

CAVERSHAM PARK  
United Reformed Church

Covenant with  
Holy Communion Service order  
(Sunday 1st January 2023)  
Year A

**A service of Covenant with Holy Communion at Caversham Park (Forth Order)**

**Opening Hymn:** Christians Awake, Salute the Happy Morn [with lyrics for congregations]

Let us worship God.

This is the day which the Lord has made;  
**let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

It is good to give thanks to the Lord;  
**for God's love endures for ever.**

Let us adore the God of love:

**You created us, O God; you continually preserve and sustain us; you love us with an everlasting love; through the light of Christ you have given us the knowledge of your glory. We praise you; we acknowledge you to be the Lord.**

Let us give thanks for the grace of our Saviour Jesus Christ;

**Though you were rich, yet for our sake you became poor. You were tempted at all points as we are yet without sin, You went about doing good and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. You were obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross; you were dead, yet are alive for ever; you have opened the kingdom of heaven to all who trust in you. You sit at the right hand of God; you will come again to be our judge; you, O Christ, are the king of glory.**

Let us rejoice in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

**You are the giver of life; by you we are born into the family of God and made members of the body of Christ. Your witness confirms us; your wisdom teaches us; your power enables us. You will do far more for us than we ask or think. All praise to you, O Holy Spirit.**

*Silence*

Let us make our confession to God: Merciful God, in Christ you have shown us the way of life. We confess with shame our slowness to learn, our failure to follow, our reluctance to bear the cross.

**Have mercy on us and forgive us.**

We confess that too often we have impoverished the life of the church by the half-heartedness of our worship, our neglect of fellowship and the means of grace, our hesitating witness for Christ, our evasion of responsibilities in your service, our imperfect stewardship of your gifts.

**Have mercy on us and forgive us.**

We confess that too little of your love has reached others through us. Often we have been hasty in our judgments, grudging in forgiveness, slow in reconciliation, unwilling to help our neighbour.

**Have mercy on us and forgive us.**

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Therefore I declare to you, you are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Reading 1** - Deuteronomy 29:10-15 (NIV)

**Hymn 2** - O Let the Son of God Enfold You (Spirit Song) [with lyrics for congregations]

**Gospel** - John 15:1-8 (NIV)

**Sermon** (Use tree of life picture on internal screen only)

### **The Covenant**

In covenant God chose Israel to be a servant people.

Through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, God has declared the covenant to be with all who trust in Christ. We stand within this covenant and we bear Christ's name. On one hand, God promises to give us new life in Christ: on the other, we pledge to live not for ourselves but for God. Today we meet, as generations before us have met, to renew the covenant which bound them and which now binds us to God.

**Hymn 3** - Covenant Keeper (Official Lyric Video)

Let us claim this covenant for ourselves and take again the yoke of Christ upon us. To take this yoke upon us means that we are willing for Christ to appoint us our place and work, and for Christ alone to be our reward.

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

Loving and holy God, with joy we take upon ourselves the yoke of obedience and for love of you commit 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 whole-heartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, you are mine and I am yours. So be it.**

### **Intercessions**

Hear the gracious words of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

*Matthew 11:28*

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. *John 6:35*

Anyone who comes to me, I will never drive away. *John 5:37*

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**Peace be with you.**

#### **Hymn 4 - All to Jesus I Surrender**

Hear the narrative of the institution of the Lord's Supper as it was recorded by the apostle Paul.

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*

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and following his example, we take this bread and this cup, and give thanks to God.

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

With joy we give you thanks and praise, Almighty God, Source of all life and love, that we live in your world, that you are always creating and sustaining it by your power, and that you have so made us that we can know and love you, trust and serve you. We give you thanks that you loved the world so much that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life.

We praise you that through his coming your promises given by the prophets were fulfilled, and that the day of our deliverance had dawned; and, as we look for the triumph of his Kingdom, we exult with holy joy.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord**

**God of power and might,**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy Lord God, by what we do herein remembrance of Christ we celebrate his perfect sacrifice on the Cross and his glorious resurrection and ascension; we declare that he is Lord of all; and we prepare for his coming in his kingdom. We pray that through your Holy Spirit this bread

may be for us the body of Christ and this wine the blood of Christ. Accept our sacrifice of praise; and as we eat and drink at his command unite us to Christ as one body in him, and give us strength to serve you in the world. And to you, one holy and eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we give praise and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All 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 Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way also the cup saying 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

*Distribution of the Bread and Wine then follows:*

**Hymn 5 – Broken for you (Communion Hymn)**

Let us praise the Lord.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

**Blessing and honour and glory**

**and power be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.**

Let us pray.

**Most gracious God, we praise you for what you have given and for what you have promised us here. You have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. You have fed us with the bread of life, and renewed us for your service.**

**Now we give ourselves to you; and we ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your kingdom, and that our love may be your love reaching out into the life of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Dismissal and Blessing: Go in peace to serve the Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you always. **Amen.**

**Hymn 6 - O Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness [with lyrics for congregations]**