

**Earlsdon Methodist Church
Covenant Service
Sunday 3rd January 2021
10.30 AM**



Theme: New Beginnings, Fresh Hopes.

Welcome

We come together on this Covenant Sunday to reflect on our commitment to and relationship with God and to repent on where we have fallen short of God's glory as we prepare to start afresh.



A new year has begun. Let us leave behind all that is past, and walk together into the future. Let us trust in the God of new beginnings, and worship the God of fresh hopes. **Amen**

Hymn StF 343: All My Days I Will Sing This Song of Gladness



A Prayer of Adoration

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 were 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

The Collect

God of grace, through the meditation 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.**



A Reading from the Prophets: Jeremiah 31: 7-14

Hymn 544 StF: As the Deer Pants for the Water

A reading from the Gospel according to: Mark 14: 22-25



What is a COVENANT? A covenant is a solemn or binding agreement either written or promised between two or more parties. A covenant is also a two-way entity because it involves relational agreement between two moral beings.

God chose Jeremiah to continue God's proclamation of God's renewed promise through a new covenant to the nation of Israel/Judea that will be different to the previous covenants with the former prophets. This covenant is about God reversing a long period of doom. It provides the transition to the comforting promise, national independence and restoration of the Davidic monarchy – the coming of a 'Branch of David'.

Jeremiah reminds us of the divine relationship we have with our heavenly Father - a relationship that will never be broken. A solid relationship which is based on God's divine **COVENANT**.

The reading from Jeremiah 31: 7-14 is a demonstration of Yahweh's everlasting love presented in the form of a beautiful oracle. It shows that God's patience is inexhaustible (vs3). As a result, Northern Israel shall be restored and Zion will be the glorious centre of Yahweh's worship. This oracle gives us a picture of all the scattered Israelites coming back in the midst of immense joy.

There shall be no more weeping (Vs 9) as the Lord will console them from their sorrow as they come. This tells us that lamentation and sorrow has been a part of their existence for over four hundred years. (Rachel the mother of Joseph weeping over her slaughtered children). Jeremiah himself was in a camp for deportees in Ramah and experienced first-hand the anguish of being homeless, injustice, exclusion, fear.

God's covenant to the exiles are of assured hope that encapsulates both the physical and spiritual needs of the people. Creation is central to yielding its increase in abundance for the

physical sustenance of the people; the grains, oil, wine, the young flock shall play a part in restoring a people who have lived decades of starvation and famine.

God's covenant to the exile Israelites brought comfort and joy to them and none amongst them was excluded as the Lord declared that 'they shall be satisfied with their bounty'.

However, in order for the exilic people of Israel to experience God's covenant, they had to submit to the will of God by being obedient and humble thus allowing God to lead them. Thus a covenant is a two-way entity, we also have a greater part to play in order that we are able to meet with God not because God needs our help because our righteousness and humility are key attributes in the kingdom of God.

Question: What would we like to put right with God today?

As we all struggle with all that the pandemic has brought upon us as a people and the Church as well as other situations that may have tested our faith – some to greater extent than others, let us be assured that the covenant of the Lord are steadfast and sure which is manifested in the sense that God is faithful, and God is true. Even though it may take some time, the situation may seem perilous, God's love and covenant to us are unwavering and God's words will shall bring joy and dancing, comfort and gladness, restoration and justice to God's people in God's time.

Even though we are not able to gather together to share in Holy Sacrament on this Covenant Sunday, Matthew 14:22-25 reassures us that we are a communion of saints. We share in the body and blood of Jesus and for our sake the body and blood of Jesus Christ is a living covenant to our salvation and faith. **Amen**



The Covenant: Prayer of Confession

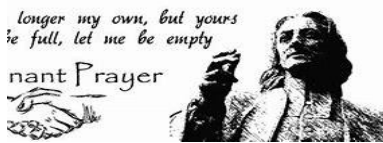
God of mercy, hear us as we confess our sins. For the sin that has made us slow to learn from Christ, reluctant to follow him, and afraid to bear the cross: Lord, have mercy, **Lord, forgive.** For the sin that has caused the poverty of our worship, the formality and selfishness of our prayers, our neglect 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.

Hymn 549 StF: Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine



A Covenant with God

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.' (*The Methodist Covenant Prayer*)

Hymn 545 StF: Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of my Heart



Intercessory Prayer

Loving God, hear us as we pray for your holy catholic Church:
The Church on earth is seeking new directions, identity and purpose during these difficult times of a global pandemic.

Make us all one, that the world may believe.

Inspire and lead all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world that their hearts and minds will be open to seek peace, pursue justice and practice equality.

Establish justice and peace among all people.

Most Merciful God, have compassion on all who suffer from any sickness or disorder, especially Covi-19, those receiving treatment or awaiting treatment, those having to cope with a serious diagnosis, the lonely, the broken hearted, those suffering from abuse and other forms of suffering.

Please deliver them from their distress.

Eternal Father, we pray that the new year 2021 will herald in a season of healing, peace and restoration. Behold all things will pass away and old things will become new through Jesus Christ.

Let this be a new beginning of good to us - your people.

We praise you for all your saints who have entered your eternal glory:

Bring us all to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Almighty God, we affirm that you will refresh, renew and restore us to continue to worship you, alone and with others as well as reading the scriptures; that we will learn and care for others,

learn about our faith and be hospitable and generous; we pray that we will be helpful to others in our communities and afar, care for creation and all of your gifts and challenge injustice; May we be strengthened to share your good news, speak of your love; share your faith with others and live such that others are drawn to Jesus Christ.

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

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 servant's prayers according to their needs; in this world grant that we may truly know you, and in the world to come graciously **Amen.**



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**

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you



Blessing of Offertory/Giving

Loving God, accept our sacrifices of giving, worship, service, suffering and joy; all that we are we give unto you for the good of your people and the Church. **Amen.**

Final Hymn 156 StF: From The Breaking of the Dawn



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

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.