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## *The Necessity of the New Birth*

*Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)*

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### Call to Worship

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!

**To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honour and glory and might  
forever and ever. Amen!**

*(Rev 5:12-13)*

Let us pray.

**Sovereign Lord, our Heavenly Father,  
it is our heart's desire, our deepest longing,  
to know you, to love you, and to worship you.  
It is our greatest pleasure,  
our highest privilege, our chief delight,  
to meet with you, the one true and living God,  
and experience your grace and favour.  
Grant us power by your Holy Spirit  
to worship you now, in spirit and in truth.  
Amen.**

*Valley of Vision*

## Psalm 84

How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O Lord of hosts to me.  
My heart cries out and even faints,  
the courts of God to see.  
The sparrow finds a place to nest,  
beside your throne of grace.  
Oh how I long to find my rest,  
and dwell with you always.

A pilgrim now for all my days,  
my gaze is set above.  
The desert blooms with autumn rains,  
You bless the ones you love.

Your people go  
from strength to strength,  
until we see your face.  
Your eyes are turned to us in love,  
You hear us when we pray.

I'd rather live for just one day  
and gaze upon my Lord.  
Than spend a lifetime far away  
from where your praise is heard.  
There's no good thing you will withhold,  
from those who follow you,  
O Lord my sun and mighty shield  
my soul will trust in you.

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## Confession and Assurance

Hear the summary of the whole law, from our Lord Jesus Christ:

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”* (Matt 22:37-40)

Have mercy on us, O God

**According to your unfailing love;  
According to your great compassion.**

God's word tells us:

*“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.  
If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins  
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 Jn 1:8-9)

Let us therefore confess our sins against God,  
and against our neighbour,  
first in silence and then aloud together.

*Please kneel or be seated.*

## *Prayer of Confession*

Almighty and most merciful God,

**We confess to you that we are by nature sinful and unclean,  
and that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed;  
not only in outward transgressions, but also in secret thoughts and desires  
that we are not able to understand, but which are all known to You.  
For this reason, we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy,  
seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

## *Assurance of Pardon*

*“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”, “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Mark 10:45; Isa 35:10)*

## *In Christ Alone*

In Christ alone my hope is found,  
He is my light, my strength, my  
song  
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground  
Firm through the fiercest drought  
and storm.  
What heights of love,  
what depths of peace  
When fears are stilled,  
when strivings cease  
My Comforter, my All in All  
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,  
Fullness of God in helpless babe.  
This gift of love and righteousness,  
Scorned by the ones  
He came to save  
Till on that cross as Jesus died,  
The wrath of God was satisfied  
For every sin on Him was laid  
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,  
Light of the world by darkness  
slain:  
Then bursting forth in glorious day  
Up from the grave He rose again  
And as He stands in victory  
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,  
For I am His and He is mine  
Bought with the precious blood  
of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death,  
This is the power of Christ in me  
From life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny  
No power of hell,  
no scheme of man,  
Can ever pluck me from His hand  
Till He returns or calls me home  
Here in the power of Christ  
I'll stand.

*Stuart Townend & Keith Getty  
© 2001 Thankyou Music*

## God's Word

### *First Reading: Ezekiel 36:22-32*

This is the Word of the Lord,  
**Thanks be to God**

### *Psalm 107:1-16*

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever!

**Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,  
whom he has redeemed from trouble  
and gathered in from the lands, from  
the east and from the west, from the  
north and from the south.**

Some wandered in desert wastes, finding  
no way to a city to dwell in; hungry and  
thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

**Then they cried to the Lord in their  
trouble, and he delivered them from  
their distress. He led them by a  
straight way till they reached a city to  
dwell in.**

Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast  
love, for his wondrous works to the  
children of man!

**For he satisfies the longing soul, and  
the hungry soul he fills with good  
things.**

Some sat in darkness and in the shadow  
of death, prisoners in affliction and in  
irons, for they had rebelled against the  
words of God, and spurned the counsel  
of the Most High. So he bowed their  
hearts down with hard labour; they fell  
down, with none to help.

**Then they cried to the Lord in their  
trouble, and he delivered them from  
their distress. He brought them out of  
darkness and the shadow of death,  
and burst their bonds apart. Let them  
thank the Lord for his steadfast love,  
for his wondrous works to the children  
of man! For he shatters the doors of  
bronze and cuts in two the bars of  
iron.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit.

**As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and shall be forever,  
age after age. Amen!**

### *Second Reading: John 3:1-15*

This is the Word of the Lord,  
**Thanks be to God.**

### *Sermon: The Necessity of the New Birth (Mike Matthews)*

## *Born by the Holy Spirit's breath*

Born by the Holy Spirit's breath,  
loosed from the law of sin and death,  
now cleared in Christ from every claim  
no judgment stands against our name.

In us the Spirit makes his home  
that we in him may overcome;  
Christ's risen life, in all its powers,  
its all-prevailing strength, is ours.

Children and heirs of God most high,  
we by his Spirit 'Father' cry;  
that Spirit with our spirit shares  
to frame and breathe our wordless  
prayers.

One is his love, his purpose one:  
to form the likeness of his Son  
in all who, called and justified,  
shall reign in glory at his side.

Nor death nor life, nor powers unseen,  
nor height nor depth can come between;  
we know through peril, pain and sword,  
the love of God in Christ our Lord.

*Timothy Dudley-Smith © 1984 Hope Publishing  
Company*

## *The Nicene Creed*

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of  
heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from  
Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one  
Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was  
incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and was  
made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius  
Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he  
rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended  
into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He  
will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who  
proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father  
and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken  
through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the  
world to come. Amen.**

## *Prayers of Intercession*

*After each petition:*

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray:

**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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen!**

*Please be seated.*

## **The Lord's Supper**

### *Invitation to the Table*

*All baptised Christians who trust in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and seek to lead a new life by God's mercies, are welcome at this table. If you do not profess faith in Christ, please refrain from receiving the bread and wine.*

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The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

*Please join in saying the Sanctus ("The Holy", based on Isaiah 6:3)*

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts**

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

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

*The stewards will distribute the wine and bread.*

*Eat the bread as you receive it, but keep the wine until we all drink together.*

## *Prayer of Thanksgiving*

**Almighty and eternal God, we thank you for reassuring us at this meal of your favour and goodness towards us, of your word for us. We thank you that we are truly members of the body of your Son, that we are heirs, by grace, of your eternal kingdom. We humbly beg you, heavenly Father, to keep us as faithful members of your church, to strengthen us by your Spirit, to draw us together in love and unity, that we may serve through those good works which you have prepared for us to do through Jesus Christ our Lord, and for His glory. Amen.**

## *Gifts and Offerings*

Gifts and offerings may be placed in the offertory box at the back of the hall. *"Honour the LORD with your wealth and with the first-fruits of all your produce."* (Prov 3:9)

## *Psalm 117. Praise The Lord, O All You Nations.*

Praise the Lord, O all you nations;  
all you peoples, sing his praise.  
For his love is great towards us;  
his commitment lasts always.  
He is faithful now and ever.  
Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

## **Benediction**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

**In the Name of Christ, Amen.**

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## Notices & Notes

**Please diarise and pray for the following:**

<b>Mon 26<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	<b>Fellowship Group: Book of Esther</b>	<b>See Alan</b>
<b>Tues 27<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	<b>Women in the Word</b>	<b>See Hilary</b>
<b>Thurs 29<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	<b>Men's Ministry Meeting</b>	<b>At the church at 7.15pm</b>
<b>Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar</b>	<b>Morning Worship 10 am</b>	<b>Followed by Church Lunch</b>