



**Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on August 7th 2022 at 10:45, meeting at Bethesda Chapel.**

Whilst some are able to meet in person, others we know are still at home. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

**Our service today is being led by Alec** as we continue our series on The Church. Trevor is playing the piano for us today.

**Alec welcomes everyone** to our service, including some here for the first time, and others back from holidays. It's a bright sunny morning, so the warm welcome matches the weather!

**Alec shares some opening verses:** Psalm 100: "For giving grateful praise".

'Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving

and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures for ever;

his faithfulness continues through all generations.'

**Alec invites those who wish to stand, as we sing our opening hymn, which Trevor plays for us:**

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heaven to earth come down,  
fix in us Thy humble dwelling,  
all Thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesu, Thou art all compassion,  
pure, unbounded love Thou art;  
visit us with Thy salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.

Come almighty to deliver,  
let us all Thy life receive,  
suddenly return and never,  
never more Thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
serve Thee as Thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,  
glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation,  
pure and spotless let us be,  
let us see Thy great salvation  
perfectly restored in Thee.  
Changed from glory into glory,  
'til in Heaven we take our place,  
'til we cast our crowns before Thee  
lost in wonder, love and praise.

Authors: Charles Wesley, William P. Rowlands CCLI SONG # 1461324 Copyrights@ Public domain CCL No 5664

**Alec reminds us of the notices** for this week, including an opportunity to help on Saturday, at 1pm, Tidy-up time at Bethesda!

**As we come to share together celebrating Communion, Alec invites us to join in song again:**

From heaven you came helpless babe, enter'd our world Your Glory veil'd;  
not to be served but to serve and give Your life that we might live:

This is our God, the Servant King - He calls us now to follow Him,  
to bring our lives as a daily offering of worship to the Servant King

There in the garden of tears my heavy load He chose to bear,  
His heart with sorrow was torn yet 'Not my will but Yours', He said.

This is our God, the Servant King....

Come see His hands and His feet - the scars that speak of sacrifice,  
hands that flung stars into space to cruel nails surrendered.

This is our God, the Servant King....

So let us learn how to serve and in our lives enthrone Him;  
each other's needs to prefer for it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God, the Servant King....

Author: Graham Kendrick CCLI SONG # 78897 Copyright ©1983 Thankyou Music CCL no 5664

**Jane and Janet join Alec at the table, as he reads from 1 Cor 11 23-29, the Institution of the Lord's Supper.**

"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves."

**Alec prays:** "Loving Heavenly Father, we thank you from our hearts this morning that we can come together freely in this place from many towns, from a number of different countries, but we all belong to the same Lord. This has come about because despite our sin, despite I will trespass and going wrong against your will, against your commands, despite going our own way, you sent your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, your only son, your beloved son, who made the world and all in it, who created us and was worthy of being worshipped by us, you sent him into the world to die. Completely unworthy then, and "when I think that God his son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in. That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin".  
(We share a time of silence, asking for God's forgiveness for our shortcomings)

**Jane and Janet** distribute the bread and wine; we eat the bread as we receive it, but retain the cup that we may all drink together. Trevor plays the piano "Peace, perfect peace" then "Meekness and Majesty."  
After all have shared, Alec concludes with the final verse: "When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart. Then shall I bow in humble adoration and there proclaim, my God how great thou art."

**Alec then invites Joyce to join him at the Communion table where she is welcomed into membership of the church family, and given the formal right hand of fellowship.** Janet and Jane then return to their seats, as does Joyce.

**Alec then introduces our Offering hymn:**

Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,  
and publish abroad his wonderful Name;  
the Name all-victorious of Jesus extol:  
his kingdom is glorious; he rules over all.

God ruleth on high, almighty to save;  
and still he is nigh: his presence we have.  
The great congregation his triumph shall sing,  
ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

Salvation to God who sits on the throne!  
Let all cry aloud, and honour the Son.  
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,  
fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore, and give him his right:  
all glory and power, all wisdom and might,  
all honour and blessing, with angels above,  
and thanks never ceasing and infinite love.

**Hywel brings our gifts and tithes forward, and Alec prays:** "Father we praise you and thank you for who you are, for all you mean to us, having just shared around the communion table.

Thank you for all the things that you give us each day, every day, and please bless what we have given back to you now for the extension of your kingdom in this place and outside, we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen"

**Our Prayers are led by Shirley:**

"Loving God, we join together in your house to worship you. We come once more reminded of all you are and all you have done: of the love with which you surround us, the grace you have shown us through Jesus Christ, and the purpose you have for all lives. We come to offer you our praise, to declare again your mighty acts, to marvel at your greatness, and commit ourselves to your service. We come to give thanks, to rejoice in all you have given us, to respond to your goodness, and to offer our love in return. We come to make our confession, to admit our faults and failings, to recognise our weakness, to ask your forgiveness. We come to pray for ourselves, to seek your guidance, to discover your will, and to find the strengths we need to live as your people. We come to pray for others, our loved ones with all their joys and sorrows, our world with all its suffering, and your church as it seeks to express your compassion in action.

We come to make our offering, to bring our time, our money, our talents, our service, and ourselves. Loving God we come to worship you in the conviction that you are here with us now, that you are by our side always, that you hold all things and all people in your hands. As we reach out to you, reach out to us, we pray, and fill every moment of every day with the light of your love, and the peace of your presence, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dear Father in these days we are overwhelmed by the needs in our troubled world. In the UK we face so much change and desperation as we hear all the predictions for not only the weeks and months but the years ahead. We think especially of all those who are on benefits and low incomes as they seek to find ways to feed their families and heat their homes as winter approaches. Lord God we know, as Christians, you are our Jehovah Jirah, our provider, so we pray that not only will our government find ways to ease this burden but we ourselves will have generous hearts to help those in need. Further afield we think of the Ukraine still suffering in so many ways from the unjust war. Strengthen their people dear Lord, unite them as they seek your glory and help in such dire circumstances. East Africa too has an increasing hunger crisis. Although Christian Aid report that there has been much generosity and support for them and the UK government has said they would spare no effort to protect the most vulnerable, we pray that they, having been slow in action, will keep their word and sanction help very soon. Yemen continues to be in deep distress with 4.8 million people struggling with disabilities and unable to receive proper care. Over half the country's hospitals have been destroyed and the roads are littered with mines and unexploded bombs. Dear Lord, protect the innocent, and aid workers who risk their lives to help their fellow human beings, and forgive us when we moan about things so insignificant to the suffering of others. We remember Israel at this time Father, and we pray for

four hostages (one who has special needs and a history of mental health) who are held by Hamas terrorists to ransom them in prisoner exchanges. Shamefully the United Nations has never condemned Hamas, in contrast, Israel has been condemned at the UN more than any other country. We pray that you will change their hearts and that the four dear souls will be released.

So many countries we could lift before you Lord, but we pray for peace but most of all for your peace that passes understanding to enter every heart.

Now Lord so much to thank you for, the joy, for some of us, of watching the England women's football team win the European cup after many years. The Commonwealth Games. Seeing the discipline, determination and joy as they won medals (or just took part) for their country. We too should be encouraged as we see how discipline and determination can help us in our Christian walk.

Sunny days in the north-west but praying for rain especially in the south. The love of family and friends. Our church family, each one so different but striving and longing to be the best that we can be so that united we can command the blessing, as your word says.

We thank you Father for all that goes on at BBC. Sunday worship, movie morning, tiddlywinks, coffee morning, Bible study, Ladies afternoon, Tuesday music evening, Thursday evening fellowship, Orbit youth and New Life International Church. We pray that as we seek to worship you in all we do you will increase our numbers and fill us with the joy of knowing that your kingdom has and will continue to come in Galligreaves and beyond.

And now in a time of quiet, we bring to you those who you have laid on our hearts, who need a special touch from you. Especially at this time we pray for comfort and peace for the family of Archie Battersby who are mourning the death of their dear son who has been on a life support machine for months.

And finally dear Lord, help us to see with your eyes. Show us that where we see no future your promise continues. Where we see only obstacles you have planned the way through. Where we see only our limitations you see opportunities. Where we said despair UC health. Where we see division you work towards reconciliation and where we see sorrow you are longing to bring joy. Living God, teach us to see with your eyes. Amen."

**We lift our voices in song again as Trevor once more plays for us:**

O worship the King, all glorious above!  
O gratefully sing his power and his love!  
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,  
pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise.

O tell of his might! O sing of his grace!  
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.  
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,  
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

The earth, with its store of wonders untold,  
Almighty, thy power hath founded of old,  
hath 'stablished it fast by a changeless decree,  
and round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air; it shines in the light;  
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,  
and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,  
in thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;  
thy mercies, how tender! How firm to the end!  
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!

O measureless Might, ineffable Love,  
while angels delight to hymn thee above,  
the humbler creation, though feeble their lays,  
with true adoration shall sing thee thy praise.

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### **Our first Bible Reading for today is read by Graham, Ezekiel 16 8-14**

**8** "Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your naked body. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine. **9** "I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. **10** I clothed you with an embroidered dress and put sandals of fine leather on you. I dressed you in fine linen and covered you with costly garments. **11** I adorned you with jewellery: I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace round your neck, **12** and I put a ring on your nose, earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. **13** So you were adorned with gold and silver; your clothes were of fine linen and costly fabric and embroidered cloth. Your food was honey, olive oil and the finest flour. You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen. **14** And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendour I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Sovereign Lord."

### **Alec announces our Message hymn:**

Breathe on me, Breath of God fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure;  
until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly thine;  
until this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God: so shall I never die,  
but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity.

## **Alec shared his Message: The Bride of Christ.**

“Have you given your life to the Lord Jesus Christ? Actually the question is the wrong way round, because He gave us life; He created each one of us; but then each one of us as individuals and the human race as a whole went its own way without Him so that without His death on the cross we would be dead forever; living dead and eternally dead. But like through His grace and through His mercy the mess we made of our lives has been forgiven and we have been given new life through God raising His Son Jesus Christ from the dead. Through this action we have become part of the ekklesia, the called-out people, the church of God.

We talked last week about what the church is and what it isn't. That it means a gathering together of those whom God has called out of the world. Now of course Jesus says we are in the world but not of it; at the moment we belong in it but not to it. We have been called out of the world system, political, religious and economic. But in this dark world we are to be lights; in this unsavoury world we are to be salt.

This week we are looking at the church as the bride of Christ. That sounds perhaps a bit strange doesn't it? What does this expression the bride of Christ mean? It is basically quite simple.

You see the church is not about a body of rules, although the Bible makes it very clear that everything must be done in a proper and orderly manner. Neither is it in general terms about carrying things out in a particular way; that things like buildings and meetings and ceremonies and whatever should have a particular form or forms, though we have maybe shared today in one special and very significant exception to this in the breaking of bread; the Bible talks of people having a form of godliness but denying its power. It's not the rules or the form but a relationship which is of critical importance to the life of the church. The church is about a relationship, a relationship to our Father in heaven to whom we can come and say Abba, which means Daddy; Abba Father.

In this relationship Jesus is pictured as the bridegroom. In this relationship God reveals Himself to be faithful, loving, and committed to an agreement of union with his church, a church which is made up of all who believe in Jesus Christ and know His forgiveness after having let Him turn their lives around in a 180 degree turn.

The church is about a relationship to God our Father in Christ Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit.

When did this relationship begin? What set it off? What or rather who started it?

In the Old Testament, God was the first to initiate a relationship with His people, the children of Israel. A covenant, which means basically an agreement, was established with Abraham (Genesis 15, 17), confirmed through His son Isaac (Genesis 26:3), and reaffirmed through Isaac's son Jacob (renamed Israel) and his descendants forever (Genesis 28:13).

As part of this contract, God agreed to be faithful and promised to set the nation of Israel apart as His holy people (Leviticus 20:26; Deuteronomy 7:6; Deuteronomy 26:18-19). In doing so, they were instructed to give themselves to the Lord and serve Him alone (Exodus 20:2-6; Deuteronomy 6:13).

The people of Israel, however, frequently broke their vows and walked away from their contract with God to serve other gods who are not gods and pursue their own interests. But in every betrayal, God remained faithful and He never once broke His promise to Israel.

“Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments” (Deuteronomy 7:9).

“The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (Deuteronomy 31:8).

“Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations; you established the earth, and it stands” (Psalms 119:90).

“The Lord's loving-kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22-23).

In the lives of the prophet Hosea and his wife Gomer we see a wonderful picture of God's faithfulness. God used the life and marriage of his prophet Hosea to deliver a powerful message to the people regarding their unfaithfulness; as Hosea's wife Gomer was unfaithful to her husband, returning to a life of prostitution, so God felt betrayed by Israel's infidelity (Hosea 1).

This, however, was neither the end of the story nor of the relationship. In this love story, God promised that if His people would return to Him, He would be faithful to forgive them always and welcome them back into His loving arms. - Joel 2:13 - Hosea 14:4 - Zechariah 1:3 - Jeremiah 24:7- Nehemiah 1:9 - Ezekiel 16:8-14

So even though Jesus Christ, the Messiah, had not yet come to redeem the earth, God was already using the symbolism of a broken marriage and broken relationship to communicate with His people, whom He loved.



Throughout the biblical narrative, God has pursued His people with a relentless passion and has done whatever He had to do to win them back. Going against God's plan may have ruined any chance of intimacy with the Father, but God had a plan to get us back and a means to restore a broken relationship.

We looked at that plan at the beginning of the message this morning.

As it is written in John's gospel, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

With Christ's life, death on the cross, and resurrection, Jesus became the living embodiment, the living expression, the living representation, the living picture of the bridegroom and a faithful husband who was willing to give up His life for the one He loved. The Church Is the Bride of Christ.

As it is written in 2 Corinthians, "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him" (2 Corinthians 11:2).

Through Christ's sacrifice, intimacy, closeness, proximity, nearness with the Father can be restored and the mess we have made of our lives forgiven. Through Christ's death on the cross as payment for our breaking our relationship with God through our wrongs, we are presented to God with the purity of a virgin on her wedding day.

Since God's covenant relationship held, while His agreement with the Israelites remained, through His Son, He made a new agreement with all who believed in Jesus Christ and surrendered to His lordship. Those who believe are called the church. In the same way that Christ promised to be faithful to the church, He described His expectations for the church's relationship as His bride.

In the book of Ephesians, Paul writes, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:21-24).

This passage naturally applies to the relationship between a husband and wife but but also extends to the relationship between the church (the bride) and Christ (the bridegroom). The church must submit to the authority of Jesus Christ and surrender to His lordship.

And let us not forget that husbands are called to love their wives, "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the

washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” (Ephesians 5:25-27).

There is just one other thing I would like to mention. The Bible also promises a final reunion between Jesus Christ and His bride, the church. When Christ returns again as prophesied in what we call the Second Coming, He will celebrate with His bride in a wedding ceremony where the two will be united forever.

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Revelation 19:7-8).

Until this event takes place, until Jesus comes again, members of the church are encouraged to be faithful and be ready, waiting with anticipation for the glorious day in which we will be united with Jesus Christ and live in harmony with Him as His beloved bride, (Matthew 25:1-13; Revelation 21:1-2). “

### **Graham returns to read again, this time Matthew 25 1-13**

The parable of the ten virgins

**25** 'At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. **2** Five of them were foolish and five were wise. **3** The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. **4** The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. **5** The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

**6** 'At midnight the cry rang out: "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!"

**7** 'Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. **8** The foolish ones said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out."

**9** "'No," they replied, "there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves."

**10** 'But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

**11** 'Later the others also came. "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us!"

**12** 'But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I don't know you."

**13** 'Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

**Alec invites us to join in a Closing hymn, which Trevor again plays for us on the piano.**

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of *Glory* died,  
my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God:  
all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down:  
when did such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small;  
love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all!

Authors: Edward Miller, Isaac Watts CCLI SONG # 721333 Copyrights: Public domain. CCL no 5664

**And finally we all join in saying:**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship  
of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.**