**UCW Service Celebrating 60th Anniversary.**

**Call to worship:**

One: There are different spiritual gifts,  
**Many: but the one Holy Spirit that gives them.**  
One: There are many of us,  
**Many: but the Holy Spirit gives to us all.**

One: The Good Lord does not call the equipped,  
**Many: The Good Lord equips the called.**

One: The Good Lord calls me;

**Many: The Good Lord call us,**

One: To love Him with all our mind, heart, strength and soul,  
**Many: and to love our neighbours as ourselves.**

One: There are many places for us to serve,  
**Many: in this broken world there are many needs.**

One: but the Good Lord equips the called,  
**Many: We can do everything through Christ, who gives us strength.**

**Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

**One:**The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, on those who dwelled in the land of deep darkness on them a light has dawned.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

**One**: For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ (Matthew 25:35 and 36)

**Many Respond: It is our mission to love God; foster Christian commitment, faithfulness, and spirituality; and promote respect and love for all God’s creation.**

Hymn: Higher Ground

Scripture: Genesis 1

**1**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2**Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

**3**And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. **4**God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. **5**God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

**6**And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” **7**So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. **8**God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

**9**And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. **10**God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

**11**Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. **12**The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. **13**And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

**14**And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, **15**and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. **16**God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. **17**God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, **18**to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19**And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

**20**And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” **21**So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **22**God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” **23**And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

**24**And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. **25**God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

**26**Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis+1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26a)] and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

**27**So God created mankind in his own image,  
    in the image of God he created them;  
    male and female he created them.

**28**God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

**29**Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. **30**And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

**31**God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Hymn: Count Your Blessings

Meditation:

Jeremiah 29:10-14 ***10 This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you,”***

A Story from JD:

“I used to go to church with my grandmother. When I was younger we would walk to church or we would rely on others to give us a drive. When I got older and bought myself a car, I would drive us. I remember one day it was snowing, not really bad, but it was snowing and to tell you the truth, I just didn’t feel like getting up, going out and scrapping the car, shoveling the end of the driveway to go to church. Well my grandmother came in and told me to get up for church and I told her that it was too snowy to go to church and that I was going to stay in bed. Oh, she said, and turned around and left the room. About 15 minutes later I heard the backdoor shut. I looked out my bedroom window and sure enough, there she was heading off on the mile long walk to church in the snow. At first I lay in the bed grumbling, but then got up, hurriedly tied my tie and ran out the door. In case you are wondering, she had already scrapped off the car and shoveled the end of the driveway. Well I got into my car and drove off after her. After she got in I said to her “Nan, it’s pretty cold and snowy, surely God wouldn’t have minded if we took this Sunday off.”  Then she said to me “JD, when your grandfather died and my two girls were relying on me to find a job, make money to pay the bills, keep the roof over our heads, keep clothes on our backs, keep food on the plate and run this household, who do you think I relied on to keep me going? God gave me what I needed to be strong for all of us and He gave me hope to keep going even when it looked hopeless. I needed Him and He was there. So it will take a little bit more than a little walk in the snow to stop me from going to say thank you.” It is then that I learned the power of faith, the power of gratitude and the hope that God gives.

My grandmother lived in times of World War, through Great Depressions and brought up her children as a window during a time when women generally didn’t work outside the home and when there was no social safety net to fall back on. Yet despite the wars, the depression, death ad the crushing responsibility of raising her family on her own, my grandmother never lost sight of the fact that she was a child of God … a woman of God; she never forgot the words that no matter how bad things look on the outside that God had plans to prosper her, not to harm her … plans to give her hope and a future. She also never forgot that when things got too much for her bear that called on God … that when she prayed to God … that He would listen to her and that if she sought God that she would find Him.

My grandmother was a woman of God and her faith and her hope shaped her life and the lives of all those who relied on her. Indeed, after God, I owe everything I am today to her.” Rev. James D. Kennedy

Many of us today may encounter situations that cannot be changed, no matter how much we would have wanted things to be different. We are older. The churches are emptier. More and more responsibility are falling on few and older shoulders. It is easy for us to become weary. It is understandable when we start feeling overwhelmed … yet the words of God are still softly and tenderly calling … ***I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.***

Don’t get so caught up in the mess that you forget that you are not alone … that we live in God’s world … that He seeks to work in us and others by the Spirit … to reconcile us and to make us new. God’s plan for us is more amazing, more exciting, and more freeing than you could ever imagine.

Created with a Purpose

In Genesis 1 the Lord says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (v. 26). In the midst of the Creation Story everything comes to a halt and God turns to us and brings us into His inner circle and tells us what He’s about to do: create humanity. Not only that, He tells us why. He’s going to place His image on the earth, and He’s going to do it in the form of men and women (Gen. 1:27). Our purpose as children of God, as women, is to bear his image.

Images are reflections, and that’s what we were crafted to be—reflections of God here on earth; mirrors displaying His character to the world. When people see us, they see aspects of God. How amazing! Your purpose, then, isn’t something you earn or work for; it’s something you already are.

Created with a Plan

Being made in God’s image is a great privilege and awesome responsibility. What does God tell us about how to bare His likeness as we live in this world?

Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth. (Gen. 1:28)

This is not a call to produce children and become farmers (not that there is anything wrong with those) This is a beautiful call to imitate and continue God’s creative works regardless of the time, place or circumstances you are living in. Filling the Earth is about being the “you” that God created you to be. Fill the empty spaces of this Earth with gifts and talents God gave you. Having dominion is about bringing love and stability into a world that can be chaotic – bringing love and stability into hearts, relationships, businesses, and our homes.

Being a woman of God doesn’t mean escaping the hardships of which this world seems to have ample supply. Instead, it is about living a meaningful life by sharing our God given gifts with this world where ever we find ourselves. To do this we must know Him, be with Him, and rest in Him if we are going to reflect Him to the world. Being a woman of God isn’t about doing more, but about being with him.

Created with a Promise

Alas the Creation Story does not end well. Trust is broken, hearts are wounded, the reflection tarnished, but God doesn’t leave it that way. Through Jesus, we have a promise. The God who loved you, chose you, created you, and redeemed you is restoring His image in you (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24). This is the heart of sanctification: God’s promise to make all things new, starting with us.

If you’ve ever felt alone, if you’ve ever struggled to understand what it means to be a woman of God, if you’ve questioned His plan for you … or if there is a plan … take heart. You are a daughter of God and have been made in His image. It’s the heart of who you are. That is why the UCW’s mission is to foster Christian commitment, faithfulness, and spirituality; and promote respect and love for all God’s creation (notice there is not one thing in here about fundraising). It is all about seeking God, drawing nearer to God, and reflecting God ***You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you,”***

JD’s grandmother was a woman of God. She stayed closed to God and used her gifts to bring love and stability into the lives of those who relied on her. It was those gifts and it was that love and stability that shaped those lives as they went through a world at war, the Great Depressions, and the death of parents. She gave them hope and a future.

The Christian life is not a quest for one more thing to do. It is about drawing near to God. It is about allowing the Potter to mold you into His image. It is about bearing that image to this world. As this happens you will discover that you, and all around you, will flourish, regardless of what is happening in the world around you … and because of that … you and all those around you will receive hope and a future shaped by God.

Responsive Prayer:

One:          Loving God. We gather together as your daughters.

**Many:       We honor those who nurtured us and taught us to honor and love You.**

One:          By their example and their faith we saw what it was like to be made in your image.  
**Many: May their example of Christian faith help transform us into your image.**

One: We thank you God for all those women who went before us

**Many: Those women who taught us, who inspired us, who held us, who prayed for us, who loved us.**

One: We thank you for our sisters in Christ who stand with us now

**Many: The ones who feed the hungry, befriend the lonely, teach the children, and help the elderly.**

One: As UCW we seek to come closer to You so we can reflect Your love to this world.  
**Many: Inspire our hearts, heal our wounds, bring your peace into our worries and your hope into our disappointments, as we continue in hope.**

One: We pray for the women who come after us.  
**Many: May we learn to encourage them as we have been encouraged**.

One: *May they discover their unique talents and gifts that they have been given.*

**Many: May they use these gifts to honour you and transform their communities.**

One: We pray that they grow up knowing that they are beautifully and wonderfully made;

**Many: And that they are loved by You. Amen**

**Hymn: I am the Light of the World**

**Benediction: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.**

**Please sing together our theme song for our 60th Anniversary Celebration**

Into Your Hands

*(to the tune of “ I Want to be A Christian”)*

*(African American Spiritual – words written by Rev. Alice Finnamore)*

Into your hands I give my worries, into your hands into your hands

Into your hands I give my worries into your hands.

Into your hands , into your hands. Into your hands I give my worries into your hands.

Into your hands I give my sorrows into your hands into your hands

Into your hands I give my sorrows into your hands.

Into your hands , into your hands. Into your hands I give my sorrows into your hands.

Into your hands I give my family into your hands into your hands

Into your hands I give my family into your hands.

Into your hands , into your hands. Into your hands I give my family into your hands.

Into your hands I give my neighbors into your hands into your hands

Into your hands I give my neighbors into your hands.

Into your hands , into your hands. Into your hands I give my neighbours into your hands.

Into your hands I give my planet into your hands into your hands

Into your hands I give my planet into your hands.

Into your hands , into your hands. Into your hands I give my planet into your hands.

In your hands I know there’s hope, in your hands, in your hands.

In your hands I know there’s hope, in your hands.

In your hands, In your hands. In your hands I know there’s hope in your hands

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