody*  
*Adapted by Maria Shaw, 1877*

All things bright and beau-ti - ful, All crea-tures great and small,  
All things wise and won - der - ful, The Lord God made them all.

1 Each lit - tle flower that o - pens, Each lit - tle bird that sings,  
2 The pur - ple-head - ed moun-tain, The riv - er run - ning by,  
3 The cold wind in the win - ter, The pleas-ant sum-mer sun,

God made their glow-ing col - ors, And made their ti - ny wings.  
The sun-set, and the morn-ing That bright-ens up the sky,  
The ripe fruits in the gar - den, God made them ev - ery one.

Repeat Refrain

Refrain: All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful, our dear God made them all.

Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings  
God made their glowing colors, and made their tiny wings.

The purple headed mountain, the river running by  
The sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky.

The cold wind in the rain time, the pleasant summer sun  
The ripe fruits in the garden, God made them everyone.

## INVOCATION

Dear God, thank you for caring and loving us through our parents and dear ones. You know all our needs, for once you were a child laughing, crying, pestering, joking, learning,

playing, working, growing. May we grow reflecting Your life spend in compassion and love, caring, helping, teaching, uplifting, and healing. Help us to live as You want us to be. Make us instruments of Your love and that in loving and caring, people will see You in us. May You be glorified in this hour of worship. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

**Liturgist:** At school, at work, at home and everywhere, we often try hard to look like we're perfect, like we're doing all right. But God knows that's not true – that we make mistakes, get it wrong, say or do something we shouldn't or wish we hadn't. God doesn't want us to pretend to be perfect. Instead, God invites us to confess our sin, trusting Jesus' promise that we are loved and forgiven, and make a new start with God and each other.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION (all)**

God of all and not just some, we confess that when some have too much and others too little, we have not proclaimed Your justice.

When some have been surrounded by love and others excluded, we have not reached out with your radical inclusion.

When some have been set on easy paths forward and others left to stumble over obstacles, we have not cleared the way as Jesus admonished.

When some are nurtured and others abandoned, we have not embraced them with your love.

When some are encouraged and others disheartened, we have not spoken Your Word of hope.

Forgive us, we pray, for the ways we have not lived up to the scope of Your vision, the depth of Your love, the wideness of Your embrace.

God of all and not just some, help us to embody Your love and speak Your justice until every child may live into the fullness of the promise for which You created them.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus who came for all and not just some. Amen.

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**Minister:** Listen! I have something to say! God sent "God's own child Jesus that we might know ourselves to be loved and forgiven children of God. Hear and believe the Good News: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

### **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

### **COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

## THE CHURCH AT PRAYER

**SONG RESPONSE**      “Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 181  
   (2<sup>nd</sup> Stanza only)  
   I ask no dream no prophet ecstasies,  
   No sudden rending of the veil of clay  
   No angel visitant, no opening skies  
   But take the dimness of my soul away.

## SCRIPTURE READING

**SONG RESPONSE**      “Hymn of a Faith Journey” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 1  
   (3<sup>rd</sup> stanza only)  
   God’s inspired instrument to instruct us, Is the Bible, the great Word of God  
   To illumine, to guide and correct us, and to brighten our pathway to heaven.  
   God is working to make us new beings in Christ, and the whole world, God’s kingdom to be  
   Where God’s presence is felt, the hungry are fed, the oppressed and the captives are freed.

## ANTHEM

## SERMON

## LITANY OF RESPONSE

**Leader:** Who is the greatest?  
         **All:** The one who can change.  
**Leader:** Who is the greatest?  
         **All:** The one who can become like a child.  
**Leader:** Who is the Greatest?  
         **All:** The one who becomes humble.  
**Leader:** If we cause a child to stumble,  
         **All:** We will be blocking the best hope of this world.  
**Leader:** If we welcome a child,  
         **All:** We will be welcoming You, O God.  
**Leader:** Our never-ending hope,  
         **All:** The eternal God-child, even Jesus the Christ.

## DEDICATION OF LIFE AND GIFT

### Call to Dedication (Liturgist)

Today we listen to Paul who said: “And now I commend you to the care of God and to the message of God’s grace, which is able to build you up and give you the blessings of God has for all people.

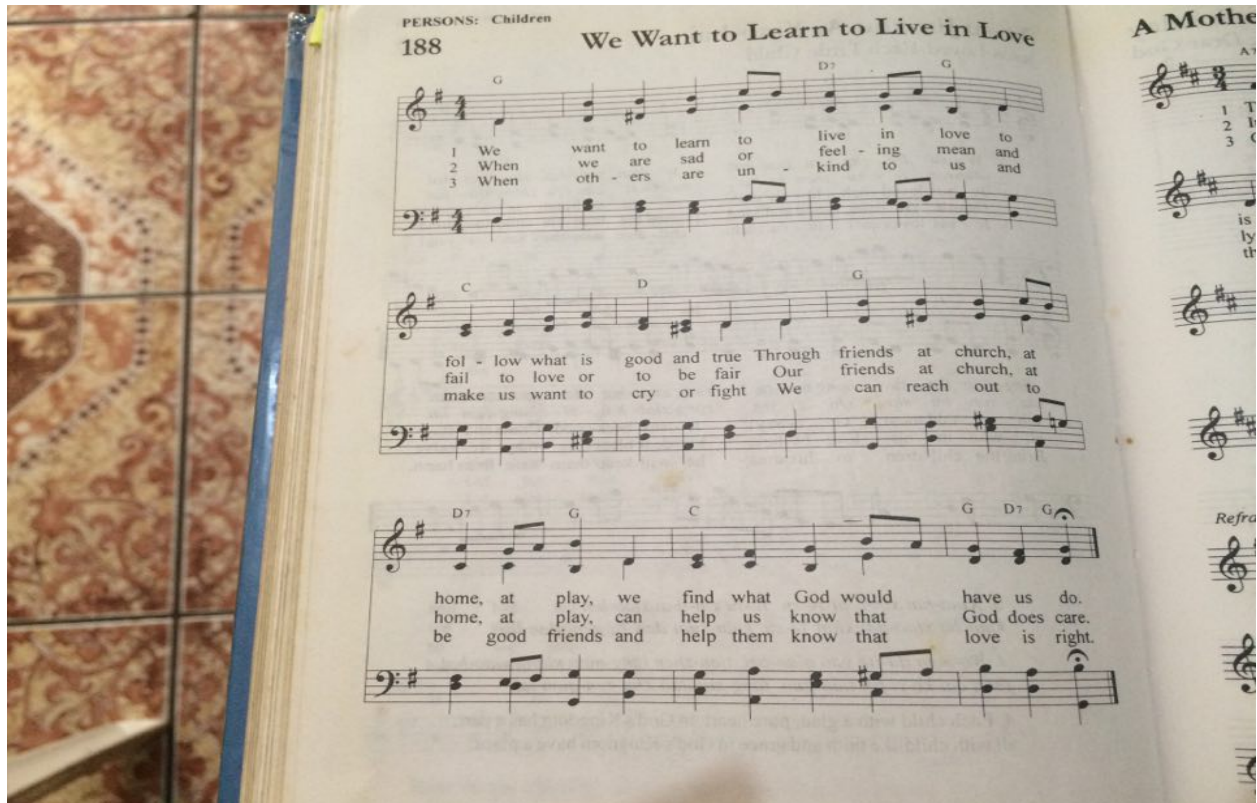
### Offertory Song

### Blessing of All Children by the Minister (Children will come forward)

### Doxology

## CLOSING HYMN

“We Want to Learn to Live in Love” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 188



We want to learn to live in love, to follow what is good and true  
Through friends at church, at home, at play, we find what God would  
have us do.

When we are sad or feeling mean and fail to love or to be fair  
Our friends at church, at home, at play can help us know that God does  
care.

When others are unkind to us and make us want to cry or fight  
We can reach out to be good friends and help them know that love is  
right.

## CLOSING PRAYER

### CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

### Minister

Go forth to hear the voices of children made in God's own image;  
Go forth to bear the love of Christ who sided with the poor;  
Go forth to seek justice as the Spirit moves in and through you.  
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion  
of the Holy Spirit be with you and each child of God now and forever more. Amen.

## SONG RESPONSE

WWW.MAMALISA.COM SHALOM CHAVERIM

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has four measures, and the second system has five measures. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system ends with a double bar line, and the second system ends with a double bar line. The website address 'WWW.MAMALISA.COM' is printed at the bottom of the page.

Sha - lom, cha - ve - rim, sha - lom cha - ve - rim, sha - lom sha -

-lom, le - hi - tra - ot, le - hi - tra ot, sha - lom, sha - lom.

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Shalom Chaverim, Shalom Shaverim, Shalom, Shalom  
Lehit raot, lehit raot, shalom, shalom.

## POSTLUDE

## RECESSIONAL