



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on January 7th 2024 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 Covenant Renewal Service today is being led by Alec, who began by **Welcoming** everyone to our time together, before inviting Tony to share the **Notices** for the coming week, Ladies Bible Study recommencing on Tuesday morning, Tiddlywinks restarting on Wednesday morning, the Thanksgiving service for the life of Joyce Naylor to be held on Friday afternoon, and a Church Members Meeting taking place following the service next Sunday morning.

**We then sang our Opening hymn**, played by Trevor, Kate, Paul W and Judith.

Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee.  
Take my moments and my days: let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love.  
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King.  
Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold.  
Take my intellect and use every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store.  
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.

Authors: Frances Ridley Havergal, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart CCLI SONG # 2873921 Public Domain. CCL No 5664

**Alec then led our Covenant renewal**

**Leader:** Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.

**All:** You are the one true God who reigns forever.

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Leader:** Now let us pray together:

**Our Father in heaven, holy is Your Name  
Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven**

**Give us today our daily bread**

**And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil**

**For the Kingdom, the power, and glory are yours, both now and forever. Amen.**

### **The Proclamation**

**Leader:** Dearly loved brothers and sisters, the Christian life is a life found in Christ, redeemed from sin, and consecrated to God. We are those who have entered into this life and have been admitted into the new covenant of Jesus Christ. He is the Mediator of this covenant. He sealed it with His own blood so it would last forever.

On one side of this covenant stands God, who promises to give us new life in Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith. Every day God proves His goodness and grace to us, showing us that His promise still stands firm.

On the other side, we stand as those who promise to no longer live life for ourselves but instead to only live for Jesus Christ because He has loved us and given His life for us.

There are times in our lives when it is important for us to remember and reaffirm our promises and vows. In this same way, we come today to renew our covenant with God. Many generations have done this before us. Today we make the covenant our own, renewing with both joy and sincerity the covenant that binds us all to God.

### **The Confession**

**Leader:** We are those who seek to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ, but sometimes we fall short. Let us now examine ourselves before God, humbly confessing our sins and submitting our hearts so that we do not deceive ourselves and cut ourselves away from God.

Let us pray:

**Father God, You have set forth the way of life through Your Son Jesus Christ, whom you love dearly. We shamefully confess that we have been slow to learn of Him and have been reluctant to follow Him. You have spoken and called to us but we have not listened. You have revealed your beauty to us, but we have been blind. You have stretched out your hands to us through our friends, but we have passed by them. We have accepted your gifts and offered little thanks. We are unworthy of your unchanging love.**

**Leader:** We now confess to you our sins.

Please forgive us for the poverty of our worship...  
for the selfishness of our prayers...  
for our inconsistency and unbelief...  
for the ways we neglect fellowship and Your grace...  
for our hesitation to tell others about Christ...  
for the ways we deceive others...

**All: Forgive us for when we waste time and when we misuse the gifts you have given us. Forgive us for when we have made excuses for the wrong things we have done and when we have purposefully avoided responsibility.**

**Leader:** Forgive us that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good and that we have not been ready to carry our cross. Forgive us that we have not allowed your love to work through us to help others and that we have not made their suffering our own. Forgive us for those times when instead of working for unity we made it hard for others to live with us because of our lack of forgiveness, inconsiderate judgment, and quick criticism.

**All:** Forgive us for when we have not tried to reconcile with others and when we have been slow to seek redemption.

**Leader:** Forgive us also for these sins that we silently confess to you now.

### **Words of Assurance and Pardon**

**Leader:** God, the Father of all mercies, is faithful to cleanse us from our sins and restore us to Christ's image. Praise and glory be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

### **The Invitation**

**Leader:** Let us gathered here before the Lord now in covenant commit ourselves to Christ as his servants. Let us give ourselves to Him so that we may fully belong to Him. Jesus Christ has left us with many services to be done. Some of these services are easy and honourable, but some are difficult and disgraceful. Some line up with our desires and interests, others are contrary to both. In some we please both Christ and ourselves, but then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.

We offer this **prayer** to God in Jesus Christ:

**All:** Let me be your servant. Let me follow your commands. I will no longer follow my own desires. I give myself completely to your will.

**Leader:** The power and strength to live as true servants is given to us in Christ. We accept the place and work that He gives us, acknowledging that He alone will be our reward.

**All:** I am not my own. I am yours alone. Make me into what you will. Rank me with those you will. Put me to use for you. Put me to suffering for you. Let me be employed for you. Let me be laid aside for you. Let me be lifted high for you. Let me be brought low for you. Let me be full or let me be empty. Let me have all things or let me have nothing. With a willing heart, I freely give everything to your pleasure and disposal.

**Leader:** Christ is Saviour to those who are His true servants. He is the source of all salvation to those who obey. To be His servant is to consent fully to His will. Christ accepts nothing less. Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing.

### **The Covenant Prayer**

**Leader:** Let us pray together:

**All:** My righteous God, for the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, see me now as I fall down before you. Forgive my unfaithfulness when I have not done your will. You promise mercy if I turn to you with my whole heart.

**Leader:** God requires that we rid ourselves of every idol in our lives.

**All:** From the bottom of my heart, I here and now renounce every idol in my life, covenanting with you that I will not commit any known sin. By turning against your will I have turned my love toward the world. In Your power I will watch for any temptation that will lead me away from you.

**Leader:** Do you acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in your life?

**All:** Before all heaven and earth, I here and now acknowledge You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as my Lord and God. I vow to give all of myself, body and soul, to be your servant and to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

**Leader:** Jesus Christ is the only way and means to God. God has given us Jesus as the way and means to salvation.

**All:** Jesus, I here and now accept you as the only new and living Way. I join myself in covenant with you. I come to you hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked, unworthy even to wash the feet of your servants. With all my power, I accept you as my Lord and Head. I renounce my own unworthiness, and vow that you are the Lord, my righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom and take you for my only guide. I renounce my own will and take your will as my law.

**Leader:** Christ has told you that you must suffer with him.

**All:** Jesus, I here and now make this covenant with you and accept whatever comes in life. Through Your grace I promise that neither life nor death will separate me from you.

**Leader:** God has given holy laws as the rule of your life.

**All:** I here and now willingly take on your yoke and burden. All Your laws are holy, just, and good. I accept them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions, promising I will strive to order my whole life around your direction. I will not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.

**Leader:** The Almighty God searches and knows you, even the thoughts of your heart.

**All:** O God, You know that we have made this covenant today in sincerity, without deceit or reluctance. If you find anything false in us, guide us and help us to set it right. And now, glory be to You, God the Father. From this day forward, I shall look upon you as my God and Father. Glory be to You, God the Son. You have loved me and washed me from my sins in your own blood.

From this day forward, I shall look upon you as my Saviour and Redeemer. Glory be to You, O God the Holy Spirit. By Your almighty power, you have turned my heart from sin to God. From this day forward I shall look upon you as my Comforter and Guide. O mighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you have now become my Covenant Friend. And I, through your infinite grace, have become Your covenant servant. You are mine and I am yours. So be it. May this covenant that I have made here on earth be ratified in heaven. Amen.

**We then watched (and some sang) THIS I BELIEVE (THE CREED)** , a video shown the screen and filmed in Kyiv.

*Our Father everlasting, the all creating One, God Almighty  
through Your Holy Spirit conceiving Christ the Son, Jesus our Saviour.*

**I believe in God our Father, I believe in Christ the Son,  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, Our God is three in One.  
I believe in the resurrection, that we will rise again,  
for I believe in the Name of Jesus,**

*Our judge and our defender, suffered and crucified, forgiveness is in You;  
descended into darkness, you rose in glorious life, forever seated high.*  
**I believe in God our Father,....**

*I believe in You  
I believe You rose again  
I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord*

**I believe in God our Father....**

I believe in life eternal, I believe in the virgin birth,  
I believe in the saints' communion, and in Your holy Church.  
I believe in the resurrection, when Jesus comes again  
for I believe in the Name of Jesus.

**I believe in God our Father....**

Author(s): Ben Fielding Matt Crocker CCLI Song Number 7018338 Copyright: © 2014 Hillsong Music Publishing (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) CCL no 5664

**before singing our Offertory hymn:**

Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me,  
and that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot,  
to thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt,  
fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Authors: Charlotte Elliott, William Batchelder Bradbury CCLI SONG # 23206 Copyrights: Words and music Public Domain CCL No 5664

**We then held a Time of open prayer, with a number of the fellowship praying aloud,  
before Alec invited Jane and Tony to join him at the Communion table.**

**Alec led Communion including:**

\*Bible reading 1 Corinthians 13 Jean W.

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

**\*A Short message was given by Alec, who then**

**\*Welcomed Carol into membership**

**\* and following Communion we sang our Communion hymn:**

Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away, slain for us: and we remember:  
The promise made that all who come in faith find forgiveness at the cross.

**So we share in this Bread of life, and we drink of His sacrifice,  
as a sign of our bonds of peace around the table of the King.**

The body of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, torn for you: eat and remember  
the wounds that heal, the death that brings us life, paid the price to make us one.

**So we share in this Bread of Life...**

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin, shed for you: drink and remember  
he drained death's cup that all may enter in to receive the life of God.

**So we share in this Bread of Life...**

And so with thankfulness and faith we rise to respond: and to remember  
our call to follow in the steps of Christ as His body here on earth.

**As we share in His suffering, we proclaim: Christ will come again!**

**And we'll join in the feast of heaven around the table of the King.**

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**Our prayers were then led by Jane**

At the start of this New Year, we give thanks to the Lord for his faithfulness to us over the previous 12 months: Heavenly Father we praise you for your loving kindness to each one of us. Many have been through some very difficult times, but just knowing your presence in our lives has given the strength and peace we needed to get through.

As we look to the new Year, we pray that you would draw us ever nearer to yourself, so that we may become more like your son, Jesus, our Saviour. We know that we each have our faults and weaknesses, but thank you that you accept us just as we are, that you forgive us in our shortcomings, not because of anything we could do, but simply because Jesus took our punishment when he died on the cross, and you have blessed us with the gift of your Holy Spirit as the assurance that we belong to you, and may never be alone, but rely on your gracious, unconditional love and care. As we have offered you again our lives and allegiance, we trust you to renew us in mind, and in spirit, to keep our hearts open to your guidance and promptings, that we may truly reflect Christ in all we say and do.

Father, we look at your world at the start of this new year and we confess we worry for the future. Thank you for the assurance in your word that you have already "overcome the world". We pray for your church worldwide, and in this country, that your spirit would so move your people to reach out, let your gospel truths be known, and demonstrate your love for all people, that many hearts may be turned to you and true faith may be restored. Please start by changing each one of us Lord, to reflect Christ's glory in whatever way you determine.

We pray for all those who have power and authority at home and abroad. Show your love to

them that they may follow your way and bring healing, peace and justice to their lands. We pray especially at this time for Japan after the terrible earthquake followed by the airport disaster. Comfort all who grieve the loss of family, friends, and homes. Similarly, we continue to pray for Ukraine, for Israel and Gaza, and the Middle East in general, for Nigeria and other places where Christians are persecuted. Lord, where there is turmoil, bring your peace by turning hateful hearts into hearts of love, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. We pray for our church here Lord, and for those with particular needs at this time: those waiting for appointments, tests and procedures; those soon to be moving to new accommodation - help them to settle well, finding friendship and care for their needs, and for those needing constant care - we pray for their carers too. To each of us, may you be the closest friend that we turn to whatever our needs may be. We pray that in 2024, you would enable us all to look outwards to the needs of others. Please grow our church that it may be a beacon of love in this area where you have placed us. We bring all our prayers in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

### **We sang together our Closing hymn**

Mine are days that God has numbered, I was made to walk with Him,  
yet I look for worldly treasure and forsake the King of kings;  
but mine is hope in my Redeemer, though I fall, His love is sure,  
for Christ has paid for every failing, I am His forevermore.

Mine are tears in times of sorrow, darkness not yet understood,  
through the valley I must travel, Where I see no earthly good;  
but mine is peace that flows from heaven and the strength in times of need,  
I know my pain will not be wasted, Christ completes his work in me.

Mine are days here as a stranger, pilgrim on a narrow way,  
One with Christ I will encounter harm and hatred for His name;  
but mine is armour for this battle, strong enough to last the war,  
and He has said He will deliver safely to the golden shore.

**And mine are keys to Zion city where beside the King I walk,  
for there my heart has found its treasure, Christ is mine forevermore.**

Come rejoice now, O my soul, for His love is my reward;  
fear is gone and hope is sure, Christ is mine forevermore.

Come rejoice now, O my soul...

Come rejoice now, O my soul...

**And mine are keys to Zion city where beside the King I walk,  
for there my heart has found its treasure, Christ is mine forevermore.**

**Christ is mine forevermore. Christ is mine forevermore.**

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Alec invited us to say the Grace together.

**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.**

