

World Day of Prayer Worship Service 2023

Taiwan (Shortened Version)

“I have heard about your Faith”

WELCOME AND GREETINGS

Leader 1: “Ping-an” (pronounced peng-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 to witness to God’s wonderful grace and mighty works.

OPENING SONG: Praise my soul the King of Heaven

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,
to his feet your tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like you his praise should sing?
Alleluia, alleluia!
praise the everlasting King.

Praise him for his grace and favour
to our fathers in distress;
praise him, still the same as ever,
slow to blame and swift to bless;
Alleluia, alleluia!
glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us,
All our hopes and fears he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes:
Alleluia, alleluia!
widely as his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him;
you behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
praise him all in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia!
praise with us the God of grace.

Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847)

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 our glory be with us.**

Leader 1: More than one hundred years ago missionaries came to Taiwan to 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 colonised by different foreign forces. The people experienced ethnic, cultural, social and political conflict and integration. By the grace of God, the islanders 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: **Open my eyes Lord, I want to see Jesus**

Open our eyes Lord
 We want to see Jesus
 To reach out and touch Him
 And say that we love Him
 Open our ears Lord
 And Help us to listen
 Open our eyes Lord
 We want to see Jesus

Open our eyes Lord
 We want to see Jesus
 To reach out and touch Him
 And say that we love Him
 Open our ears Lord
 And Help us to listen
 Open our eyes Lord
 We want to see Jesus

Leon Lumpkins

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

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

All: **Oh Lord, have mercy on us.**

Leader 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.**

Assurance of Pardon

Leader 1: Oh 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.

All: **Amen.**

THE WORD OF GOD

SCRIPTURE READING – Ephesians 1: 15-19

Reader 1: 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

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Congregation remains seated throughout

Leader 2: Just as Paul wrote a letter of encouragement to the saints, so we, having heard the faith stories of women and girls in Taiwan, are sending them letters of encouragement. Let us hear what these have to say.

Woman 1: Dear Sister Fen-Jiau (pronounced fong-jiao),

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 you were neglecting your family responsibility when the reason you looked for a job was to take care of your family. 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.

Woman 2: Dear Sister Pearl,

As a hospital cleaner on the front-line during the COVID-19 pandemic, you risked your life to clean and sanitise patients' rooms in the hospital. You could not go home after work as you did not want to risk infecting your three young children. Struggling on a meagre income, you still needed to rent a room and live there to minimise contamination risks. During self-isolation you could not be there to 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.

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.**

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

Leader 1: Merciful God, Taiwan has been caught in a superpower struggle. It has been isolated internationally for decades, though not officially recognised by the international community, Taiwan has tried its best to help the world in agriculture, technology, medicine and humanitarian assistance.

Leader 2 Oh Holy Spirit, may you grant people in Taiwan the strength and wisdom to cope with an uncertain future. We trust you to help 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 3 Creator God, we thank you for entrusting us with this amazing world rich in natural resource. However, we ignore the cry of Mother Earth: we are facing ecological problems, such as air and water pollution, the waste disposal crisis, the over-utilisation of hillsides, habitat destruction and climate change.

Leader 1 Wonderful God, you showed us the value of family when you placed your Son within our human family. We ask you to bless all those who have the responsibility of raising children and providing for their needs. May the examples parents give be rooted in the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader 2 Holy Spirit, may your guiding influence prevail upon those in Taiwan who seek to discriminate against those working women who have to support their families financially. Bless all women

who show, through their examples, that your love has helped them overcome great hardships in the workplace.

- Leader 3** 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.
- Leader 1** Holy Spirit, please give us wisdom to fight for the marginalized and the oppressed, the poor and the helpless. Give us courage to speak up for them and inspire leaders to create a safer place for women and girls.
- Leader 2** Caring God, to you all people are equal and deserve to be treated with kindness and respect. We pray for all those – men, women, and children – who have suffered abuse in any form. Be with them as they try to rebuild their lives.
- Leader 3** O Lord, may you guide us toward the path of unity in Christ. May God hear our stories and keep us in faith. May Jesus grant us wisdom truly to know the meaning of redemption. May the Holy Spirit open our hearts so that we can be a blessing to others. AMEN

CLOSING HYMN In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found
 He is my light, my strength, my song
 This cornerstone, this solid ground
 Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
 What heights of love, what depths of peace
 When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
 My comforter, my all in all
 Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone who took on flesh
 Fullness of God in helpless babe
 This gift of love and righteousness
 Scorned by the ones He came to save
 Till on that cross as Jesus died
 The wrath of God was satisfied
 For every sin on Him was laid
 Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay
 Light of the world by darkness slain
 Then bursting forth in glorious day
 Up from the grave He rose again
 And as He stands in victory
 Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
 For I am His and He is mine
 Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
 This is the power of Christ in me
 From life's first cry to final breath
 Jesus commands my destiny

No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

Keith Getty / Stuart Townend