

# Church at home

East Leake Methodist Church 2020

*Sit comfortably in a quiet place and prepare, start with a brief period of silence, turning your mind and spirit towards God. You may want to have a cross or candle in view as a focus.*

## **Opening prayer**

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.

## **Blessed 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.

## **Blessed 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.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

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

*Silence*

**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.**

**Jeremiah 31:31-4**

**StF 222: Who would think**     <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwCyLamhFrk>

**Romans 12:1-2**

**John 15:1-10**

**The Covenant**

God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation,  
chosen to bear witness to his 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.

## **Prayer of Confession**

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.**

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.**

### **Address**

This service is to help us as Methodists to remember those we came into Full Membership with. For some of us that could well be 40-50 years+ ago, for some maybe even more. Over the years there will have been for some Membership Classes, could be even a residential weekend or so. Then came the Reception into Full Membership service when we responded to the questions:

- 1) Will you commit yourself to the Christian life of worship and service, and be open to the renewing power of God?
- 2) Will you seek the strength of God's Spirit as you accept the cost of following Jesus Christ in your daily life?
- 3) Will you witness, by word and deed, to the good news of God in Christ, and so bring glory to God?

To which we replied to each challenge – With God's help I will

Each year on Covenant Sunday we have renewed these vows and remembered. Is it possible some of you are still in contact with those others you came into membership with? Non- Methodists cannot always understand what Covenant means to us collectively or as individuals. Yet over the years I have had many Anglican colleagues who have been jealous of the Methodist Church and wished the Anglican Church had the same or something similar. In fact in a number of places often the folk from the Parish Church have joined their Methodist brothers and sisters on this occasion.

The Covenant relationship is in some ways similar to the old medieval feudal system, a hint of care going both ways. In ancient times the Lord would receive the pledge from his knights/servants/serfs to provide him with time and service, in return the Lord promised to help and protect those under his care. This was done by the individual placing their hands together between the knees of the Lord and bowing their heads in homage. When making his promise the Lord would place his hands on the petitioners head in blessing (sound like how we were taught to pray maybe?). Of

course there were unscrupulous lords who wanted just to take and not to give anything back in return. Possibly seeing this as their God-given right; human beings have ever been thus.

Yet for us as Christians the Covenant relationship goes much deeper, being as it were a spiritual connection. It goes beyond the physical to the eternal, it is not constrained by time or space but binds us as one.

**StF 549: Come let us use the grace divine** page 287

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-rAoZu5Cg0> (lyrics and music only)

## **Covenant**

A Sisters and brothers in Christ,  
let us again accept our place within this covenant  
which God has made with us  
and with all who are called to be Christ's disciples.

This means that, by the help of the Holy Spirit,  
we accept God's purpose for us,  
and the call to love and serve God in all our life and work.

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.

Eternal God,  
in your faithful and enduring love  
you call us to share in your gracious covenant in Jesus Christ.  
In obedience we hear and accept your commands;  
in love we seek to do your perfect will;  
with joy we offer ourselves anew to you.

We are no longer our own but yours.

**I am no longer my own but yours.  
Your will, not mine, be done in all things,  
wherever you may place me,  
in all that I do  
and in all that I may endure;  
when there is work for me  
and when there is none;  
when I am troubled  
and when I am at peace.  
Your will be done  
when I am valued  
and when I am disregarded;  
when I find fulfilment  
and when it is lacking;  
when I have all things,  
and when I have nothing.  
I willingly offer  
all I have and am  
to serve you,  
as and where you choose.  
Glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
you are mine and I am yours.  
May it be so for ever.  
Let this covenant now made on earth  
be fulfilled in heaven. Amen.**

## **Lords Prayer**

### **Intercessions**

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.**

**StF 330: Joy to the world** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9IqiFU8qnE>

**Blessing** (32-3) page 296

The blessing of God,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you/us and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

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