

**Order of Worship for the International Women's Day, March 8<sup>th</sup>  
2022**

**"Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow"**

**Theme: I am Unique, as God has made me: Beat the Bias.**

**Call to Worship:**

**Leader: Come, like Sister Miriam, leading the Hebrew people out of bondage with tambourines and dance!**

**All: We come to our God with praise**

**Leader: Come, like Sister Martha, running through the dark with courage, proclaiming that Jesus is God!**

**All: We come to our God with our doubt and our faith.**

**Leader: Come, with the word of God on your lips, like Sisters of early church, who did not fear preaching to the early Brethren**

**All: We come to our God with proclamation**

**Leader: Come and proclaim justice, like Mother Teresa with a passion for all people and an unquenchable search for justice.**

**All: We come to our God with hope**

**Leader: Come sisters and brothers, as *you* are, and join in the worship of the One who unites all women, all men, all children.**

**ALL: Here we are! We raise our voices in unity and celebration! Praise to the one who unites us all!**

**Opening Song : We are one in the spirit , we are one in the Lord.**

**Prayer:** Mother God –whose wisdom created us, whose strength sustains us, whose compassion guides us– crack us open this day. Crack open us to accept the differences and accept them. Crack open our bias against various women and gender so that we do justice and live in harmony. Crack open our ears so we may hear the words of our sisters from across space and across time. Crack open our eyes so we may see the places our lives connect. Crack open our hearts so the redeeming power of Christ may renew our relationships with those we may never meet. Crack open our lives, so you may infuse us fully with your passion and grace. In Christ's name, AMEN.

## **Prayer of Confession**

**All:** Mother God, who gave birth to us through the moulding and forming of the earth—you breathed life into our lungs and called us good. You made us a people to dwell together. But we confess, something happened. We have distanced ourselves from your love. We have built walls between each other. What we don't see we don't love and what we don't love we are fearful of. In your generous diversity, loving God, we have formed division—divisions made deeper by money, opportunity, violence, arrogance, caste, colour, creed, ethnicity, nationality, and gender. We want to live in binary of the world. We don't want to hear the stories of those less fortunate than us because it hurts. We don't want to see the faces of our sisters and brothers who are hurting because we will feel responsible. We don't want to feel responsibility because we will feel the need to change. We don't want to change.

(silence)

But you call for us to be transformed. You call for us to open our eyes and see ourselves in each living being on earth. We know we can't change the entire world in our lifetime. But help us see how we can transform ourselves so the world might come one, small step closer to realizing your love. AMEN

## **Assurance of Pardon**

God hears our cries and longs to help us in our struggle. God hears our confessions and forgives us. May we take God's desire for transformation seriously and find ways to respond to God's forgiveness with acts of love and faith.

## **Theme: forgotten/nameless women (Breaking the Bias)**

**OT:** Exodus 1:1-22 (Shiphrah and Puah) Or Gen 30:21; 34; 46:15 (Dinah) Or Judges 19-20 (Concubine/Second Wife of a Levite) Or Judges 11:34-40 (Jephthah's daughter) –

**NT:** Acts 16:11-15 (Lydia)

**Gospel:** Matthew 1:1-17 (Jesus' genealogy – 4 women, all outcasts!)  
Jesus' birth Breaks the Bias

**Song: Search me Lord, by**

**Thomas A. Dorsey**

**Faith Affirmation to take us forward: (women of the Presbyterian Church in Colombia)(Adapted)**

**All:** We believe in the goodness and value of women, in our strength and health, in our capacity to cry, in our capacity to sustain each other instead of being

rivals, in our capacity to respond to the demands of  
children  
and carry the weight of daily life,  
in our openness and desire to continue working,  
in our spiritual and earthly being,  
full of life – birth, death and resurrection.

We affirm the history of  
women as the history of  
humanity.  
We are gatherers of fruits,  
peasants, farmers, sewers,  
workers,  
mothers, scientists, doctors, housewives and economists.

We give our life, we are hidden workers,  
without wages at home and breadwinners in  
society. We recognize this diversity and  
versatility.  
We rejoice in our intuition and our  
thinking. We confess our faults and  
fragility,  
because we have accepted violence and  
injustice in relationships between men and  
women.

We expect a future of faith and hope,  
working for the day to come in which we and all our  
sisters will no longer have to adapt to a stereotype  
because we will be free  
to express ourselves as  
we are and we will be free  
to share in all the benefits of human life and work.

We hope for a time of  
peace, when violence  
will disappear  
and men and women can love and be loved,  
and the work and riches of our world can be justly shared.

### **Offertory Thought**

(Consider giving a part of your congregation's offering for the cause of Indian Women & Project related to their empowerment, this may be an opportune time to introduce your congregation to the cause of Gender Justice).

We know that money does not buy love. We know that money does not purchase

peace. No matter how much money we save, or give, or spend, there will still be voices who cry out in need. What can we offer, in addition to money, that can take these voices of pain and transform them into shouts of joy. Let's us break the bias that are prevalent in our society and family. We must give more of ourselves than our pocketbooks allow. We must give of our humility, our hearts, our humanity. As you give your monetary gifts this morning, consider how you can give of yourself to the lives of others.

**Offertory Hymn: Help Us Accept each other.**

### **Prayer of Dedication**

**All:** God of all things, we give this money as a token of what is important to us. May this money go to do good of others to break the bias and help needy. May this money go to do justice. But also, may the giving of this money help guide us into the path of awareness, recognizing that what this world needs is not more money, but more good...more justice...more of each of us loving one another. AMEN.

### **Intercessory Prayers:**

**Leader:** We are called to be people who listen to God's Word and respond. Let us turn to God in prayer now, so that our prayers can help make a difference to our world.

We pray for men and women who hold positions of leadership and power within the Church, that their work will help empower all those influenced by their ministry, to know their full dignity and value. (Pause to enable the faithful to pray this prayer in their hearts.)

**All:** Gracious God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** We pray for liberation for women who live with violence and exploitation in all countries of our world Specially our country India. We also pray for women suffering due to war in Ukraine. For all those who are forced to leave their country, for the pregnant women, nursing mothers and mothers with toddlers. (Pause to enable the faithful to pray this prayer in their hearts.)

**All:** Gracious God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** We pray for all women and men in our Church, that we will find new ways to work together in partnership to reflect each of us being made in the image of God. (Pause to enable the faithful to pray this prayer in their hearts.)

**All:** Gracious God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** We pray for ourselves, that each of us will discern ways that we can more fully live as God calls us to live. (Pause to enable the faithful to pray this prayer in their hearts.)

**All:** Gracious God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** We pray for healing for those in our community who are suffering physical, emotional, or mental illness. (Pause to enable the faithful to pray this prayer in their hearts.)

**All:** Gracious God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** We pray for those who are unjustly treated due to their ethnicity, look, economic status, profession, colour, creed. Help us to come out of our bias attitude and never forget we all are created equal before the site of God.

All; Gracious God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** Gracious and ever-loving God, we know that you hear these and all the prayers in our hearts. We make all these prayers through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader: Let us all sum up our prayers in the model of Jesus' prayer**

Our Mother and Father in Heaven and on earth! Blessed be your name!

Let your earth turn into new heaven where women and men and all live in peace!

Your wish for giving life in abundance to women be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Forgive our gender-based sins and give us the courage to forgive others!

Lead us not into temptation of ignoring the strength of women but deliver us from our ego-centric nature that destroys the lives of women.

For yours is the heaven and the earth, and glory forever and ever. Amen

**Benediction**

**May the God of equality who raised Christ from dead lead us to awake in an unbiased attitude and strengthen our inner being for every good work and Jesus Christ, friend of all motivate us and Holy Spirit lead us in humbleness And blessing of God, Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit dwell within us this day and always. Amen.**

**Blessing**

Go in Peace to Love, Serve and do Justice to all.

**All:** In the name of Christ!

**Closing Hymn: Faith Of Our Mothers.**

***Order of Worship Prepared By***

***Women's Concern. NCCI***