



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on July 2nd 2023 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, and we give a special welcome to the family of Paula and Tim, and their baby daughter Daisy, as we give thanks for her in a service of dedication.

Alec welcomed everyone (including one of his old friends, Doug, whom he had met at Reading University, a fellow Pastor in a similar situation but in Australia, and on this trip to the UK had stayed with Alec overnight) and after an opening prayer, said he had chosen an opening song from Baby Praise, which was shown on the screen as it was new to most present. There were some lovely pictures illustrating the words!

This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears
all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas— His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world: the birds their carols raise,
he morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world: He shines in all that's fair;
in the rustling grass I hear Him pass, He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world: O let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father's world: why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King: let the heavens ring! God reigns; let earth be glad!

Authors: Franklin Lawrence Sheppard, Maltbie Davenport Babcock CCLI SONG # 5203488 Copyrights, Words and Music Public Domain. CCL No 5664

We then moved into the **Dedication Service**, firstly giving a special welcome to Paula and Tim, Daisy's parents, and the rest of the family and friends present (Curtis, Bev and Rob, Liz, Michael, and Christopher.) Daisy was her usual smiling self throughout!

Alec continued:

In the Name of Jesus Christ we welcome today Tim and Paula with their daughter Daisy Marie.

Tim and Paula are here today to present their child before the Lord as Jesus was presented in the Temple by His parents.

In so doing they recognise that their child is not their personal property but belongs also to

God and that as parents they have responsibilities before God. In their promises they will commit themselves to fulfil those responsibilities.

As a church, we shall welcome their child into our family, as Jesus welcomed children brought to Him.

Also we shall promise in the presence of God to offer our support and friendship to this child and her family and to join with her parents in sharing our faith in Jesus Christ in the hope that she may one day discover such a faith for herself.

Finally we shall ask God for His blessing on Daisy Marie.

Sheila read from Mark 10:13-16: The little children and Jesus

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Alec shared a prayer of thanksgiving:

Lord God, we praise you, the creator of all things, the giver of all life, and the Father of each person. Joyfully we thank you for the gift of new life in the birth of this child. For all that you have given and will give to us through her; for the potential of her new life; for the love and hope she has awakened; and for the care which surrounds her; accept our thanks and praise in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

We made promises:

PASTOR: Tim and Paula, do you thank God for the gift of your child; do you accept the joys and duties of parenthood, promising to give love and care to your child?

PARENTS: We do.

PASTOR: Do you promise to bring your daughter up within the Christian community and to share your own faith with her?

PARENTS: We do.

PASTOR: What names have you given to your daughter?

PARENTS: Daisy Marie

At this point, Alec held Daisy Marie.

PASTOR: Daisy Marie, we welcome you in the Name of the Lord

CONGREGATION: Daisy Marie, we welcome you in the Name of the Lord

PASTOR: Do we promise to offer to Daisy Marie and her family our love and care and to join with her parents in sharing our Christian faith?

CONGREGATION: We do.

PASTOR: Bev and Liz, will you pray and care for her and draw her by example into the community of faith and walk with her in the way of Christ?

GODPARENTS: Yes, we will.

Alec shared a blessing:

Daisy Marie,
The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn His face towards you
And give you His peace. Amen

Alec then prayed:

Loving God, we pray for this child and her family. May they know the challenge and comfort of your love, and see its power. Take all that we offer to Daisy Marie, our care, our wisdom, and our mistakes, and through them reveal yourself. Take the experiences which Daisy will have, and through them speak your gracious word.

As Daisy grows in body, mind and spirit, feed and guide her by your spirit, bring her safe through childhood and youth, and lead her to make the good confession that "Jesus Christ is Lord"; through Jesus Christ your Son, our Saviour.

Alec gave Daisy back to Tim, and handed Paula and Tim a Dedication Certificate for Daisy.

We then all joined in singing our Dedication hymn, played by Paul W and Judith - unfortunately Kate was unwell and not able to be present to play the piano today. Alec warned the congregation that there would a starting note played, then we would all begin to sing without any further introductions!

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

Shirley led our prayers:

Loving God, we thank you for your promise that when we come together in the name of Jesus he is here among us. We thank you that he is here now, ready to speak, to listen, forgive,

teach and love. He is present here in one another, in the fellowship we share together. He is present through the scriptures, constantly speaking to us in new ways. He is present in the world around us, in the beauty of creation and the people we meet. He is present every moment of every day, through his life-giving and life-transforming spirit.

Loving God, we thank you that whoever we are, wherever we are, whatever we may be doing, you are with us through Christ, constantly by our side, travelling with us and looking to lead us forward into new experiences of your love. In the name of Christ we praise you. Amen.

Here now, dear Father God, in your presence, we remember all those less fortunate than ourselves. Our troubled world so desperately needs you and needs to know you. We pray once more for peace in war-torn lands like Ukraine as they bravely press forward to reclaim their land. We also pray that the present troubles in France will cease, that the government will face up to the historic problems eg racial discrimination in the police but that the people will come to understand that rioting and looting is no way for those problems to be solved. We pray too for comfort and peace for the family of the 17 year old boy who was shot.

We continue to pray for all those who are finding life so difficult in our economic crisis, but thank you for small mercies in the fact that fuel bills, although still high, will be coming down, and that the Government have instigated an NHS workforce plan. We pray too that in the short term plan they will have the wisdom to find new ways of helping those in need.

We thank you Lord for Prince William's Homeless Project and pray that it will successfully place homeless people in safe accommodation and help them to transform their lives. Your word tells us that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all people, for Kings and all in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness, so we pray your blessing on Prince William and Kate, our King and Queen and all the Royal Family that they will seek to make you first in their lives.

Now here at home - our families and our church family. We thank you for all the love and support they give us. We remember particularly at this time those who are grieving the loss of Joan and Don, whose funerals are shortly to be held. Lord of all comfort, comfort those who mourn.

We thank you for your healing power in those recovering from illness and we pray patience and strength for those battling with illness themselves and for those who care for them.

We pray for all activities here at BBC, Bible study, Ladies afternoon, Tiddlywinks, Young people's groups, the International Church meeting here on Fridays and Saturdays and of course our worship here on Sundays. May they all be to your glory dear Lord, and our benefit.

We thank you too for the visit of our BMS Link Partners, Jackie and Brian, recently retired from their work in Chad, and pray that you will bless them abundantly as they seek to serve you in the UK..

We pray for Alec our Pastor and the Deacons, and look forward to what they will share with us over lunch.

And now this being a very special day for Paula, Tim, Daisy and family, we share a special prayer for Daisy. Creator God, we worship you today for the gift of a new life. We come with joy in our hearts to thank you for this child, to praise you for all her birth means to us and

all it means to you.

Lord of life, hear our prayer.

We thank you for the love that has brought Daisy into being, the care that surrounds her, the excitement her arrival has brought, and all the happiness that she has given to those around her.

Lord of life, hear our prayer.

Grant your blessing upon Daisy, watch over her, guide her footsteps, protect her from danger, bless her with health, fill her with joy, and in the fulness of time may she come to know your love and respond to you in faith, discovering the joy and peace that you alone can offer.

Lord of life, hear our prayer. Amen.

Our Notices were shared by Tony, reminding us that next Sunday we hope to have a Baptismal service, including Communion, and of the dates of the funeral of Don B, on Thursday, 1pm at Bethesda, and Joan A, on July 10th at 2.20pm at Accrington Crematorium.

We then began a time of Praise and worship, singing 3 songs:

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart,

I will enter His courts with praise;

I will say, "This is the day that the Lord has made."

I will rejoice for He has made me glad.

He has made me glad,

He has made me glad,

I will rejoice for He has made me glad.

He has made me glad,

He has made me glad,

I will rejoice for He has made me glad.

Author: Michael Omartian CCLI SONG # 3062205 Copyrights© 1982 Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing (Admin. by Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Inc.) Birdwing Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) CCL No 5664

Light of the world, You stepped down into darkness,

opened my eyes, let me see

beauty that made this heart adore you,

hope of a life spent with you.

Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down,

here I am to say that you're my God.

You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy,

altogether wonderful to me.

King of all days, oh so highly exalted,

glorious in heaven above;

humbly you came to the earth you created,

all for love's sake became poor.

Here I am to worship....

(Bridge)

I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross.

I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross.

Here I am to worship...

And finally, shown on the screen,

**Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul, worship His Holy name;
sing like never before, oh my soul, I'll worship Your Holy name.**

The sun comes up - it's a new day dawning,
it's time to sing Your song again.

Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me,
let me be singing when the evening comes.

Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul....

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger,
Your name is great and Your heart is kind.
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing -
ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul....

And on that day when my strength is failing,
the end draws near and my time has come,
still my soul will sing Your praise unending
ten thousand years and then forevermore.

Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul....

Authors: Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin CCLI SONG #6016351 COPYRIGHTS@ 2011 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd)
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Sheila led our second Bible reading: Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Alec then began a SHORT MESSAGE "THE EMPOWERED BODY"

"Our starting point is an expansive heart, a big heart, a heart open to God and to the people He has made. We are on the start line as we so often have been in our lives. We are in the starting blocks. What do we see in front of us? What is our vision? From the earliest days of the birth of the early church, we see that the literal heart of it was people who were ready to respond; ready to respond in turning their backs away from the mess they had made of their lives, asking God for forgiveness, being baptised and receiving the Spirit of God in their hearts; the Spirit of God who is here to comfort us, to strengthen us, to be with us, in one phrase to empower us.

The Holy Spirit is the gift that the Father had promised. The Holy Spirit came down on the disciples as the Lord Jesus had said he would. And when the Holy Spirit came the disciples were empowered for the life and ministry to which the Lord had called them. The Holy Spirit is the source of the power we need to tell our stories of Jesus to those around us. We celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit on what we now call Spring Bank Holiday weekend, the time of year when we rejoice at new birth and new life and newly-blossoming flowers and new growth.

The coming of the Holy Spirit to all the disciples of God was the beginning of the church then and He is the source of new life and new growth in our churches now.

A church is not a building; it is the people of God in whom the Spirit lives and where the Lord Jesus is honoured, worshipped and obeyed. A church is a community of people with a distinctive lifestyle where God is writing, running through and carrying out the agenda and where God running the show, leading and guiding according to His Word and strengthening the believers so that we grow in grace and in our life together in the Lord. We are an empowered community of believers, disciples, followers of Jesus.

The Apostle Peter had a heart and a vision with a perspective and a horizon that reached in its fulfilment way beyond those people sitting and standing in front of him; and so do I; and so do we! We long to talk about Jesus and share Jesus with our neighbours and friends, with our families and colleagues.

Luke`s snapshot of life amongst the young community of believers highlights not just the practicalities, those things which are not simply put to one side or even ignored in the enthusiasm and energy of new life and new growth; he paints a picture in which the collective heart posture of the new church is clearly revealed and equally clearly seen, equally clearly visible to those outside.

Devotion and awe, compassion and generosity, gladness and sincerity were all evident in the newly-born church.

They devoted themselves to the apostles` teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

EVERYONE was filled with awe. It was truly awesome what was going on! Many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

ALL the believers were together and had EVERYTHING in common.

EVERY day they CONTINUED to meet together. They did not give up meeting together as is the habit of some people. As it says in the New Testament letter to the Hebrews 10:24-25 , “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another —and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Soon we will be with the Lord for ever, so encourage one another with these words. Jesus died for us so that we may live together

with Him; therefore encourage one another and build each other up just as in fact you are doing.

The disciples of Jesus broke bread in their homes.

They ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

They praised God together and people in general liked what they saw.

The Common English Bible puts it like this. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone.

Is that how we live? Is that how we live together? Are these the hallmarks, the characteristics of our fellowship together, clearly visible to those at present outside?

Do our devotion, our dedication, our allegiance, our commitment, our loyalty and our faithfulness look like this?

I think it is a "work in progress" but I think that this is clearly the direction in which we are going. I think our hearts are clearly postured towards togetherness.

If we are seen openly to be overflowing in acts of worship and in acts of love, in caring for one another and for those around us, for the community here around this building and for the communities in which we live, then it should be no surprise to us that this common life together attracts others. The church of God follows the Light of the world; He is our light in the darkness of this present age. This light shines in the darkness. He is the true light that gives light to everybody. The world did not recognise Him, but it will know Him when it sees the body of Christ living as He taught empowered by the Spirit of God. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never and will never extinguish it. The darkness will never be able to put the light out.

It is in our continuing together that the world sees the light. It is we not I. It is togetherness not individualism. It is individuality reflected at its zenith in togetherness.

At the Baptist Union National Assembly in Telford two weeks ago we sang many, many songs together. It was a wonderful time of worshipping the Lord together. At one point the worship leader announced that we were going to sing a Stuart Townend song but that he had written to Stuart asking for permission to change the words where it said **I and me** in the singular to **we and us** in the plural. Stuart had agreed and so we sang the song he had written together in the plural. It is **not I but Christ**; and then after that change it is **not I but we, together in Jesus we are the light in the darkness around us.**

Graham Kendrick wrote the song I am about to refer to. Graham, we are not going to sing this today, but if you are watching, this is a formal application for your permission to modify the words of your song, "Shine Jesus shine" to sound like this with all me's changed to us:

Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness,
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us,

Set us free by the truth that you taught us
Shine on us, shine on us.

Shine, Jesus, shine fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze and set our hearts on fire

Lord, we come to your awesome presence
from the shadows into your radiance
by the blood we may enter your brightness
Search us, try us, consume all our darkness
Shine on us, shine on us

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on us, shine on us together with you

A church may be a collection of individuals but in a heart of togetherness which is the heart of our Lord. That is what speaks to those at present outside our fellowship.

“And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

May He do the same here in this place. Amen.”

We closed our service with our Offering song:

*Come now is the time to worship.
Come now is the time to give your heart.
Come just as you are to worship.
Come just as you are before your God.
Come.*

One day every tongue will confess You are God; one day every knee will bow.
Still the greatest treasure remains for those who gladly choose You now.

Come now is the time to worship....

Willingly we choose to surrender our lives, willingly our knees will bow;
with all our heart, soul, mind and strength we gladly choose You now.

Come now is the time to worship....

Author: Brian Doerksen CCLI Song Number 2430948 Copyright: ©1998 Vineyard Songs (UK/Eire) (Vineyard Music UK) CCL No 5664

After Alec had shared a brief prayer of thanksgiving for our offerings, we closed our time of worship as we said together:

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy - to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and for evermore! Amen. (Jude 1 24-25)

