

The Camel-Allen Churches

Home Worship

19 July 2020



WE GATHER TOGETHER

We come from scattered lives
and scattered places
to meet with God.
Let us recognize his presence with us.

**We sit silently for a moment as we each bring ourselves into God's
presence**

Hymn:

*Come down O Love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.*

*O let it freely burn,
till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
and let thy glorious light
shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.*

*Let holy charity
mine outward vesture be,
and lowliness become mine inner clothing;
true loneliness of heart,
which takes the humbler part,
and o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.*

*And so the yearning strong,
with which the soul will long,
shall for outpass the pow'r of human telling;
nor can we guess its grace,
till we become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.*

As God's chosen people
we worship at home in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
We may give ourselves to the service of God.

WE SEEK THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS

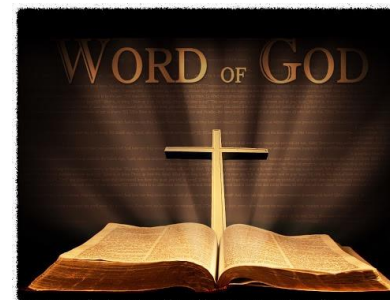
Jesus says,
"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand".
So let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ,
Confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

We reflect in silence, then say together:

**Lord God,
We have sinned against you;
We have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing
And cleanse us from our sins.
Renew a right spirit within us
And restore us to the joy of your salvation;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen**

May the Father of all mercies
Cleanse us from our sins,
And restore us in his image
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blesséd is the Lord
for he has heard the voice of our prayer



Genesis 25: 21 - 34

Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. The children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is to be this way, why do I live?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger." When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. Afterward his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!" (Therefore he was called Edom.) Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Colossians 3: 12 - 17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and

admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Hymn:

**God is working his purpose out
as year succeeds to year.
God is working his purpose out,
and the day is drawing near.
Nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.**

**From the east to the utmost west
wherever foot has trod,
through the mouths of his messengers
echoes forth the voice of God:
"Listen to me, you continents,
Ye islands, give ear to me,
that the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea."**

**How can we do the work of God,
how prosper and increase
harmony in the human race,
and the reign of perfect peace?
What can we do to urge the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea?**

**March we forth in the strength of God,
his banner is unfurled;
let the light of the gospel shine
in the darkness of the world:**

**strengthen the weary, heal the sick
and set ev'ry captive free,
that the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.**

**All our efforts are nothing worth
unless God bless the deed;
vain our hopes for the harvest tide
till he brings to life the seed.
Yet ever nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.**



THE GOSPEL

John 15: 8-17

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. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. "This is

my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

REFLECTION



Our service began by recognising us as the chosen people of God: but what does that really mean?

The Epistle last week was taken from the letter to the Ephesians which told us that God chose Christians (1) before the foundation of the world and (2) that we were chosen to be holy and blameless before God in love.

What does it mean to have been chosen before the foundation of the world? In the letter to the Colossians we are reminded that Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible (Col 1: 15-16). We were chosen, then, by and for the eternal Christ who, as the Prologue to John's Gospel tells us, was with God in the beginning and is God.

In the Old Testament story of Esau and Jacob. Jacob, the younger twin, swindles his brother out of his birthright and, later, deceives his own elderly, blind father into believing that he is conferring his blessing on Esau, when it is actually Jacob impersonating him. Jacob flees from his brother's wrath; but when he eventually returns he is welcomed and forgiven by his brother. Jacob's conduct is morally reprehensible; Esau stands on the higher moral ground. Yet it is Jacob who is chosen by God to be renamed Israel and to become the father of the Israelite nation, the chosen people of God in our Old Testament.

Why was Jacob chosen? Not because he was a better person than Esau: but because he was to play a role in the history of salvation on Earth. God chose Jacob because that was the best way to establish Israel, intended to be a light to the nations, as the prophet Isaiah tells us. So God chose Jacob as the right person to further his mission here on earth and Israel was chosen to further God's mission on earth, to be the spearhead for the eventual establishment of the kingdom. Does this help us to understand why we are now God's chosen people?

With the coming of Christ, we have become the new Israel. So, if we, the church community, have now replaced Israel as the chosen people, we too are chosen as instruments of God's mission on earth.

As we were told in Ephesians: we were chosen to be holy and blameless before God in love. In our reading from Colossians the author addresses us as "God's chosen ones...holy and beloved"; and we are told to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. This is how we are to be holy and blameless before God: to live our lives displaying these qualities. We are to be an example to others: just as Israel was to be a light to the nations. Above all we are to clothe ourselves with love. This is the way we are to further God's mission to bring his kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus tells us that if we obey his commandments we will abide in his love. And his commandment is simple: love one another, as I have loved you. We are, he says, his friends, because "You did not choose me, I chose you". We are chosen, then, by Christ from

before the beginning, to be holy and blameless before the eternal Christ, to love one another and to abide in his love. "I appointed you", Jesus said, "to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last".

Let us then go forth, resolved to keep that commandment to love one another; and by our compassion, our kindness, our humility, meekness and patience, to bear that fruit, fruit which will last, and, by doing this, fulfil the task for which we were chosen, to spread abroad the good news of Jesus Christ.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in God the Father,
God Almighty, by whose plan
Earth and heaven sprang to being,
All created things began.**

**We believe in Christ the Saviour,
Son of God in human frame,
Virgin-born, the child of Mary
Upon whom the Spirit came.**

**Christ, who won the cross forsaken,
Like a lamb to slaughter led,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
He descended to the dead.**

**We believe in Jesus risen,
Heaven's king to rule and reign,
To the Father's side ascended
Till as judge he comes again.**

We believe in God the Spirit;



**In one church, below, above:
Saints of God in one communion,
One in holiness and love.**

**So by faith, our sins forgiven,
Christ our Saviour, Lord and friend,
We shall rise with him in glory
To the life that knows no end.**

PRAYERS

In the faith of Christ, we pray as he has commanded us and given us his example:

As we have become your chosen people in this time and place, make us more worthy of our calling. Lead your church to follow Jesus and help us to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience; and above all to clothe ourselves with love.

Silence

Lord, meet us in the silence
And hear our prayer.

Jesus told us to obey his commandment to love one another as he has loved us. Lord, help us to understand what this truly means and give us the insight to see where we fail to do this, even when we think we do.

Silence

Lord, meet us in the silence
And hear our prayer.

Lord, we thank you for calling us your friends, not your servants. Yet we long to serve you and to be worthy of your friendship. Keep us strong in our faith and guide us, our families, friends and neighbours to keep your commandment to love each other that we, and they, may abide in your love, as we yearn to do.

Silence

Lord, meet us in the silence
And hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for your world in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic. Soothe the many hearts that are troubled in these difficult times and help them to know you and become your friends also. Grant, to all who suffer, for whatever reason, the knowledge that you are there for them, if only they cry out to you. And help us to bring them to you by our exercise of compassion, mercy, patience and love through which they will see you in all that we say and do.

Silence

Lord, meet us in the silence
And hear our prayer.

In silence, Lord, we each make our own prayers known to you.

Silence

May the Lord who has gone before to prepare a place for us, receive the souls of the all the faithful and grant us and them, at the end of this life, the perfect knowledge of his love.

We make these, our prayers, in the name of the Son, our Saviour, in whom the Father is revealed and glorified.

Amen.

Creator God,
You made us all in your image:
May we discern you in all that we see,
And serve you in all that we do;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
Let us pray as our Saviour taught us:

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.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
And the glory are yours
Now for ever.
Amen.

Hymn:

**Jesus calls us here to meet him
as, through word and song and prayer,
we affirm God's promised presence
where his people live and care.
Praise the God who keeps his promise;
Praise the Son who calls us friends;
Praise the Spirit who, among us,
to our hopes and fears attends.**

**Jesus calls us to confess him
Word of life and Lord of all,
sharer of our flesh and frailness
saving all who fail or fall.
Tell his holy human story;
tell his tales that all may hear;
tell the world that Christ in glory
came to earth to meet us here.**

**Jesus calls us to each other;
Found in him are no divides.
Race and class and sex and language -
such are barriers he derides.
Join the hands of friend and stranger;
join the hands of age and youth;
join the faithful and the doubter
in their common search for truth.**

CONCLUSION

Let us pray:

Draw your Church together, O God,
Into one great company of disciples,
Together following our Lord Jesus Christ
Into every walk of life,
Together serving him in his mission to the world,
And together witnessing to his love
In everything we say and do.

And the blessing of God Almighty,
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Be among us and remain with us always.

Amen

Go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

