



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on September 4th 2022 at 10:45,
meeting at Bethesda Chapel.

(This service was not able to be recorded, and as I wasn't present, I can only use the outline available to me. I hope it is still acceptable and helpful, and not too inaccurate!!)

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 Trevor plays the piano as we meet together.

The service began with a video of a well known hymn sung in a slightly less familiar format "Crown Him (Majesty)<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xHVtE3BT0c>

Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne.
Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of Him who died for me,
and hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity
Majesty, Lord of all,
let every throne before Him fall.
The King of kings Oh, come adore
our God who reigns forevermore.

Crown Him, the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave
and rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save.
His glories now we sing, who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring and lives that death may die.
Majesty.....
Forevermore

All hail, redeemer, hail, for He has died for me
His praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.
All hail, redeemer, hail for He has died for me,
His praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.
Majesty.....

Majesty....
(forevermore)

Praise God who reigns forevermore (forevermore)
You're the God who reigns forevermore.

Songwriters: Chris Tomlin / Daniel Carson / Matthew James Redman / Daniel Kim / Colby Taylor
Crown Him [Majesty] lyrics © Integrity Worship Music, Said And Done Music, Worship Together Music, Thankyou Music Ltd.,
Valley Of Songs Music, S.d.g. Publishing, Capitol Cmg Paragon, Sixsteps Songs, Mariners Worship, Mariners Church Worship
CCL No 5664

Welcome, given by Alec.

Opening hymn: Tune: Diademata (5 verses), played on the piano by Trevor.

Crown him with many crowns

Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne;
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee
and hail him as your chosen king through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save:
his glories now we sing who died and reigns on high;
He died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of love, who shows his hands and side
those wounds yet visible above in beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,
but downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of peace his kingdom is at hand;
from pole to pole let warfare cease and Christ rule every land!
A city stands on high, his glory it displays,
and there the nations 'Holy' cry in joyful hymns of praise.

Crown him the Lord of years, the potentate of time,
creator of the rolling spheres in majesty sublime:
all hail, Redeemer, hail, for you have died for me;
Thy praise shall never, never fail through all eternity!

Words by Matthew Bridges (1800 - 1894) and Godfrey Thring (1823 - 1903)
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Prayers were then led by Debbie Doggart

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet here together this morning – that we are free to gather, to sing, to pray and to listen to your word. May we not take for granted the many opportunities you have given us and we pray this morning for our brothers and sisters who do not have this freedom and pray that you will bless them today in their solitary and maybe even secret worship of you. May they know that they are part of a world-wide family who are upholding and remembering them in their prayers.

We bring before you the wider world we live in – we pray for the country of Pakistan, which has suffered such devastating floods over the last week or so. Be in the rescue efforts and the work required to make safe and rebuild communities and livelihoods. Please provide finance and expertise for this country to get back on its feet. We pray for Christian communities to be able to share your love and open their arms to those in need. Give wisdom to those in charge to make good decisions to safeguard communities from future disasters. As a world, may we play our part, no matter how big or small, to protect this wonderful planet you have made and given us as our home.

We continue to pray for Ukraine. May you bring peace and an end to conflict – may you move the minds of the Russian leadership to peace rather than a drawn-out conflict that is so damaging to all. Be with those who have been hurt and with those who have had to flee their homes – may they find the help they need and would they know they can turn to you to find ongoing strength and peace.

We pray too for our own country, as there will be a new Prime Minister this week. We pray that whoever is elected will fulfil the role responsibly and will be given wisdom to make the best decisions for the country. It is such a weight of responsibility and we pray that our next Prime Minister would know they can turn to you at any time. May they live with integrity and have a genuine compassion for all. As they make decisions about who to appoint to key jobs will you direct their thoughts, so the right people are put in the right places. With the current cost of living crisis, the backlog of issues from the pandemic and other forms of inequality, there is much to do and we pray that you would help our country to weather the storm and become a good place to live for all.

We pray for the family of Olivia Pratt-Korbel, so horrifically gunned down in her home – in their devastation may you comfort them and let them know that your heart is grieving too. Please help the police to bring the gunman to justice and find ways of making the streets of Liverpool a safer place for those who live there. Bring healing we pray.

We bring before you the many who are struggling or anxious about their ability to cope financially over the coming months – how to heat their home, clothe their families and put food on the table. Please help those genuinely in need to find the help they need when they need it. We pray you would bless the work of food banks, clothing charities and services like CAP who seek to share God's love in very practical ways. May we seek to see how we can help and where we can give generously where we can, no matter how small our help may seem to us. We pray too that we can support people who are mentally and emotionally stressed through this crisis. May we be diligent in praying for those we know who are struggling, as well as offering support.

As schools go back to start a new academic year, we pray your blessing on our local schools – St Luke's, Griffin Park, St Wilfred's and Witton Park, where many from this area will attend. Bless and sustain their teachers – may they be able to offer a high-quality education to all and allow children to achieve their potential and give them many opportunities for the future. We pray also for the many young people who will soon start at university and

may well be feeling anxious about moving away from home and starting new courses – we pray for churches and Christian Unions that they might make newcomers feel welcome and that all those starting at university who know you will be strengthened in their faith and be able to testify to your love and peace, that they might not be ashamed to acknowledge you and make a stand for you.

We pray too for our church community – we pray for activities as they start up again after a summer break. Bless the ladies' meetings and Tiddly Winks and may you continue to work through these groups. Please be with those in our church family who need your presence and help especially at this time – whether for health reasons, family issues, loneliness or some other need. May they know that you care and that they can share their feelings and concerns with you at any time and that they would know the support and love of the fellowship here at Bethesda as well.

We thank you, again, that we can bring our prayers to you, Lord, that you are mighty to save and also compassionate and full of mercy. Thank you that you give us more than we deserve and we pray you will answer our prayers this morning in line with your great wisdom and purposes.

We pray with confidence in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour this morning

Amen.

Becky shared our Bible reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.
He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets.
A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope."
This is what God the Lord says—the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out,
who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it,
who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:
"I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.
"I am the Lord; that is my name!
I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols.
See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare;
before they spring into being I announce them to you."

**Our Offering hymn, which again Trevor played: "All hail the power of Jesus
Name" Tune: Miles Lane, 6 verses**

All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall,
bring forth the royal diadem and crown him, crown him, crown him!
Crown him Lord of all.

Crown him you martyrs of our God, who witnessed to his call;
exalt the one whose path you trod, and crown him crown him, crown him!
Crown him Lord of all.

Descendants of his chosen race, you ransomed from the Fall,
hail him who saves you by his grace, and crown him crown him, crown him!
Crown him Lord of all.

Sinners, whose love cannot forget the wormwood and the gall,
go spread your offering at his feet and crown him crown him, crown him!
Crown him Lord of all.

Let every people, nation, tribe, on this terrestrial ball,
to him all majesty ascribe and crown him crown him, crown him!
Crown him Lord of all.

O that in heaven with that great throng, we at his feet may fall,
join in the everlasting song and crown him crown him, crown him!
Crown him Lord of all.

Jubilate Hymns version of 'All hail the power of Jesus' name' Edward Perronet (c.1726 - 1792) and John Rippon (1751 - 1836)
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Time for the Message “WHERE DOES GOD FIT IN?”

Alec began by showing a video, (which I was surprised to see was actually a song!!)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLXQXZsYPRo>.

These are the words, although I have omitted the oohs and ohs!

Here and now I'm in the fire, in above my head
being held under the pressure, don't know what'll be left;
but it's here in the ashes I'm finding treasure.

He's making diamonds, diamonds, making diamonds out of dust
He is refining and in His timing, He's making diamonds out of us.
I'll surrender to the power of being crushed by love
'Til the beauty that was hidden isn't covered up.

Oh it's not what I hoped for, it's something much better,
He's making diamonds, diamonds, making diamonds out of dust
He is refining and in his timing, he's making diamonds out of us.

Oh the joy of the Lord it will be my strength,
when the pressure is on He's making diamonds.
Oh the joy of the Lord it will be my strength,
when the pressure is on He's making diamonds.
Oh the joy of the Lord it will be my strength
when the pressure is on -
He's making, he's making He's making diamonds, diamonds
making us rise up from the dust.
He is refining and in his timing He's making diamonds out of dust,
making diamonds out of us.
I won't be afraid to shine, I won't be afraid to shine, I won't be afraid to shine
'cause he's making diamonds out of dust, making diamonds out of us

Songwriters: Jerry Lordan Diamonds lyrics © Sony/atv Timber Publishing, Open Hands Music, Forest For The Trees Music CCL
no 5664

Alec continues:

This is the fifth and final part of our series on the church.

The church and me: where do I fit?

Once again I turn the question in the title around. Where does God fit in? I mean where does God fit in in our God-given lives? No I am not putting ourselves first; exactly the opposite. If we have asked God in Jesus Christ to forgive us for the mess we have made of our lives, if we have made a 180 degree turn-around and are following Him today we are His disciples. He says follow me. We are living and growing as His disciples. That is our God-given role. That is our God-given purpose. That is where you and I fit in.

I probably wasn't even 20 years of age at the time as I walked home as usual from the morning church service close to Crystal Palace football ground in south-east London when a lovely elderly believing Irish lady, a widow and a member of the church who had just reached her home ahead of me saw me and looking at me walking rather head-down towards her said, Alec, you are a diamond in the crown of the Lord; and that is exactly what we all are. I admit to having been rather discouraged at that time so that these words were truly a great encouragement to me. If you are an elderly lady or gentleman hearing this this morning be encouraged what a few words which the Lord may give you to say to the right person at the right time can lead to.

We are diamonds in the crown of the Lord.

“When that day comes, the Lord will save his people, as a shepherd saves his flock from danger. They will shine in his land like the jewels of a crown.” Zechariah 9:16 (GNT)

We are diamonds in the crown of the Lord.

Diamonds are a gift from God. How are they made? Natural diamonds are formed at depths of over 120 kms, through intense heat of between 900 and 1,300 degrees Celsius

and under pressures of 45 kilo bar and above, over a considerable period of time. Creating a diamond is possible with intense pressure, intense heat and a considerable period of time.

Do you still want to be a diamond in the crown of the Lord? Do you want to face this pressure, this heat and wait that long?

Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. Matthew 16:24 (NLT)

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23 (NLT)

Jesus said to those who believed in him, "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples." John 8:31 (GNT)

How do you make a diamond fit into a ring or into a crown? You cut it; shape it; form it.

We are diamonds in the hand of the Lord that need to be cut, shaped and formed.

Paul writes to the church in Corinth: "And we all, who with unveiled faces reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." 2. Cor. 3:18 (NIV)

A diamond is formed under great pressure and heat and when it is found there are dirt and a film covering it. It is found in the ground with various types of dirt and elements. Naturally, a diamond is rough, not shiny. After they are found, diamonds must be cleaned and polished. The colour of a diamond depends upon which elements are present when the diamond was formed. They can be white, yellow, brown/chocolate, and sometimes they have black spots. Regardless of the colouring and the diamond's history, a diamond has the potential to shine brilliantly! The diamond's sparkle is a result of its cut. The cut is not just the shape of the diamond. The diamond jeweller cuts multiple facets into a diamond that make it reflect light better. When cut or shaped well, a diamond shines brightly in the presence of light.

We are diamonds in the hand of God. He sees each of us as precious and beautiful. Just like a diamond, we may go through times of intense pressure and heat. When God finds us, we are often covered with the elements of this world, traumatised, hurt and broken. But He does not treat us like a worthless piece of rock. God begins with us as rough diamonds and just like a diamond, we must be cleaned and polished. When we come into relationship with God, we must turn away from and stop doing wrong, and allow God to clean us. If we confess our wrongs to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us of everything and clean us up completely.

We have elements from our past that have coloured our hearts. There are those dark spots which are the deep wounds in us. Some wounds are caused by our past wrongs, and other scars hang on from times when we were the victims of another person's sin. They are both part of our development under pressure, and part of our life history as we become new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). God cuts back things, in our lives, that hinder us from

reflecting Him. Just as a jeweller shapes the diamond to reflect the light, even with its flaws, God shapes us to best reflect His glory.

A huge uncut diamond was entrusted to a skilled craftsman to create what is now known as the Hope diamond. The craftsman kept the rough gem for over a year, turning it over and over again, to determine how to cut each facet to reflect its fire and exquisite beauty. He carefully chipped away bit by bit until he could hold and admire this gorgeous jewel shining in all its glory.

If we could look at it here this morning we would be filled with awe and amazement to catch a glimpse of this diamond which is estimated to be worth around 200 million in English currency. Diamonds and disciples of the Lord Jesus are formed in a similar fashion — by heat and pressure. We undergo the heat of fiery trials and the pressures of the cares of this present world. The chipping away of our rough edges is necessary if we are to become a jewel of great value.

Once we have given our lives back to the Lord Jesus Christ how does God make us into these eternally valuable priceless jewels?

God, the Master Craftsman, sees the pain which He has allowed to enter our lives. He sees our pain and grief. He sees our hurt. He sees our suffering and deep sense of loss. He knows our disappointments and our failed expectations of ourselves and of others. He sees the suffering that we are experiencing. We are not artificial or synthetic diamonds. We are for real. We are not simulants—we are for real. He is working on us. In the same way that a diamond reflects natural light, a believer mirrors the Light of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The beauty of both can be seen in their sparkle and the gorgeous colours refracted from each facet.

As it says in Matthew 5:14 "Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world." (MSG)

Isaiah 48:10 reads God says: 'I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.'

"On the day when I act," says the Lord Almighty, "they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him."
Malachi 3:17 (NIV)

"You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God." Isaiah 62:3 (NIV)

"It is God who works in us, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." Phil. 2:13

"This is what the Lord says—he who created you. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour; since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, do not be afraid, for I am with you."

You might read Daniel 3 this week to see what God did in Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

We are the redeemed of the Lord, those whom God has bought back from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light to shine and glisten, to reflect light and warmth and reveal a depth of real beauty, to attract people to the Lord Jesus as diamonds in this dark world, in this increasingly dark time of its history in which people can no longer see where they are and where they are going and have no real, genuine and lasting hope.

It is not about what we are doing for God in the church. It is about what God is doing for the sake of His Name, for His glory and honour in us. For we are the church of God, the body of Christ, we are His building which He is making and establishing. The body of Christ is not a club bound by the traditions of men but a living dynamic organism where the Spirit of Christ lives and moves according to God`s Word. A church is a living entity.

There is a well-known story of the gravestone of a church which reads, “We always did it that way.”

But there are other challenges. How often does the spirit of the world creep into the church with cries for “what`s in it for me?” “What`s the best way for us? What`s the best compromise for us?” instead of seeking to hear and to follow what is clearly written in God`s Word.

For the Word of God says: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God`s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

What a privilege and what a responsibility!

“Our” strategies, “our” plans, “our” concepts, “our” ideas, “our” thoughts must always give way to His ways and to His Word, for it is not “our church” but His Body on earth.

In March 2021 I visited the regional government offices in Germany for the final stage of my application for German nationality. At the close of the interview I was asked to read aloud an A4 document. When I reached the last sentence it read: “If you have read this far this is to tell you that you are now a citizen of the German Federal Republic.” In the weeks following people asked me if I felt any different now that I was a German citizen as well as being British. I said the only difference I feel is that I am no longer a foreigner here.

God says: “You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God`s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” Eph. 2:19-22

It is probably our pride or our self-will or something similar that creates and sustains the kind of challenges to harmonious church living which Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians 3 where it says:

“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Peter”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

Paul is not saying that we should all have the same opinions or the same styles of ministry, or the same ways of deciding things and doing things, or that we should all have the same priorities, all use the same translations of the Bible, all wear the same kinds of clothes, all pray and worship in the same way or whatever, but that we should be perfectly united in mind and thought from the heart.

Probably because it is so important Paul again says: “Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? We are only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.” 1 Cor. 3:1-9 (NIV)

Of course we are different from that aren’t we? We don’t think or behave like that, do we? Or do we not infrequently say “I am from Leamington Road” or “I am from Bethesda Chapel”? Brothers and sisters, we are co-workers in God’s service; we are God’s field, God’s building, in the place to which He so clearly called this church, in Galligreaves and Wensleyfold.

The prophet Isaiah said: “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour.”

The church was created when the Holy Spirit came as we read in Acts 2.

The church grows when the Spirit of God speaks to the hearts of men, women and children who do not yet know Him.

When God speaks; when God works; when our hearts are so full each and every day with the Holy Spirit that people cannot but see that Jesus Christ is Lord.

When the Spirit came the church began and grew. Church growth is in God's hands, according to His Word and in His time.

The church grows through the proclamation of the Word of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit. She grows in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Where do I fit? We are His disciples. Our role is to follow Him; in all things, everywhere and each single day and night. God has called us to whole-life discipleship; not just with our heads but with our whole being; not just outwardly but inwardly from our hearts.

"In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6. This is what discipleship is all about, looking to God for guidance in all things at all times.

The guidance of God is not like walking a tightrope. But neither does seeking God's guidance give us the option of following it or not following it when He tells us what to do!

But I can here you thinking, "Aren't there passages in the New Testament that concentrate specifically, almost exclusively on spiritual gifts and the church?" Yes indeed there are. Particularly in 1 Corinthians 12 there is a very helpful treatment of this subject. Maybe you can read that for yourselves at home so that we can look at that together in a later message.

Three Sundays ago our middle-daughter Miyuki was here with us with her fiancé. Miyuki was born in Fujian Province in the million city of Fuzhou in China where my next cited author was a pastor. Watchman Nee's "What shall this man do" encourages us by showing that God calls people from diverse backgrounds and equips them for distinctive tasks.

He explains that since God does not call each of His servants to precisely identical tasks, neither does He use precisely identical means for their preparation. As the Lord of all operations, God retains the right to use particular forms of discipline or training, and sometimes the added test of suffering, as means to His end. For His goal is a ministry that is not merely common or general, but rather, one specially designed for the service of His people at a given time. To the servant himself, such a ministry must become peculiarly his own—something to be specially expressed because specially experienced."

Though each of us is called to a unique place of service, our ministries are not in conflict, but complementary. Nee draws from the lives of three apostles to illustrate essential elements of Christian ministry:

Are we like Peter, "fishers of men" – leading others to the WAY

Are we like Paul, teachers of Scripture, instructing others in the LIFE

Or

are we like John, elders in the church, discipling others in the TRUTH

Those with exceptional secular qualifications and experience may well be able to exercise their gifts in the church. But the first qualification is faith in Christ, a growing knowledge of

the Word being lived out in practice and being filled continually from day to day with the Holy Spirit. Power wheels and control freaks have no place in God's holy church.

The Holy Spirit of God and the gifts of the Spirit were and are given to the church not so that we can cause division in churches through arguing about these things. Not so that we can show how proud we are in possessing or practicing or indeed in not owning these gifts. Not so that we can pretend to all and sundry that these gifts did not really ever exist or do not exist anymore.

The gifts of the Spirit are given to build up the church, not to extend the arrogance of believers. In all humility and with grateful and thankful hearts let us be being filled each and every day with God's Holy Spirit and through His grace demonstrate the fruit of the same Spirit continually in our day-to-day lives. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The fruit of the Spirit is love. So it may surprise you to know that the word love does not appear once in the New Testament book of the Acts of the Apostles. But we see how the church grew. We see love in action. They didn't even talk or write about it. But they lived in love with one another and everybody inside and outside of the churches could see it.

On judgement day we stand each one of us alone before the Lord.

He gives a crown of beauty instead of ashes. From dust we came and to dust we shall return. But we are diamonds in His crown.

God says "To those who endure to the end I will give the crown of life".

There was then a time of Open worship and prayer including the following songs:

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones He came to save:
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied -
for every sin on Him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain:
then bursting forth in glorious day
up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am His and He is mine -
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from His hand:
till He returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

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I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them, they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them, whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?...

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them, my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?....

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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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**Alec then introduced a time of communion: with Gospel words, words of invitation,
and a reminder of the institution of the Lords supper.**

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke
is easy, and my burden is light. Matthew 11.28-30

All who love Jesus are invited to the table.

Come to this table, not because you must but because you may,
not because you are strong, but because you are weak.
Come, not because any goodness of your own gives you a right to come, but because
you need mercy and help.
Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more. Come,
because he loved you and gave himself for you.
Come and meet the risen Christ, for we are his Body.

The apostle Paul tells us of the institution of the Lord's Supper:

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on
the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new
covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11.23-26

Jesus said, 'This is my body which is for you; do this in memory of me'.

The bread is shared, with words such as: Take this in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

In the same way, he took the cup after supper, and said:
'This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this in memory of me.'

The wine is distributed with words such as: Drink this and remember that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful.

After all have been served, and have eaten the bread and drunk the wine, words such as these may be said:

Your death, O Lord, we commemorate. Your resurrection we confess.
Your final coming we await.
Glory be to you, O Christ.

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.