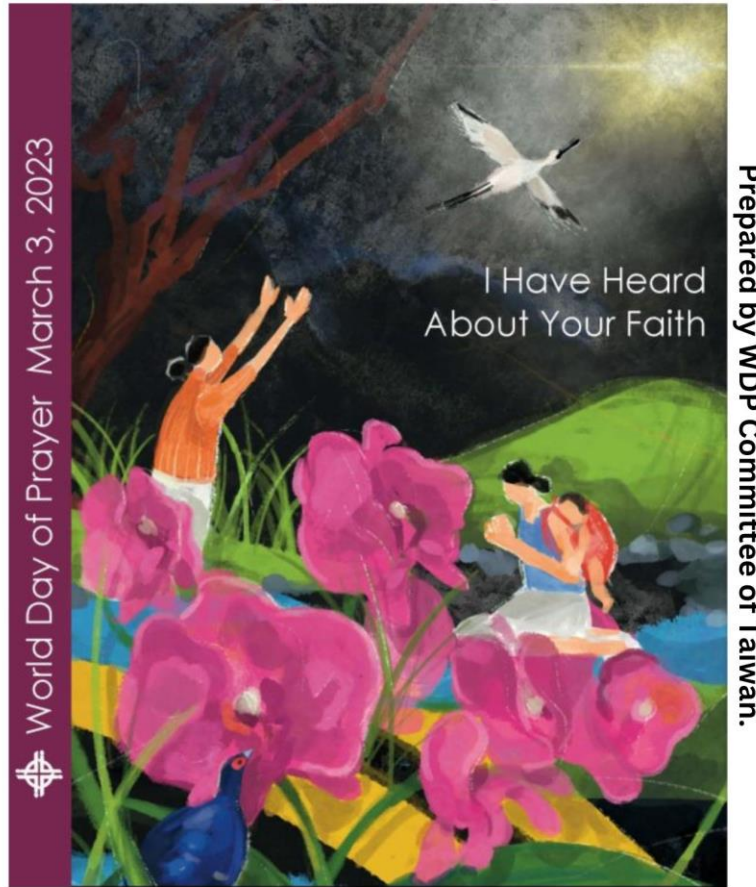


Let us all Join to Celebrate World Day of Prayer 2023



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Orientation

- Practice in advance all hymns (music sheets and recording are available)
- Decorate the front stage with the following materials:
- Blue cloth (Taiwan is nurtured by the ocean); Green cloth (Taiwan is covered in mountain peaks); Yellow cloth and White cloth (Taiwan is rich in natural resources); Arrange lilies and orchids. Another option: folding paper flowers, see the website: [Origami Lily Instructions \(origami-fun.com\)](http://origami-fun.com) Place in advance Taiwan map puzzle on the podium (see the appendix).

- Before the Worship Service, play Taiwanese music and show PowerPoint slides to introduce Taiwan. Let the congregation get familiar with Taiwan.
- When the Prelude song starts, the five women from the stories walk toward the Taiwan map puzzle. One of them sings the hymn “Give praise to the Lord”; the other four women lead the congregation’s response with the hymn “Give praise to the Lord.” Then the five women will put the puzzle pieces up on the map. The Mosaic Map of Taiwan symbolizes the diversity of the country.
- Read the Bible Study for the complete version of the reflection based on Ephesians 1:15-19 (NRSV).

Order of Worship

Leader: Let us begin the 2023 World Day of Prayer worship service.

Prelude: “Give praise to the Lord.” Word & Music by Mayaw Kumud, Amis, 1990s. Authorized use of copyright only for WDP Taiwan 2023.

(The five women walk toward the Taiwan map puzzle. One of them sings the hymn “Give praise to the Lord”; the other four women lead the congregation’s response with the hymn “Give praise to the Lord.” The five women put the puzzle pieces up on the map.)

Welcome and Greetings

Leader 1: “Pîng-an.” This phrase in Taiwanese means “May God grant you peace, a peaceful relationship with God and with one another.”

Leader 2: Welcome! On behalf of the sisters in Taiwan, we would like to welcome all of you to join us today in worship.

Leader 1: Dear sisters and brothers, through this celebration, we would like to share our experiences with you, and witness God’s wonderful grace and mighty works.

Song: “Love Overflows.” Word & music by Sandy Yu. 2003 Stream of Praise Music/CCLI Song # 3978045. Authorized use of copyright only for WDP Taiwan 2023.

After singing the song, share the peace of Christ with each other.

Call to Worship

Leader 1: Praise to the Lord, we thank God for all the blessings bestowed upon Taiwan.

Leader 2: Praise God, the Creator, who created this beautiful island covered with mountain forests and nurtured by the ocean. Taiwan is rich in natural resources.

All: Let the name of the Lord be praised. May your glory be with us.

Leader 1: More than one hundred years ago, missionaries who came to Taiwan spread the good news. The people heard the gospel and received the grace of salvation.

All: Let the name of the Lord be praised. May your glory be with us.

Leader 2: Since the 16th century, Taiwan has been colonized by different foreign forces; and experienced ethnic, cultural, social, and political conflict, and integration. By the Grace of God, the people on this island can live in peace. Taiwan shows great hospitality and is willing to help and become a blessing to others.

All: Gracious God, we thank you and praise you. May your glory be with us.

Song: “Jehovah’s Blessing Abound.” Word by Jessica Lee, music by Sandy Yu. 1997 Stream of Praise Music/CCCLI Song #3518931. Authorized use of copyright only for WDP Taiwan 2023.

Prayer of Confession

Prayer 1: Forgiving God, we confess our sins to you. We sin against you. We have failed to take care of the land you entrusted to us and have used it in unrighteous ways causing pollution and the extinction of various species.

All: Oh Lord, have mercy on us.

Prayer 2: Gracious God, we are selfish and arrogant. We have overlooked human dignity; we ignore the needs of minorities, migrants, and immigrants. We hear the cries of the land, women, children, and young people, but we have not done enough to respond to the grace that we received. These actions have caused some people to suffer and be oppressed.

All: Oh Lord, have mercy on us.

Hymn: “Lord, have mercy on us.” Music by Saisiat melody, Taiwan. Transcr. & adapt. by I-to Lohl, 1984. Authorized use of copyright only for WDP Taiwan 2023.

Assurance of Pardon

Leader 1: O God, you are faithful and righteous. May you forgive us, cleanse away our sins, and help us live in the light. May you give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation as we come to know you and be filled with love and faith. May you reveal yourself to us so that we may know the immeasurable greatness of your power. Amen.

All: Amen.

Hymn: “O Lord, Hear Our Prayer.” Word: Tayal Hymn #288, para. I-to Loh. Music: Yokay Watan, Tayal, Taiwan, 2017. Used with permission.

The Word of God and the Witness of Life

Reader:

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1: 15-19 (NRSV)

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the

immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

Meditation: Paul gave thanks to God for the Ephesians living out their love and faith. He prayed that they would receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation and would “come to know [God]” through the light and inspiration of the Holy Spirit!

Oftentimes we are frustrated by difficulties and obstacles and may even lose our hope and faith, or rely on our weak human nature. However, we are called to keep our “hope and faith” in God’s kingdom and promises. Through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, we come to see the faithful, loving, and gracious God.

Throughout the letter, the author shared his prayers for the saints in the trust that they could grasp how wide and long and high and deep the love of Christ is (Ephesians 3:18). Should we be willing to respond to that love by living not for ourselves but for God? The love of Christ may be revealed through our actions, which will point to God’s glorious and abundant inheritance!

In the eyes of God, we are not pieces of confetti that go with the wind without a specific direction, but irreplaceable pieces of a puzzle. Despite our different social backgrounds, regional contexts, and diverse cultures, we come to unity in Jesus Christ.

Silence for meditation.

Leader 2: We have heard the faith stories of women and girls in Taiwan, and we are sending them a letter of encouragement. Let us hear the letters.

Woman 1

Dear Sister Pao-Chu,

Last time we met at the gathering I heard your stories about the urgency of protecting the environment. Your story of faith impacted me, and I have followed in your footsteps ever since. I have recycled resources, joined a beach cleaning, and sorted waste at home. I carry my own cutlery and cup to mitigate the plastic crisis. Most importantly, I teach our next generations to protect the environment. We hope that Taiwan can be a nuclear-free homeland in the future. Let us learn together to become good stewards of God’s creation.

(Silence)

Response hymn: “I have heard about your faith” Words: Ephesians 1:15-16. Music: Lai, Yin-ting. Composed especially for the 2023 WDP Taiwan program. ©WDPIC. Used with permission.

Woman 2

Dear Sister Fen-Jiau,

I have heard of your faith. You, a middle-aged, indigenous woman, have become a wonderful blessing to women of a similar age.

As a homemaker, you have dedicated yourself to your family for decades. When you tried to find a job to support your family, you were challenged at the workplace. You faced discrimination because of your age and felt pressured to accept social rules against women. You felt like you were neglecting your family responsibility, while taking care of your family was the reason you looked for a job. Facing a dilemma, you trusted God's guidance and found the path to support your family by teaching traditional weaving and taking care of your tribe. Your creative potential and strength thrived once again. Your testimony is a wonderful blessing that inspires many sisters.

(Silence)

Response hymn: "I have heard about your faith" Words: Ephesians 1:15-16. Music: Lai, Yin-ting.

Woman 3

Dear Sister Jojo,

When you were young, your father asked you to get a job instead of letting you pursue your education. From his perspective, girls do not need an education but to get married instead. However, you insisted on continuing your studies.

You asked God to give you wisdom to have conversations with your father so he could change his mind. You prayed that he could understand that daughters and sons have the same right toward an education. Gradually, your father understood that girls are not inferior to boys.

After graduation, you went to work. Then, your superiors looked down on educated and professional women. Again, you sought God's wisdom to resist the pressure and communicate with your superiors to measure the performance of women and men without gender bias. You realized that it is a long path until gender discrimination is over; still, you do not give up and try your best to convey that women and men have equal rights.

(Silence)

Response hymn: "I have heard about your faith" Words: Ephesians 1:15-16. Music: Lai, Yin-ting.

Woman 4

Dear Sister Pearl,

As a hospital cleaner on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic, you risked your life to clean and sanitize patient rooms in the hospital. You could not go home after work, for you did not want to risk infecting your three young children.

Struggling on meager incomes, you still needed to rent a room and live there to minimize contamination risks. During self-isolation, you could not take care of your family, so you felt frustrated and lonely. I am so impressed by the sacrifices you made

and pray for you earnestly, hoping that the Lord of my life will also be your strength.

(Silence)

Response hymn: “I have heard about your faith” Words: Ephesians 1:15-16. Music: Lai, Yin-ting.

Woman 5

Dear Sister Daiken,

I constantly thank God for your recovery from the pain caused by the verbal and sexual abuse you suffered when you were little. The unendurable suffering led you to question yourself - *Do I deserve love?* Then a teacher came to your rescue when you were at the age of 14. You have found support from the social workers and people who cared about you. Through them, you experienced God’s love; you became a follower of Christ.

Though suffering a painful past, you refused to be silent. You revealed your stories by writing and painting. You want to encourage women who have suffered mental and physical abuses to trust in Our Savior, to defy all the negative labels, and to create new images. Now you are a mother of two children, and you have become a blessing to them and other people.

(Silence)

Response hymn: “I have heard about your faith” Words: Ephesians 1:15-16. Music: Lai, Yin-ting.

Response Prayer:

All: Merciful God, we come to you in our prayers like the faithful women in the letters who told you of their struggles and hopes. They were not defeated by the difficulties but empowered by your wisdom. We are not alone, for you are listening. We thank you for your presence, guidance, and protection as we walk through the valley of shadows. May we glorify you and become a living testimony of Christ.

(Silence)

Response hymn: “I have heard about your faith.” Words: Ephesians 1:15-16. Music: Lai, Yin-ting.

Offering

Leader 2: The World Day of Prayer is an ecumenical movement led by women. The offering is part of our common vision to improve the lives of women and children around the world. We dedicate the offering to this ministry of prayerful action.

The congregation stands and sings:

Hymn: “Offering to you.” Words and Music: Lai, Yin-ting. Composed especially for the 2023 WDP Taiwan program. ©WDPIC. Used with permission.

Intercessory Prayer

Leader 1:

Merciful God, Taiwan has been caught in a superpower struggle. It has been isolated internationally for decades. Though not officially recognized by the international community, Taiwan has tried its best to help the world in agriculture, technology, medicine, and humanitarian assistance.

O Holy Spirit, may you grant people in Taiwan strength and wisdom to cope with the uncertain future. We trust in you for Taiwan to be a blessing in the world. Divine Consoler, you are the Lord of the world; we cling to you, we give ourselves and Taiwan to you, and ask you to watch over us in our weakness. You are our fortress and place of safety.

Leader 2:

Dear God of Creation, we thank you for entrusting us with this amazing world rich in natural resources. However, we ignore the cry of Mother Earth, and we are facing ecological problems, such as air and water pollution, a waste disposal crisis, over-utilization of hillsides, habitat destruction, and climate change. God of life may your kindness fill our hearts; guide us to protect Mother Earth.

Leader 1:

Loving God, you created us in your own image and blessed us. You saw that it was good. We pray for women and girls who bring love and justice into the world. Holy Spirit, please give us wisdom to fight for the marginalized and the oppressed, the poor and helpless; give us courage to speak up for them and inspire leaders to create a safer place for women and girls.

Leader 2:

Gracious God, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a great challenge. We pray for the ones who lost their loved ones, and the ones who did not find relief for their suffering. There are so many victims of the pandemic. God, empower us to help and bring comfort in a post-COVID-19 pandemic world.

Gracious God, we thank you for your good guidance during the pandemic outbreak in 2020, when under severe circumstances, WDP Taiwan prepared this worship service we are celebrating now in 2023.

Caring God, we thank you for granting World Day of Prayer the grace to stay together

in your presence and have faith in you.

We are grateful for the effort of WDP women in Taiwan to overcome their differences and seek unity and consensus through God's grace. O Lord, may you guide us toward the path of unity in Christ.

The Lord's Prayer

Sending and Benediction

ALL: May God hear our stories and keep us in faith. May Jesus grant us wisdom to truly know the meaning of redemption. May the Holy Spirit open our hearts so that we can be a blessing to others. Amen!

Closing Hymn: "Christ, Our Lord, Your Yoke We Will Take." Word by Ông Cheng-bûn, 2005. Music by Tsou's traditional melody, Taiwan. Arrangement by Avai Yatauyungana, 1973. Authorized use of copyright only for WDP Taiwan 2023.

Postlude

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