

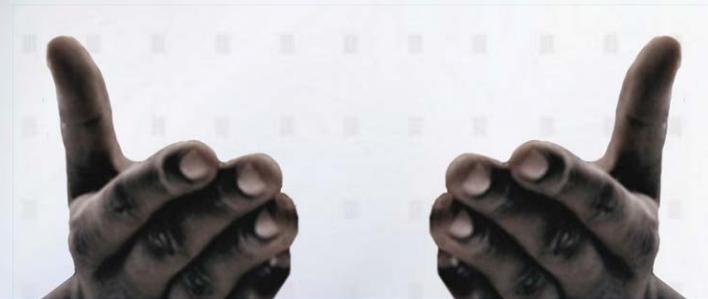


CHRISTIAN EDUCATION WEEK 2020



FOLLOWING JESUS IN HOSPITALITY:
SHOWING UNUSUAL KINDNESS

2nd - 8th March 2020



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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“

The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold.

(Acts 28:2)

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Vision:

To have a society which has children and adults who are God fearing and uphold Christian values of love, moral integrity, self-control and respect

Mission:

We endeavor to make disciples by instilling knowledge though education for life.

Motto:

'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge' (Hosea 4:6)

DAY 6: Saturday 7th March 2020

The day is dedicated to cleaning and preparing the Church for Sunday. It is also the day to pray for the Sunday Service and share duties in collaboration with other teams like praise and worship teams, choirs and others who participate in the Sunday Worship. Use of Skits, spoken words, Solo verses should be encouraged to pass the message – these should be polished on this day. All the details should be taken care of. It is also a good time to polish the message to the congregation detailing the Work of the Christian Education team throughout the past year, summarizing the activities of the just concluded week as well as giving a projection of the annual activities highlighting areas of collaboration. The use of technology – the audio and visual facilities available helps to drive the message home in a better way.

DAY 7: Sunday 8th March 2020

This is the climax of the week. The team meets early in the Church to pray and plan for the Worship service. The team gathers in the vestry together with the other leaders to pray and share duties.

1. Opening Hymn: Great is thy faithfulness
2. Call to Worship: Psalm 46:1-11 (It can be done as a responsorial where possible)
3. Praise in Worship
4. Prayers of Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. End with the Lord's Prayer
 - a. Prayers for Children
 - b. Prayers for Teens and Youth
5. Presentations:
6. Intimations and Welcoming of Guests
7. Brief talk on the role of Christian Education and reading of the report.
8. Bible Readings:
 - a. 1st Reading: Mark 4:35-41
 - b. 2nd Reading: Acts 28:1-10
9. Hymn: Jesus, I my cross have taken
10. Sermon & Prayers for needs

'Following Jesus in Hospitality: Showing Unusual Kindness'
11. Tithes and Offerings/Special collection to support Christian Education work
12. Offertory prayers
13. Closing Hymn: I'm not ashamed to own my Lord
14. Benediction

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION WEEK 2020 PROGRAMME -2ND – 8TH MARCH 2020

It is advisable for the Parish Committee - and include all the local teams, to meet before the CE Week begins in order to plan together and lay down the objectives of the week.

Depending on the contexts, the Sunday preceding the Week perhaps in the afternoon can be used as a time to gather together as a Parish for fellowship and prayers. It is important to share with the congregation the anticipated activities of the CE week before it begins and invite them to pray and join where possible. Following the theme, it is important to encourage the congregation to practice showing hospitality and 'unusual kindness' in their homes, workplaces in all their interaction in the course of the week and see the difference this will create.

DAY 1: Monday 2nd March 2020

This is the opening day of the Christian Education Week and is very crucial in setting the pace of the rest of the Week. The day is dedicated to Prayer and Fasting, exposition of the theme and launch led by the Parish Minister. The team can also join the morning assemblies for the neighbouring, PCEA owned, or sponsored schools for prayers.

Plans for the whole week to be discussed and finalised.

DAY 2: Tuesday 3rd March 2020

The CE team to visit an engage with the local communities and institutions (except schools) – police stations, hospitals, Children Homes, Chief's office, Prisons etc to share the theme and pray with them.

DAY 3: Wednesday 4th March 2020

This is the 'Touch a Life Day'. The team plans an event to show 'unusual kindness' to a group of people or setting. This depends on our context but the idea is to reach out to people and show 'unusual kindness' where ordinarily it would not be expected. Breakfast or lunch for Boda boda/Tuk tuk riders, Matatu crews, guards, painting a police station or providing some furniture, taking some senior citizens for an outing - these are just but a few examples. God will give each team the creativity they need.

DAY 4: Thursday 5th March 2020

This is set apart as the day to join the other groups of the Church/fellowships like Districts and lead prayers for them (this can be interchanged to suit the different contexts). An environmental exercise like cleaning can also be incorporated.

DAY 5: Friday 6th March 2020

With prior arrangements, the Christian Education team to visit all the local schools around them and participate in PPI lesson as well as fellowship with the teachers.

Dear Brethren,

Receive warm greetings from the Christian Education Department. What a joy to walk in this new dispensation of God's grace! Happy New Year 2020 and Happy New Decade.

It is a great honour to present the theme for Christian Education Week 2020. We enter into this New Beginning (and we may have many beginnings of different aspects) of the Christian Education work, Year, Decade and such with many experiences from the past. Yet in all the aspects we have experienced the faithfulness of God. God's faithfulness remains steadfast. It is on that strength that we begin this new year and decade. We look back to God's faithfulness with gratitude while pushing forward with hope and confidence. As we reflect on God's faithfulness, we rededicate ourselves to God in the beginning of this new year individually, and as a Church family.

By God's grace, the Christian Education Department has continued to engage with different stakeholders within our PCEA Church family which has brought mutual growth and benefits. We have also engaged outside with different stakeholders especially on matters that touch on the department – this too has greatly enriched us mutually and expanded our horizons.

In the ongoing Strategic Planning exercise at the Head Office, this has been identified as a Strategic Objective for the Department: 'To transform the Church, Families, relationships, and society through teaching Christ-centered knowledge'.

We are working with a number of Strategic Initiatives namely: -

1. Entrenching and expanding PPI in Learning Institutions across presbyteries
2. Establishing Chaplaincy Services in Institutions
3. Design and Implement comprehensive family programs
4. Establish and Initiate Christian Professional Fellowships
5. Establish Leadership building conferences for Church and Community Leadership

Among others...

Schools and other learning institutions still remain our biggest catchment areas for teaching Christ Centered knowledge to children and youth thereby shaping their lives. Our presence therefore needs to be felt strongly in our sponsored and owned institutions. Let us be actively involved in offering Chaplaincy - prayers, PPI programs, Bible Studies, seminars for teachers, Sunday services, fellowships, weekend challenges etc. We need to guard our areas well and monitor keenly what is being taught to our Children and Youth especially.

Through the guidance of the General Assembly office, we now have a Lectionary in the Sermon Notebook for 2020 that will go a long way in helping us deepen our study of the GA theme as well as lead us on a path of unified thematic teachings that are faithful to the Christian liturgical calendar.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 2020 THEME

Readings: Mark 4:35-41; Acts 28:1-10

FOLLOWING JESUS IN HOSPITALITY: SHOWING UNUSUAL KINDNESS

'The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold.' (Acts 28:2)

Our theme this year has been adapted from the materials offered by the World Council of Churches (WCC) for the 2020 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We acknowledge with thanksgiving the work done by the Christian Churches in Malta and Gozo (Christians Together in Malta) in providing the theme under the guidance of the WCC. The Week of prayer is traditionally observed between January 18th to 25th of every year to coincide with the feasts of St Peter and St Paul. Christians from around the World are however free to celebrate the week any time in the course of the year as they deem appropriate for their context.

The theme for March in our Lectionary is 'Following the Way of the Cross' and the aim is 'to challenge people on the cost of Discipleship'. The Christian Education theme therefore sits in well in the month as we reflect on ways through which we can be instruments of Showing hospitality and bringing calmness and peace like Jesus and Paul did when caught up in different stormy situations. In the Markan account (Mark 4:35-41), just like we all do, the disciples needed rest but instead of rest what they encountered was a terrible storm that shook them to the core. Until this time, the disciples seem to have underestimated the Power that Jesus had and were terrified and amazed when he spoke to the storm and it obeyed him. In life in general – and Christians are not exempted, we encounter more of stormy weather than calm seas. And because storms of life – challenges that we face daily, are inevitable, a lot of resilience is needed, a strength that many people do not have. This is where Christians come in – to encourage people to face life courageously and to embrace those who are traumatized, beaten and who are giving up in their lives following the many stormy encounters.

Paul's shipwreck story begins in Acts 27:1ff with Paul being taken to Rome as a prisoner. Paul is in chains in a very stormy journey yet even in these circumstances the mission of God still continues through him. The 276 people on board the ship are at the mercy of the forces of the seas and eventually these forces take them into

unknown territory, where they are lost and without hope. It is remarkable that in the tempest, Paul stands out as a centre of peace in the turmoil. In our text, Acts 28:1-10 we read that the 276 who have through God's providence survived the storm and the shipwreck have now landed at the Island of Malta. They are no longer at the mercy of indifferent forces, but embraced by God's loving providence made present through a people who show them "unusual kindness" (28:2). Cold and wet, they can warm and dry themselves by the fire. Hungry, they are given food.

They are sheltered until it is safe for them to continue their journey. In our present world, many people are making equally dangerous journeys by land and sea to escape natural disasters, warfare and poverty – Kenya as a home to one of the biggest refugees' camps in the world can relate with this. Their lives, too, are at the mercy of immense and coldly indifferent forces – not only natural, but political, economic and human which takes different forms.

After the traumas and conflicts of the storm at sea, the practical care offered by the islanders is experienced as an unusual kindness by those washed up on the shores. Such kindness demonstrates our common humanity. The Gospel teaches us that when we care for those in distress we are showing love to Christ himself (cf. Matthew 25:40). Furthermore, when we show loving kindness to the weak and dispossessed we are attuning our hearts to the heart of God in which the poor have a special place. Welcoming outsiders whether they be people of other ethnic backgrounds, cultures or beliefs, immigrants or refugees, homeless, the downtrodden is both to love Christ himself, and to love as God loves.

As Christians, we are called to step out in faith and reach out with God's all-embracing love, even to those we find difficult to love. At the local levels many individuals, families, organizations are in the midst of, or just survived very tempestuous journeys. Our News bulletins are full reports of men and women, young and old who are giving up on life and some are not only taking their own lives but are also ending the lives of their loved ones. The many traumatic experiences that we are hearing about daily are reflections of the storms that people are going through. God is calling us to be the agents who will bring hope, peace, and comfort to his people. It is possible to follow our saviour in showing hospitality, it is possible to show "unusual kindness".

May you have a most blessed Christian Education Week full of acts of Unusual kindness.

Yours in Christ's Service

Rev Lucy W. Waweru – Director, Christian Education