



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on March 20th 2022 at 10:45, meeting once more 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 led by Alec, as we complete our series: Characteristics of God, and Tim plays the piano for us as we gather: "Lord I come to you"

Alec welcomes everyone to Bethesda Chapel:(and we have a group of visitors with us today, those present at the Church Members meeting may have an inkling as to who they are!)

"Good morning everybody - a very warm welcome to you all,. A very special greeting to our friends Juri, Irina and Robert, Igor and Faiana from different parts of the world, they will introduce themselves a little later on. I had the privilege yesterday evening of being in, for me the first time, a Russian speaking church, it's called Blackburn International New Life Church, which was a great privilege for me, and I was very grateful for my translator from Latvia who was really wonderful translating all this complicated language because I am not familiar with it yet, into English, so I could understand. You were very kind to let me share a few words as well which I was really honoured and appreciated and we're going to do the same for you in a few minutes. I think some people here already have the feeling that one of you can sing and play and we will hear Irina singing for us in a short while. I'm going to begin the service this morning with a song on the screen which we are not going to sing but we are going to watch as a prayer, reflection for our brothers and sisters especially in the country of Ukraine now, like we did last week and the previous week, that we are quiet and pray for our brothers and sisters, that the Lord will be with them, that they will know that he is with them, they will know the Lord's peace and provision for their needs at this time. Let us pray for them as we watch this film which has the title 'Rooted in Christ' which is sung in Ukrainian with English subtitles."

During times of sadness, trouble or anxiety,
when there is no more strength left to carry on,
in a sincere prayer I turn to God for I know my Lord is mighty to save.
When I walk through the valley of darkness,I firmly believe that the Lord is with me.
In him I find protection and peace, I believe he hears my prayers.
And with reverence, during those moments, oh my Saviour, I fall on my knees.
I know you hear our prayers, in you alone I will find joy and peace.

When my heart rejoices infinitely, and blessings flow like a river,
then with sincere gratitude I give praise for I know that your hand is upon me.
When I recall all of Gods mercies, how often he has saved us from affliction!
Only the Lord's Heart can love so much, he gave up his life for me and for you!
During those times, with songs of gratitude, I glorify you, my Jesus.
You are with us in times of joy and in times of sorrow, with humility I worship you.
I come to you, Jesus, my Saviour in times of joy and in times of despair.
Like no one else, I can trust only you, my dear Lord.
Like no one else, I can trust only you, my dear Lord.

Following this beautiful reflective song, Alec immediately prays:

"Our loving heavenly Father, we thank you for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters. We thank you that you care for each one of them. We praise you that even in this really difficult situation their main aim is to glorify your name, to glorify God, in their situation, in their situation of loss, in their suffering, in their struggle and in their fighting, they fight with your word, your word is the weapon in our hands, it is the weapon of peace, and we pray for all our Ukrainian friends and all those helping them, that they may know the reality that your presence with them each moment of every day and that you will meet their needs. For we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and for his sake. Amen."

Alec then invites those who wish to stand as we join in singing (or reading) Love divine, played by Tim.

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

Breathe, O breathe, Thy loving spirit into every troubled breast,
let us all in Thee inherit, let us find that perfect rest.
Take away the love of sinning, Alpha and Omega be,
end of faith, as its beginning sets our hearts at liberty.

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.

Alec gave the Notices for the week, which were shown on the screen. In addition to the regular ones, there are 'Keswick in East Lancashire' meetings this coming weekend, (Gt Harwood on Friday evening and Padiham on Saturday) .

Tim will lead our Mothering Sunday all-age service next Sunday - don't forget that's after the clocks go forward.

April 3rd Sunday evening St Lukes will meet here at Bethesda for an evening called Kingdom Come, a worship event, a type of choral evensong, from 6-9pm, to which we are invited. Come for half an hour or as long as you wish!

We have special gift envelopes available for those who wish to give to the BMS appeal for Ukraine.

Alec then introduces Juri and Irina. Originally from Estonia, Juri moved to Russia to study, moving back to Estonia after marrying Irina. They have been in UK for 22 years, and have 3 children, aged 2, 4 and 6 when they moved. They now have a grandson, Lucas, and their daughter is expecting a second child! Already a christian family, (Juri preached in Estonia before they left) when they moved here they established a Russian speaking church which met at Elim for 6.5 years, and has been at St Barnabas Church for a further 6.5 years, and now are looking for a new home for the fellowship - hopefully here at Bethesda!

Irina then spoke briefly - she is a music teacher (who trained at a place called Tchaikowski) and she played and sang a song we were invited to share - Bless the Lord O my Soul.

Alec thanked Juri and Irina for meeting with us, saying that we are all children of the King and our citizenship is in heaven, which unites us, being one in Jesus, one in our Lord.

We were then invited to join in our next song: **"One day when heaven was filled with His praises."** Tim again played the piano.

One day when heaven was filled with His praises,
one day when sin was as black as could be,
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin,
dwelt among men, my example is He!

Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me;
buried, He carried my sins far away;
rising, He justified freely, forever;
one day He's coming: O glorious day!

One day they led Him up Calvary's mountain,
one day they nailed Him to die on the tree;
suffering anguish, despised and rejected,
bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He!

Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me...

One day they left Him alone in the garden,
one day He rested, from suffering free;
angels came down o'er His tomb to keep vigil;
hope of the hopeless, my Saviour is He!

Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me...

One day the grave could conceal Him no longer,
one day the stone rolled away from the door;
then He arose, over death He had conquered,
now is ascended, my Lord ever more!

Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me....

One day the trumpet will sound for His coming,
one day the skies with His glory will shine;
wonderful day, my beloved ones bringing;
glorious Saviour, this Jesus is mine!

Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me....

Author: John Wilbur Chapman, CCLI Song # 2646282
Public Domain: CCL No 5664

Debbie came forward to lead our Intercessory Prayers:

“Let us remind ourselves of who God is – the one to whom we pray.

We have been reminded in our current series about God’s amazing character: he is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin, yet does not leave the guilty unpunished.

At the end of the book of Joshua, Joshua is able to say that not one of the promises the Lord your God gave his people has failed, every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed

Let’s take confidence that He is a God who will listen because he loves us and who can act because he is just and powerful, even when we feel so helpless and inadequate when faced with difficult situations of our own or when we think of the problems faced by the wider world

We continue to bring the nation of Ukraine before you – your heart must be breaking to see such mass destruction, loss of life and trauma

We pray that you would move the heart of Vladimir Putin and his advisors to seek the pathway of peace, to turn back from waging war. We pray for other world leaders and diplomats that you would give them wisdom to broker peace and to find the best solutions to help the people of Ukraine, whether this be through sanctions or other measures

We pray for the leaders in Ukraine to turn to you for strength and wisdom to know what to do and how to best protect their people

For those in shelters or unable to get to a shelter, especially the young, the ill and elderly, we pray for a strong sense of your presence, especially during the shelling

We pray especially for those in Mariupol, that you would open up a way for them to get water and food, the basics of life

We pray for those who mourn, including the families of Russian soldiers killed, that you would comfort them and let them know you share their sorrow- -give them the support of friends and families at this dark time

For those forced to flee and maybe leave some family members in Ukraine, we pray for comfort and that you would prepare a future for them, until they can return home in safety

We pray for the Russian soldiers, many of whom are conscripts, that they might find a way to lay down their arms and that they would know compassion in their hearts for the people of Ukraine

We pray for Russians who oppose the war – may their voice not be silenced and may many hear the truth about what is happening

We thank you for the response from people around the world to help, for the generosity of many, and we pray for supplies to arrive safely at just the right places at just the right time. We thank you for all who have opened their hearts and homes to refugees and we pray that the current initiative here in the UK would be well-organised and successful in giving many a safe place to stay

On a more positive note, we thank you for the release this week of Nazinin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori and their safe arrival back home. We pray for them and their families that they would soon settle in to being together and would enjoy their freedom

We continue to pray for others still held behind bars, especially those who suffer for their faith – that you would give them strength and keep their faith in you strong, that you would work on their behalf to free them, if that is your will, and to give them opportunities to witness for you, even behind bars

We pray, too, for our own town – please give our civic leaders wisdom to make the best decisions for the people of BwD. We pray that you would bless our town and make it a town where those who need help and kindness will find it

We pray especially for those struggling financially because of the cost of living crisis – we pray for the work of the Food Banks and CAP among others, that they would be able to support and advise those in distress.

We thank you for all you have given us – may we be generous with our money and resources, if we can help others in need. May we see what we have as a gift from you and not ours to hoard.

We pray for our church family, that you would feel very close to each and every one of us. Help those who feel down or lonely, especially when they are unable to get out and about or miss loved ones. Strengthen and give patience to those who are ill or waiting for treatment or appointments. Give wisdom for those with difficult decisions to make.

May we all read your Word more and may we pray more and love more – make us all more like you every day and challenge us where we need to change.

Please bless the activities we run – from Tiddlywinks to the Tuesday groups, from Movie morning to the new youth group. May they meet local needs but may they also be a place where we can talk about you and show love to those who do not know you yet. We pray too for the plans to start a Messy Church – may you guide and direct our plans that this would draw in people who wouldn't normally attend a service and allow them to meet you.

We thank you that we can come with confidence to you because you love us and you love those who do not know you yet, because you want to help and are able to answer all our prayers, from the smallest to the biggest request. We leave our requests with you this morning, asking you to answer them according to your will and we thank you for what you will do on our behalf in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen”

Alec thanked Debbie, then invited Victor to share our Bible reading:

Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

We were then invited to stand if we so wished, or remain seated, for our Message hymn “Man of Sorrows, Lamb of God” sung by Hillsong.

Man of sorrows, Lamb of God by His own betrayed:
the sin of man and wrath of God has been on Jesus laid.

Silent as He stood accused, beaten, mocked, and scorned,
bowing to the Father's will He took a crown of thorns.

Oh, that rugged cross, my salvation
where Your love poured out over me.
Now my soul cries out, "Hallelujah,
Praise and honour unto Thee"

Sent of heaven, God's own Son to purchase and redeem
and reconcile the very ones who nailed Him to that tree.

Oh, that rugged cross, my salvation....

Now my debt is paid it is paid in full,
by the precious blood that my Jesus spilled.
Now the curse of sin has no hold on me
whom the Son sets free oh, is free indeed.
Now my debt is paid it is paid in full...

Oh, that rugged cross my salvation...

See the stone is rolled away behold the empty tomb,
Hallelujah, God be praised, He's risen from the grave!

Oh, that rugged cross my salvation....

Songwriters: Matt Crocker / Brooke Ligertwood, CCLI Song # 6476063

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZjBJuHgXPE>

Alec then gave his Message God`s character (5) Love

The character of God (5) LOVE (CPR FOR CHURCHES)

‘Now this looks like a title from a theological textbook or a bible commentary. So I changed the title today to read “CPR for churches” and we will see that this clarifies the need for and emphasises the reality of knowing and applying God`s Word in our life as a church and in our individual lives as believers in Jesus.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is an emergency procedure that can help save a person's life if their breathing or heart stops.

It is very special and often necessary to try to save a person`s life.

There is only one text message that I use shorter than using CPR and that is OK?

What we use as an abbreviation for a key procedure to save lives we are using today for the three main points of our message and believe me that is not an accident. It is a matter of life and death for us as individuals, for people everywhere, for this church and for all churches everywhere.

CPR

God`s love in Creation

God`s love in Providence

God`s love in Reconciliation

God`s love gives us life, sustains our life and brings us back to a real relationship with Him, with ourselves, with others and with our environment.

God`s love is perfect. God`s love is beautiful. God`s love is lasting.

Parallel to the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Paris agreement (COP26) in Glasgow towards the close of 2021 BBC held a series of three services with messages led by Colin on creation which remain available on our YouTube channel for your viewing and listening. Paul the Apostle wrote to the church in Rome, "For since the creation of the world God`s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made."

God`s eternal power and divine nature are clearly visible; His love, in His creation. Right at the start of the Bible in the book of beginnings, in the book of Genesis 1:1 we read: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Immediately before the creation of light in Genesis 1:3 we find in the Genesis creation narrative in 1:2 תהו וָבֹהוּ תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ *tōhū wā-bōhū* meaning without form or void, unseen and unformed.

Through the active and dynamic love of God we see in 1:31 that "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."

God`s love in creation.

But He didn`t stop there. He didn`t just make the earth and let it go on its own way. At least that was not His intention.

From day one He has continued to sustain the universe which He Himself made. God continuously upholds the existence and natural order of the created universe and God intervenes specifically, often miraculously, in individual people`s lives.

Let us be clearly aware that one way in which the secular mind-set has made inroads into churches and into the thinking of believers is through the world view that assumes that everything happens according to fixed natural causes, and God, if He is actually there, is above and beyond it all. He is just a spectator in heaven looking down, perhaps cheering us on but exercising no immediate control over what happens on earth; but we know that this is our Father`s world and that the affairs of men and nations, in the final analysis, are in His hands. He is not a press-button God but He is always and continuously providing for our needs, genuinely and generously, using us to do that on His behalf as well.

The first time we find the word providence in the Old Testament is in the narrative of Abraham`s offering of Isaac upon the altar. God called Abraham to take his son Isaac, whom he loved, to a mountain and offer him as a sacrifice. Quite naturally, Abraham anguished under a great internal struggle with God`s command, and as Abraham prepared to obey, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "The fire and wood are here, but where is the lamb for the

burnt offering?" (Gen. 22:7). Abraham replied, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." (22: 8). We could perhaps rightly say, God Himself IS the lamb. Abraham spoke here of Jehovah Jireh, "God will provide." That is the first time the Bible speaks of God's providence, which has to do with God's making a provision for our needs. And of course, this passage looks forward to the ultimate provision He has made by virtue of His divine sovereignty, the supreme Lamb, Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was sacrificed on our behalf. We may I am sure hear more of this in a couple of weeks' time.

CPR: God's love in Creation, God's love in Providence and thirdly and finally God's love in Reconciliation. In coming to this we need first of all to look at 1 John 4:7-12.

The ultimate test of our lives as believers, whether we are indeed believers at all, is not what we know about God but that we love one another. A thorough and correct understanding of who God is is a wonderful thing; of course if we know the truth it will set us free. But if we only know it in our heads and on our database and not in our hearts and daily lives we might think we are free, free from sin and death, but actually we will be slaves to sin and without hope in the world and thereafter. The Apostle John is constantly repeating our need as believers to love one another.

Maybe we ask ourselves the question, why does he keep on doing that? Well I think the reason is that with his many decades of experience living together first with Jesus and His disciples and then as an Apostle with the churches that had been started and built-up under their ministry that he had in practice realised the necessity of emphasising this. This was nothing new. There was always some kind of problem in the churches related directly to this. Loving one another is not easy. But this question of love is of vital importance and John constantly emphasises it.

The Apostle Paul did the same. He says, "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."

Because God is love certain things must be true of us. Love flows from God. Only those who are born of God can love like He does.

Excuse me putting it bluntly, but you see the point of us spending five weeks looking at the character of God is not so we might know more about God's character and be able to talk about Him, write about Him, text about Him and argue constructively with people about what we know about Him that He is compassionate, merciful, long-suffering, faithful and loving but that we live like that so that everyone can see that we are His disciples and glorify God.

In North Devon where 56 years ago I gave my life to the Lord I heard the truth of the Gospel being explained night after night for 7 nights and I heard the Lord speaking clearly to me. But what I saw day after day for 7 days and afterwards as well was people who loved the Lord Jesus living out naturally what it meant to be a believer in their daily lives. Without that I don't think ultimately I would have been convinced. It would have been all talk and no life reality. But you see it isn't like that. It is real. So let's continue to live it out.

In the context of loving one another, Jesus says: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

That is not a printing or transcription error in that text.

In the context of loving one another, Jesus actually says: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Do you know something? I can't do that; and if you are honest I don't think you can either. But God can!

Some of us have strange ideas about priorities. But I hope none of us when we are on Preston New Road in a queue at a red light will engage gear, release the handbrake and hit the accelerator when we see that the road ahead beyond the red light is clear. There is a time for every purpose under heaven.

I am sure you may well have a “to-do” list at home? At the latest when you have got to about 30 items on that list you might come to the conclusion that you need to prioritise the items on the list. But how? You could use a priority matrix like the Eisenhower matrix, you could use the ABCDE method, or the Pareto principle, (the so-called 80/20 rule which means that 20 percent of the things you do during your day will produce 80 percent of your results), or whatever. There are so many ways of prioritising what you need to do. My preference as you know would be to pray first and then start into the chaos. Luther said once he had so much to do that he would spend more time than usual in prayer first. He was a wise man.

So in Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21 we have a list of the Ten Commandments. How do we treat the list of the Ten Commandments? What is our priority? Do we have to keep these in a particular order? Which one is the most important, the second most important and so on? Shall we look at them all and start with “you shall not murder” or what do we do? Let me give you a hint. In Matthew's Gospel someone has already prepared the way and picked out the two most important ones.

One of the Pharisees, an expert in the law, tested Jesus with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ‘This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Matthew 22:36-39).

So you see this is Jesus' order. First love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, then love your neighbour as yourself. You see the second commandment follows the first. We will never ever manage to love our neighbour without first being in a loving relationship to the Lord our God. So if we are trying to do the second without having done and continuing to do the first we will fail; and how we will fail! It will look something like this. Instead of loving our neighbour it will be one or more of self-centredness, self-assertion, self-indulgence, self-sufficiency, self-pleasing, self-sensitiveness, self-defence, self-consciousness, self-righteousness and self-glorifying; in short all of me and none of God! Our priority needs to be God first.

And when it is God first then you know something interesting happens. The more we are aware of the love of God, the more we understand how He loves us, the more we will realise what we are like without Him. Without Jesus Christ we are in a state of spiritual death. We are not only without knowledge of God; we lack an understanding of spiritual things. Without Him we have no hope, none whatsoever.

But then we see the love of God in contrast to our evil hearts and lives. He sent His only Son into the world, born into a very poor home, living a very ordinary life as a carpenter, living a life with ordinary people. When He started to minister the opposition grew and grew, treating Him treacherously and tricking Him, putting Him on trial; and at the apparently tragic end of all these events killing Him; an incomparably cruel death on a cross.

Those who us who through God`s grace have come to faith in Him have the enormous privilege of living out this kind of love in fellowship with one another and living out amongst ourselves and in the communities with which we are connected the love that God has and is showing us day-in, day-out 24/7. Not that we loved God, but that He loved us. This is what God`s love is about.

In practice this is not easy. As David Watson said, “You have to love people more than you are offended if you want them to have the slightest chance of experiencing Christ’s love.”

— David Watson, *Contagious Disciple Making: Leading Others on a Journey of Discovery*

The one thing that makes us Christians is being born of God. There is no other way. It is no less and no more than that. The only people who can love as God loves are those who have received the nature of God. We need to have the divine nature within us to be able to love one another.

If within our churches we are unable to love one another there is really no hope for the world.

We know that God is love. Even when we are tempted to question that, we still say God is love for He is. We see that nothing matters but love. But it is more than that. The more we see love in God, the more we want to look at Him; and the more we want to look at Him the more we love our brothers and sisters, which then proves that God is love and shows it to the world around.

You see the love comes from our being in God and the glory goes to Him.

I must admit I am a little bit unorthodox in my approach to even very straightforward technical and practical challenges. I miss sometimes literally the most obvious connections. I might for example try and re-charge my mobile phone battery, succeed in connecting the re-load cable to the phone and to the socket, well eventually, and wonder some considerable time later why it is not fully charged up again before I realise I should have switched the socket switch to on. I don` t forget such things I just don` t think about them.

In simple terms in this context this means we need firstly to understand how great the love of God is towards us sinners so that we can realise secondly that we ought to love our brothers and sisters. It is no use connecting the phone to the socket without a connection to the mains being activated.

Or to put it another way, knowing the author personally is the best way to understand the story and live it out in our own lives.

We close today at the point to which Victor brought us with Romans 5:6-8. “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Amen.’

We bring our worship to a close with a final hymn: (during which we take our offering) "And can it be", which Tim once again plays for us:

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain, for me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

"Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies! Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries to sound the depths of love divine!
"Tis mercy all! Let earth adore, let angel minds inquire no more.
"Tis mercy all! Let earth adore, let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above so free, so infinite His grace,
emptied Himself of all but love and bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free for O my God, it found out me!
'Tis mercy all, immense and free for O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night,
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light.
My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread, Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine.
Bold I approach the eternal throne and claim the crown, through Christ my own.
Bold I approach the eternal throne
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Authors: Charles Wesley, Thomas Campbell, CCLI Song # 25280
Public Domain: CCL no 5664

Alec prays, as we remain standing :

Heavenly Father we thank you for giving us your son, your only son. Sinless he came into the world, sinless he died on the cross, you raised him from the dead to give us new life, and we praise you and thank you for the new life that we have in this world and the next, that you are preparing a place for us even now, and we bring and ask you to bless the small gifts that we bring you for the extension of this kingdom of yours until you come again. We praise you and thank you in Jesus name. Amen

And we say 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.