

*We lift our voices!
Hear us, O God!*



FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN

2020 In-Gathering Service

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH
COUNCIL OF CANADA

You can find the new **Circle of Prayer** (Volume 25) at:

<http://www.flc.net.ph/images2/FLC%20Circle%20of%20Prayer%20v25.pdf>

You can find this service (for emailing or copying) at:

<https://wicc.org/fellowship-of-the-least-coin/how-to-participate>

PRELUDE

WELCOME & GREETINGS

INVITATION

Leader 1: Is God saying something to you today? Is God telling us something about ourselves and our Church during this pandemic? Amidst great loss, uncertainty, and change, can we hear God's call for real peace and solidarity around the world? Sisters, let us respond by lifting our voices to God.

CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from Psalm 126)

Leader 1: We lift our voices with tears in our eyes...

People: and God hears us.

Leader 1: We lift our voices with doubts in our minds...

People: and God hears us.

Leader 1: We lift our voices with hope in our hearts...

People: and God hears every word.

OPENING HYMN Joyful, Joyful (Tune: Ode to Joy)

(Verse) Joyful, joyful all together, sing we praises to your name.
Great Creator and Sustainer with us through all joy and pain!

(Chorus) You're indwelling and transcendent, from you we come and return.
Sing now in this fullest season that your wisdom we may learn!

(Verse) Joyful, joyful, all of nature joins us on this brightest day.
Our Great God, full of beauty, hear us as to you we pray!

INVOCATION PRAYER

Leader 2: O loving God, give us clear eyes to see you. Give us compassionate ears to hear you. Give us strong voices to share the Good News that, with you, we can do all things for good. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Genesis 16: 1-16 Hagar and Ishmael

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Leader 2: Whether it is the first time you are reading this scripture or the hundredth time, what word, phrase, or image stands out to you today?
This passage is sometimes referred to as "Hagar: She Who Speaks with God." What does that mean to you - as a woman and as a leader in the Church?

THE FLC STORY (can be Read or Dramatized)

Leader 3: The Fellowship of the Least Coin (FLC) was envisioned by Shanti Solomon, a Christian woman from India, in 1956. Shanti was part of an international mission team led by Presbyterian Women from the United States. The team travelled throughout Asia to meet with and listen to women who had been touched by injustice during the Second World War. The team heard stories of violence and trauma, deep pain and distrust.

Leader 4: When Shanti and the team went to Japan, three Japanese women met them at the airport. They brought garlands for Shanti and others on the team, but they brought none for the Americans. They said, “We have had enough of General MacArthur... we do not welcome American women.” On that visit, Shanti saw destruction all over Japan, especially in Hiroshima, where the United States military had dropped an atomic bomb that instantly killed 80,000 people and later killed tens of thousands of people due to radiation exposure.

Leader 5: When Shanti and the team went to the Philippines, they met with Filipinas who were selling their jewelry to rebuild churches that had been reduced to rubble during the Japanese occupation. When Shanti asked the women if they would ever receive a mission team from Japan to have conversations about reconciliation they said, “Not during our lifetime.”

Leader 6: When the team went to South Korea, Shanti had to stay behind in the Philippines because at that time, India and South Korea had poor diplomatic relations. After the Korean War, the United Nations asked Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to be the neutral world leader to settle the boundary between North and South Korea. Prime Minister Nehru settled the boundary at the 38th parallel even though most Koreans did not want their country to be divided at all. So, as an Indian citizen, Shanti’s visa application was denied. She was not welcome in South Korea.

Leader 3: After hearing these stories of hurt and resentment and experiencing divisions and borders herself, Shanti prayed for peace, justice, and reconciliation among countries and peoples. She believed that if individual Christian women could pray about these issues, they could create ripples of peace, justice, and reconciliation that flowed to people and places all around the world.

Leader 4: When the team returned, Shanti told them her vision. The team pledged to pray whenever they were in conflict with another person. They committed to praying for the person that hurt them and for themselves –

for strength and grace to seek understanding and offer forgiveness. As well, they committed to praying for peace, justice, and reconciliation all around the world.

Leader 5: As a token of each prayer, they agreed to set aside the least coin in their currency. Only the least coin was offered so that women of all socioeconomic status could be generous and participate in this peace-making.

Leader 6: Today, the FLC is a global ecumenical movement of prayer for peace, justice, and reconciliation with prayers and least coins flowing to projects around the world that advocate for women and girls, support gender equality, and uphold human dignity.

OUR SISTERS' STORIES

2019 Project: Groundswell – Changing Perspective (Croatia)

Leader 7: My name is Marija and I want to tell you about Groundswell. I experienced positive changes after spending time with women who I normally would not even have a cup of coffee with. But after participating in this program in Sarajevo, I cannot wait to meet them again. I talked about faith, prayer, and confidence with women outside my religious tradition, without having the wish to convert them or convince them that they were wrong. This is a significant change in my life. The workshops did an amazing job of crushing my stereotypes and the small group discussions made it possible for me to open up completely. I loved being there and it has left a deep impact on me. I remember being full of prejudice and misconceptions, being arrogant, and having self-righteous views of Islam, especially of women in Islam. After Sarajevo, all of that changed.

2019 Project: Education to Change the Lives of Children (Kenya)

Leader 8: My name is Mona and I want to tell you about the resilient girls and boys in Nairobi. The taboo of discussing menstruation leaves many girls with little or no knowledge about this important bodily function. Many girls think of it as an abnormality or a disease while others have no knowledge of the menstrual cycle at all. Without supplies and because of shame, girls stay home during their monthly cycle and can miss up to 20% of their education. In addition, a Gates Foundation report found that to manage their periods, some girls trade sex for pads, which exposes them to HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, and early pregnancies.

Last year, approximately 300 girls from the Siloam Kware School attended ten Menstrual Hygiene Management workshops. Each girl who attended

received a menstrual kit (reusable pads, soap, and a metal washing bowl) and an increased awareness of how to manage her monthly cycle. In addition, boys were encouraged to participate in workshops on respecting girls and women and they learned about the attributes of positive masculinity. As a result of this project, both girls and boys learned positive life skills to help them be safe, healthy, and confident in themselves.

2019 Project: Shekinah Home Nursing Care (Malaysia)

Leader 9:

My name is *Vidjaya* and I want to tell you about a strong woman that I know. Last year, an elderly care centre closed down and all the residents had to be relocated. Among them was Madame Ambiga, a 74-year old single woman. She was suffering from chronic asthma coupled with acute knee problems that greatly hampered her mobility. She needed medical care but most senior homes were not willing to take her in because she could not afford to pay. The only option for her was a government-funded senior home, however these are typically poorly kept and managed.

Fortunately, the Shekinah Home embraced and welcomed her. The day Madame Ambiga arrived at our home, she was crying, “Will you beat me? I don’t know what to do.” She was very afraid. After 18 months at Shekinah Home, her asthma is now under control with daily medication. She moves around slowly with the help of a walker. Gone is her fear. She worships with other residents with great joy and her faith in God is unshakeable. She said, “I have you to love me and God to protect me...I am thankful!” The FLC grant helped Shekinah Home welcome and support Madame Ambiga and other elderly women live out their twilight years with dignity and self-worth.

YOUR FLC STORY (Message, Presentation, or Small Group Discussion)

Leader 10:

How did you first hear about the FLC? If you are part of a Christian women’s organization, how did your organization start participating in this prayer movement?

What part of the FLC story and vision resonates the most with you and why? How do you live out the FLC vision of peace, justice, and reconciliation in your own life, faith, and ministry today?

SHARING & PRAYER (in Pairs or Small Groups, as permitted)

Leader 11:

What is on your heart and mind today? What are your prayer concerns for your family, church, community, country, and world?

What do you want to hear from God? How is God speaking in your life today?

HYMN OF COMMITMENT Lord, You Give the Great Commission (J. Rowthorn & C.V. Taylor)
OR I Am Walking a Path of Peace (J. B. Tissandier)

COLLECTION OF FLC OFFERING

BLESSING FOR THE OFFERING

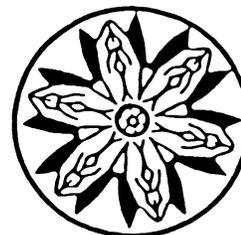
Leader 12: Loving God, thank you for the gift of life and sisterhood. We are especially grateful for the Fellowship of the Least Coin, which binds us together in love and forgiveness around the globe. Free us from our doubts and prejudices, we pray. Inspire us to live in solidarity with people crying out for peace, justice, and reconciliation today. Accept our least coins as tokens of our prayers. May this offering support women and girls all over the world. May this offering transform our faith. We pray for all these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God all creatures high and low.
Praise God in Jesus fully known:
Creator, Word, and Spirit One. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Leader 13: May the blessing of the God of peace and justice be with you.
May the blessing of Jesus who weeps when there is suffering be with you.
May the blessing of the Spirit who inspires us to reconciliation and hope be with you, now and always.
Sisters, lift up your voices. God is listening and the world is waiting!



THREE-FOLD AMEN (Sung)

Please remit your offerings through our regional ecumenical organization:

Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada

- by donating online: <https://wicc.org/donate-online/>
and selecting “Fellowship of the Least Coin” in the Fund drop down menu
- by mailing a cheque: Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada
47 Queen’s Park Crescent East, Toronto, ON, M5S 2C3
with the enclosed Offering Remittance form.