

10th January 2020 – Morning Service

Covenant Service

Rev Josephine Soon

Gathering

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 Lord's Prayer

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.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

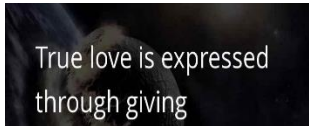
Song – If a wise man knows (what can I bring)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) If a wise man knows where the Saviour's born
Guided by a shining star
To the world He shows why He came so far
Understanding who You are | B) <i>Singing Gloria, singing Gloria
Bringing praises to the King
Singing Gloria, singing Gloria
Bringing praises to the King</i> |
| Ch) <i>What can I bring, what can I sing
To honour You my Friend and King
Who can describe this love of mine
The holy Saviour so divine</i> | 3) When a child is born and the reason why
Was to love this broken world
How can I repay, can the only way
Be to love Him in return |
| 2) If a shepherd hears when a child is born
By the angels shining bright
And the hopes and fears of a thousand years
Will be met in You tonight | |

Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34 A new covenant

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.

Reflection 1 – ‘Give’ – love is to give before one may/may not receive



True love is expressed
through giving

God ‘...(gives) by ‘...put my law within them,...’ (v. 33)

‘My law’ is God’s word. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us (John 1:14).

The Word, God-in Jesus. God gives Himself to us so we can be in His presence. So that God can and is with us. We are with God. The point is this, God loves us first; God gives first, before we offer any response. Even if we choose not to respond, God gives. We are called to grow/ transform in the fuller image of God; to grow to be more like our Father in Heaven. To what extent have you found yourself willing to be a giver, to give regardless of any return?

Will you, from this moment onward, love your neighbour, strangers, the poor and the hungry...

May God help you and me to see past myself to the wants and needs of others.

This is a New way of living your life: New Year – New lifestyle.

Reading: Romans 12:1-2 The New Life in Christ

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[b] 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.

Reflection 2 – ‘Serve’ – love is to serve... with expectation to have a mutual commitment/relationship in God

In the Old Testament/ Covenant:

‘...by hand to bring them out of Egypt...’ (v. 32) God acted as a tour guide, leader, instructor to bring, to journey and to lead His people out of something disastrous.

Now, in the integration of the New Testament/ Covenant. God promises:

‘..I will put...I will write...I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’(v.33)

Through the New Covenant, God acts as a Servant, Helper and Motivator to those who are already cleansed/ those who believe their sins were wiped away by the Blood of Jesus. God has put...the imprint/ the word that God has spoken to us. That imprint refers to our Lord Jesus – the Word become Flesh.



Love is to serve... with expectation that will bear the FRUIT of a mutual commitment/relationship in God.

To serve others without an expectation that they will get to know our God, is a waste of time and energy, waste of God’s provision and His saving grace.

Reading: John 15: 3-4

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.

Reflection 3 – ‘Rescue’ - LOVE is to rescue/deliver others from their sins

F.R.O.G



Fully Rely On God

Christians are to be fully reliant on GOD. The only way to be a Christian, which means that nobody can be a Christian unless they Fully Rely On God #F.R.O.G.

God’s Covenant love is to serve us... whilst expect us to FROG. The aim of Love – to serve is to have a mutual commitment/ relationship in God.

Rescue’ - LOVE is to rescue/deliver others from their sins - ‘...to bring them out...’ (v. 32), ‘...I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.’ (v.34)

As a Christian, you are the only person who can bring your friends and family out from their sins. It is only you who can be the bridge, the channel, to bring hope of salvation and life beyond here on earth to them. Only you can, and only you have the authority to bring people out from their darkness to the Light (Matthew 28). To bring them out from a troublesome and sinful life to a life of hope and peace and even joy.

Reading: Mark 1:9-11 The Baptism of Jesus

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Reflection 4

It is through repentance and belief that when we confess our sins from our hearts, God will come into our presence, into our being. In 1775, John Wesley introduced the covenant service and he saw it as an important part of spiritual life in Methodist Societies. This renewal service was a time for Methodists to gather annually in a time of self-examination, reflection, and dedication, wholly giving up themselves and renewing their covenant with God. Repentance through confession and commitment was a key focus of the service, demanding humility from those willing to submit themselves to the dynamic words stated within the liturgy.

This year, we are the Methodist Society of today. May we learn to love God through dedicating ourselves to give, to serve and to rescue all those in our lives who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. They may be people from your family, friends and strangers alike. May we be like God Himself to them:

1. to accept Jesus into their life
2. to serve them with an expectation that they may have a mutual relationship with God
3. to rescue them from their darkness to Jesus, the Light, the Resurrection and the Life.

May 2021 be a fruitful year in your Gospel garden, may you take courage to lead many in praying this Sinner’s Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Saviour. In Your Name. Amen.

Proclamation

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

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:

L: Lord have mercy: **R: 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:

L: Lord have mercy: **R: Lord, forgive**

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

L: Lord have mercy: **R: 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:

L: Lord have mercy: **R: Lord, forgive**

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.**

STF 549 – Come let us use the grace divine

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Come, let us use the grace divine,
And all, with one accord,
In a perpetual cov'nant join
Ourselves to Christ the Lord: | 4) 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. |
| 2) Give up ourselves, through Jesu's power,
His name to glorify;
And promise, in this sacred hour,
For God to live and die. | 5) To each the cov'nant blood apply,
Which takes our sins away;
And register our names on high,
And keep us to that day. |
| 3) The cov'nant we this moment make
Be ever kept in mind:
We will no more our God forsake,
Or cast his words behind. | |

Charles Wesley CCL No. 515642

Invitation

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.

Covenant Prayer

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.

Prayers of Intercession

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 287 – When I survey

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride. | 4) His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the tree;
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me. |
| 2) Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood. | 5) Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all. |
| 3) See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown? | |

Isaac Watts CCL No. 515642

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.**