

COVENANT SERVICE

HYMN: Let earth and heaven combine

Let earth and heaven combine,
angels and all agree,
to praise in songs divine
the incarnate Deity,
our God contracted to a span,
incomprehensibly made man.

He laid his glory by,
he wrapped him in our clay;
unmarked by human eye,
the latent Godhead lay;
infant of days he here became,
and bore the mild Immanuel's name.

Unsearchable the love
that has the Saviour brought;
the grace is far above
both earth's and angels' thought:
suffice for us that God, we know,
our God, is manifest below.

He deigns in flesh to appear,
widest extremes to join;
to bring our vileness near,
and make us all divine:
and we the life of God shall know,
for God is manifest below.

Made perfect first in love,
and sanctified by grace,
we shall from earth remove,
and see his glorious face:
his love shall then be fully showed,
and we shall all be lost in God.

WELCOME

PRAYERS

Let us pray.

Glory to the Father, the God of love,
who created us;
who continually preserves and sustains us;
who has loved us with an everlasting love,
and given us the light of the knowledge of his glory
in the face of Jesus Christ.

Blessèd be God for ever.

Glory to Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who, though he was rich,
yet for our sake became poor,
and was tested in every way as we are,
yet without sin;
who proclaimed the good news of the kingdom,
and was obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross;
who was raised from the dead and is alive for ever,
and has opened the kingdom of heaven
to all who trust in him;
who is seated at God's right hand in glory,
and will come to be our judge.

Blessèd be God for ever.

Glory to the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
by whom we are born into the family of God,
and made members of the body of Christ;
whose witness confirms us;
whose wisdom teaches us;
whose power enables us;
who will do for us more than we can ask or think.

Blessèd be God for ever.

To the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be praise and glory for ever. **Amen**

COLLECT

God of grace,
through the mediation of your Son,
you call us into a new covenant.
Help us therefore to draw near with faith
and join ourselves in a perpetual covenant with you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

A reading from the Law.

Deuteronomy 29: 10-15

You stand assembled today, all of you, before the Lord your God—the leaders of your tribes, your elders, and your officials, all the men of Israel, your children, your women, and the aliens who are in your camp, both those who cut your wood and those who draw your water— to enter into the covenant of the Lord your God, sworn by an oath, which the Lord your God is making with you today; in order that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you and as he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I am making this covenant, sworn by an oath, not only with you who stand here with us today before the Lord our God, but also with those who are not here with us today.

For the wisdom that guides us
we praise you, O God.

A reading from the Prophets.

Jeremiah 31.31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of

them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

For the word that inspires us
we praise you, O God.

A reading from the Epistles.

Romans 12.1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For the truth that enlightens us
we praise you, O God.

GOSPEL READING

A reading from the Gospel according to John

Hear the Gospel of Christ.
Glory to Christ our Saviour.

John 15: 1-10

‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.

This is the Gospel of Christ.
Praise to Christ our Lord.

REFLECTION

THE COVENANT

God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation, chosen to bear witness to God's steadfast love by finding delight in the law.

The covenant was renewed in Jesus Christ our Lord, in his life, work, death and resurrection. In him all people may be set free from sin and its power, and united in love and obedience.

In this covenant God promises us new life in Christ. For our part we promise to live no longer for ourselves but for God.

We meet, therefore, as generations have met before us, to renew the covenant which bound them and binds us to God.

Let us then seek forgiveness for the sin by which we have denied God's claim upon us.

Let us pray.

God of mercy, hear us as we confess our sins.

For the sin that has made us slow to learn from Christ,
reluctant to follow him,
and afraid to bear the cross:

Lord, have mercy,
Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has caused the poverty of our worship,
the formality and selfishness of our prayers,
our neglect of fellowship and the means of grace,
and our hesitating witness for Christ:

Lord, have mercy,
Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has led us to misuse your gifts,
evade our responsibilities,
and fail to be good stewards of your creation:

Lord, have mercy,
Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has made us unwilling to overcome evil with good,
tolerant of injustice,
quick to condemn,
and selfish in sharing your love with others:

Lord, have mercy,
Lord, forgive.

Silence

**Have mercy on me, O God,
in your constant love;
in the fullness of your mercy
blot out my offences.
Wash away all my guilt,
and cleanse me from my sin.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Give me the joy of your help again
and strengthen me with a willing spirit.**

The presiding minister says:

If we confess our sins,
God is faithful and just,
and will forgive our sins,
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Therefore to all who truly repent
this is his gracious word:
'Your sins are forgiven'.
Amen. Thanks be to God.

HYMN: Come, let us use the grace divine

Come, let us use the grace divine,
and all, with one accord,
in a perpetual cov'nant join
ourselves to Christ the Lord:

Give up ourselves, through Jesu's power,
his name to glorify;
and promise, in this sacred hour,
for God to live and die.

The cov'nant we this moment make
be ever kept in mind:
we will no more our God forsake,
or cast his words behind.

We never will throw off his fear
who hears our solemn vow;
and if thou art well pleased to hear,
come down, and meet us now.

To each the cov'nant blood apply,
which takes our sins away;
and register our names on high,
and keep us to that day.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Beloved in Christ,
let us again claim for ourselves
this covenant which God has made with his people,
and take upon us the yoke of Christ.

This means that we are content
that he appoint us our place and work,
and that he himself be our reward.

Christ has many services to be done:
some are easy, others are difficult;
some bring honour, others bring reproach;

some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests,
others are contrary to both;
in some we may please Christ and please ourselves;
in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.
Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ,
who strengthens us.

Therefore let us make this covenant of God our own.
Let us give ourselves to him,
trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.

Lord God, holy Father,
since you have called us through Christ
to share in this gracious covenant,
we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience
and, for love of you,
engage ourselves to seek and do your perfect will.
We are no longer our own but yours.

**I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
 put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you
 or laid aside for you,
exalted for you
 or brought low for you;
let me be full,
 let me be empty,
let me have all things,
 let me have nothing;
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.**

**And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.**

As we have entered this covenant not for ourselves alone, but as God's servants and witnesses, let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Loving God, hear us as we pray for your holy catholic Church:
make us all one, that the world may believe.

Inspire and lead all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world:
establish justice and peace among all people.

Have compassion on all who suffer from any sickness, grief or trouble:
deliver them from their distress.

We praise you for all your saints who have entered your eternal glory:
bring us all to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray in silence for our own needs and for those of others . . .

Silence

Lord our God,
you have helped us by your grace
to make these prayers,
and you have promised through Christ our Lord
that when two or three agree in his name
you will grant what they ask.
Answer now your servants' prayers
according to their needs;
in this world grant that we may truly know you,
and in the world to come
graciously give us eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace

God has made an everlasting covenant of peace with God's people.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught his disciples, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

NOTICES

BLESSING

The blessing of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon us and remain with us forever. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn: O thou who camest from above

O thou who camest from above
the pure celestial fire to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return,
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up thy gift in me -

Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat,
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

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