

We lift our voices!

Hear us, O God!



FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN

In-Gathering Service

2020

The Fellowship of the Least Coin's In-Gathering Service is an offering from the International Committee for the Fellowship of the Least Coin (ICFLC) as a suggested guide. There is space for local women's groups and churches to choose hymns and different ways of connecting (ex. dramatization, message, presentation, small group discussions). As well, this service includes room for up to 10 different leaders and voices to encourage greater participation.

The In-Gathering Service is published and distributed every summer so that our regional ecumenical partners, denominational partners, women's groups, and local congregations can host In-Gathering Services starting in the fall of each year. In this way, In-Gathering Services can take place throughout the year to suit the needs of different groups.

The ICFLC would greatly appreciate your feedback on the In-Gathering Service as well as personal anecdotes, stories, and photos of your worship service. As well, during the pandemic, we encourage all groups to follow the latest health and safety guidelines in their region to ensure the safety of all who gather. Please send any and all feedback to: icflcph@gmail.com.

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 loss, uncertainty, and change, are we listening to God's call for real peace and solidarity around the world?

Opening Hymn Joyful, Joyful (Tune: Ode to Joy)

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

Chorus: She's indwelling and transcendent from her we come and return. Sing now in this fullest season that her wisdom we may learn!

Verse: Joyful, joyful all of nature joins us on this brightest day. Our Great Mother, full of beauty, hears us as to her we pray!

Invocation Prayer

Leader 1: O loving God, our Mother,
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.

Our FLC Story (Read or Dramatized)

Alternative 1 (Longer Version):

- Leader 2: 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 3: 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 the American women on the team.” On that visit, Shanti saw destruction all over Japan, especially in Hiroshima, where, in 1945, the United States military dropped an atomic bomb that instantly killed 80,000 people and later killed tens of thousands of people due to radiation exposure.
- Leader 4: When Shanti and the team went to the Philippines, they met with Filipinas who were selling their jewelry in order to rebuild their church. It had been reduced to rubble during the Japanese occupation. When Shanti asked the women if they would receive a mission team from Japan to have conversations about reconciliation they said, “Not during our lifetime.”
- Leader 5: When the team went to South Korea, Shanti stayed behind in the Philippines since her visa application was denied. At that time, India and South Korea had tense diplomatic ties. After the Korean War, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru accepted the United Nation’s request 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 was not welcome in South Korea.

- Leader 2: After hearing these stories of hurt and resentment and experiencing divisions and borders herself, Shanti prayed for peace, justice, and reconciliation between 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 would flow to people and places all around the world.
- Leader 3: Shanti and the team pledged to pray whenever they were in conflict with another person. They committed to praying for the person that hurt them and they committed to praying for themselves – for strength and grace to seek understanding and offer forgiveness. As well, they committed to praying for peace, justice, and reconciliation around the world.
- Leader 4: 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 5: Today, the FLC is a global ecumenical movement of prayer for peace, justice, and reconciliation with prayers and least coins flowing to projects that support gender equality and human dignity.

Alternative 2 (Shorter Version):

Leader 2: The Fellowship of the Least Coin (FLC) is a global ecumenical prayer movement for peace, justice, and reconciliation. Through this movement, women around the world strive to be in solidarity with each other and are reminded to pray and work for peace.

Leader 3: The idea for the FLC emerged as a vision from God to Shanti Solomon of India. Shanti was part of the Pacific Mission Team, a group of seven women from different countries that traveled throughout Asia in 1956. The mission was organized by Dr. Margaret Shannon on behalf of the women of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America (PCUSA). On this mission, Shanti heard stories from Asian women who had experienced abuse and trauma during the Second World War. Due to unfavourable diplomatic relations between India and South Korea at the time, Shanti was refused a visa to South Korea. So, she stayed in the Philippines and prayed about her experiences and the stories she had heard.

Leader 4: When the team met her in the Philippines, Shanti shared her vision of Christian women praying for peace to transcend every national boundary and human-made division. Shanti wanted all Christian women to pray for peace, justice, and reconciliation in their own lives and throughout the world and to set aside a coin as a token for each prayer. She proposed that all women give the “least coin” of their currency so that women of all socioeconomic status could be given opportunities to be generous and participate in this peacemaking.

Leader 5: She challenged the Christian women of Asia and the women from PCUSA to combine their efforts and resources to launch this project of justice, peace, and reconciliation. The team accepted Shanti’s challenge and the FLC was born.

Your FLC Story (Message or Small Group Discussion)

- How did you first hear about the FLC? If you are part of a Christian women's group, how did it 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?

Our Sisters' Stories

2019 FLC Project: Groundswell – Changing Perspective (Zagreb, Croatia)

Leader 6: I've definitely experienced positive changes after spending time with women who I normally wouldn't have a cup of coffee with. But after participating in this program in Sarajevo, I can't wait to meet them again. I talked about faith, prayer, and confidence with women outside of my religious tradition, without having the need or wish to convert or convince them of being 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 and say what I think, which I had never liked doing before. I loved being there. Sarajevo... with everything that runs through my mind when someone mentions the city, I can honestly say that 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. – *Marija*

2019 FLC Project: Education to Change the Lives of Children in the Mukuru Slums (Nairobi, Kenya)

Leader 7: 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 disease

while others have no knowledge of the menstrual cycle at all. By staying home during their monthly cycle, girls can miss up to 20% of their education. As well, a Gates Foundation report found that to manage their periods, some girls trade sex for pads, which exposes the them to early pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, or other sexually transmitted diseases.

Last year, approximately 300 girls from the Siloam Kware School attended ten Menstrual Hygiene Management workshops. Each girl who attended received a menstrual kit and an increased awareness of how to manage her monthly cycle. In addition, the boys at this school were encouraged to participate in workshops on the attributes of positive manhood. As a result of this project, both girls and boys learned positive life skills to help them learn, survive, and prosper in this increasingly complex world.

– *Mona & Alan*

2019 FLC Project: Shekinah Home Nursing Care (Selangor, Malaysia)

Leader 8: An elderly care center closed down last year and the residents were 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 however most homes for senior citizens were not willing to take her in because she could not afford to pay for her upkeep. The only option for her was a government-funded old folks' home, which are typically poorly kept and managed.

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.

– *Vidjaya*

Your Local/National/Regional FLC Story (Presentation or Small Group Discussion)

- Has your local, national, or regional women's group sponsored or facilitated a FLC project this year or in the past?
- If so, what was its impact on women, girls, or the wider community? What was its impact on you, your faith, and ministry?

Your Personal Story (Discussions and Prayers in Pairs or Small Groups)

- What is on your heart and mind today?
- What are your prayer concerns for your family, church, city/town, country, and world?
- What do you want to hear from God? How is God speaking in your life?

Hymn of Commitment

Collection of FLC Offering

Blessing for the Offering

Leader 9: O loving Creator,

We present ourselves in your divine presence to thank you for all the bountiful gifts of life. 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 humankind that we may know the joy of giving and receiving. Accept our least coins as tokens of our love and prayers. Make us mindful of the miracles of these coins. Let us honor your creation with love, as shown through the life, death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus the Christ. 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 10: May the blessing of the God of peace and justice be with us.

May the blessing of the Son who weeps the tears of the world's suffering be with us. May the blessing of the Spirit who inspires us to reconciliation and hope be with us, from now into eternity. Amen.

Three-Fold Amen (Sung)

The International Committee
for the Fellowship of the Least Coin (ICFLC)
is grateful for your prayers and participation
in this global ecumenical movement
for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

We will gladly accept
your least coin offering.

To send your offering, please contact:

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