

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CELEBRATING THE COVENANT

This approach to the Covenant Service has been prepared for use by and with people with learning disabilities. The ideas are only suggestions and it may be that group leaders who are used to working with particular groups or individuals will want to use more familiar material. Some of these suggestions may, where appropriate, be incorporated in a church's own covenant service.

The service follows closely the five parts of the Covenant Service:

We Gather • We Believe • We Serve
We Covenant • We Share

We Gather

A worship song has been suggested here but local group leaders will know which other known songs would be appropriate. The Bulid version of the Lord's Prayer has been reproduced but Groups may choose to use a sung version. Groups may also prefer to make their own prayer of confession.

We Believe

This section includes the Action Creed from Angola which has a number of simple actions which are illustrated. The Action Creed is also very useable by children (and adults too!). For those who can, it ends with a jump of joy!

We Serve

The statements that appear here are taken from the Bulid version of the *Five Core Values*.

We Covenant

Thanking our loving God is normal in teaching and worship with special groups. Caring friendship and mutual help is an important part of their experience. Often those with varying disabilities are alert to others' needs and difficulties and they feel for, help and enable one another: examples might be drawn out. They rely on people's promises – like the friends who provide transport to the church. They are disappointed if a promise fails. This Covenant

Prayer is a special promise.

The illustrations have a central theme around hands – linking covenant with relationship. These may be photocopied or transferred on to OHP acetates. The original version of the covenant prayer is displayed above each illustration with the Bulid version (in bold type) beneath. It is anticipated that if the Bulid service is used, those with a learning disability will have been able to look at the themes and reflect in advance on their own experiences. It is important that people with a learning disability are given the opportunity to share in the preparation process. The material might even be incorporated into the period of preparation of the whole fellowship.

We Share

This may depend on what a group is used to. The *Living Stones Group* from Harlow have a way of singing the repeated line, 'The Father himself loves you', sung to one person after another as they go round greeting the congregation.

The words of the Grace are often appropriate for people with a learning disability – the associations of these words (in terms of church life) are as important as the content!

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CREATING AND
DEEMING GOD
WE GIVE YOU
NKS AND PRA
YOUR COVENA
E GRACE MADE
OUR SALVATIO
JESUS CHRIST
OUR LORD
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BUILD VERSION

BAPTIST UNION INITIATIVE WITH PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

**COVENANT
FOR A
GOSPEL
PEOPLE**

THE BAPTIST UNION
OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Covenant Service for a congregation including people with learning disabilities

WE GATHER

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| God made us | <i>Halleluia</i> |
| Jesus calls us together | <i>Halleluia</i> |
| The Holy Spirit leads us | <i>Halleluia</i> |

Worship Song

Jesus is a friend of mine, praise him

Actions:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Jesus | point to left and right palms in turn for nails |
| friend | hold left hand in right hand, both palms inwards, in front of body at shoulder height |
| mine | touch hand on heart |
| praise him | lift up both hands |

Sometimes the song is effective as actions only.

Other verses can be created:

- *Jesus died to set us (or named members of group) free, praise him*
- *Jesus cares for all the world, praise him*

Prayer of Confession

Dear Lord we are sorry for the bad things we do.
Help us to be good and kind. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (Build version by Chris Ruddle and Marie Kirk)

Father God in Heaven
You are very special.

We want you to be our King
And for everyone to do what you say
Here in , as in Heaven.

[supply the name of your town]

Give us today the food we need.
We are sorry when we are nasty or unkind
And we forgive those who are unkind and hurt us.
Do not let us even think about doing wrong.
Keep us safe from badness,
For you are the King of everything.
You are the strongest
And we worship you
For always,
Amen.

WE BELIEVE

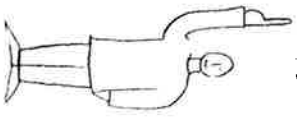
We believe in God the Father Almighty who sent Jesus into the world. He came as a baby, born of the Holy Spirit, was crucified, died and was buried. On the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven where he prays for us continually. Praise the Lord. Halleluia!

The Action Creed:

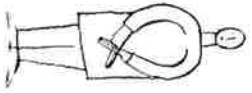
(Illustrated by Mark Westbrook)

We Believe In

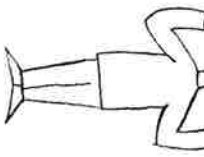
GOD



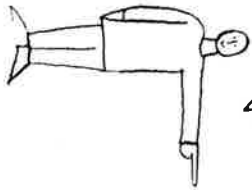
the Father



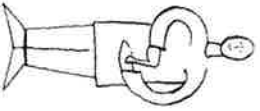
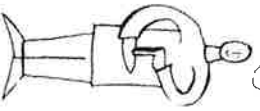
Almighty



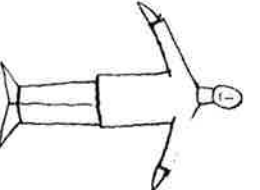
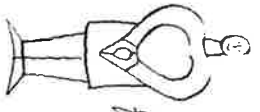
who sent



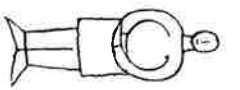
Jesus



into the world

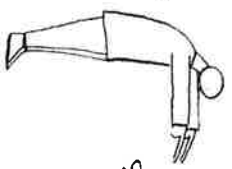
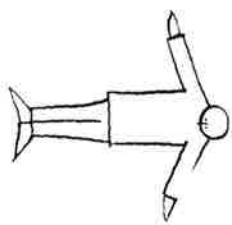


He came as a baby



Born of the Holy Spirit

died



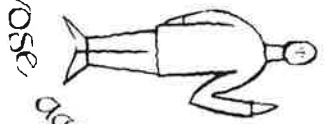
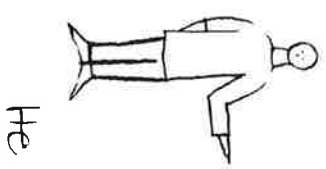
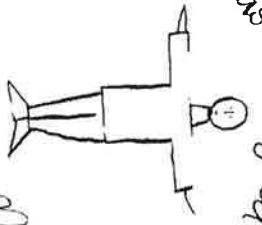
and was buried



on the third day



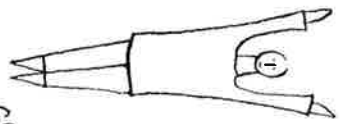
was crucified



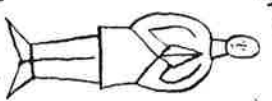
again from the dead

He rose

He ascended into Heaven



where he prays for us continually



Praise the Lord



HALLELUIA!

WE SERVE

A talk, drama or meditation based on the *Five Core Values* of the church.

A prophetic community

This means that

- God speaks to his people
- God speaks through his people about the wrongs and hurts in the world

An inclusive community

This means

- making everyone who comes to our church feel welcome, wanted and needed

A sacrificial community

This means a church made up of people who want to be like Jesus and give their lives for others

- think about the work we do for God

- think about how the way we live day by day will make a difference to other people

A missionary community

This means

- if we follow Jesus and do what he asks,
- others will see and hear about his love for them and will want to follow Jesus too

A worshipping community

This means worship

- must not just be what we do on Sunday
- but how we follow Jesus every day of the week

WE COVENANT

The Covenant Prayer
(Illustrated by Roger Adkins)

Creating and redeeming God,



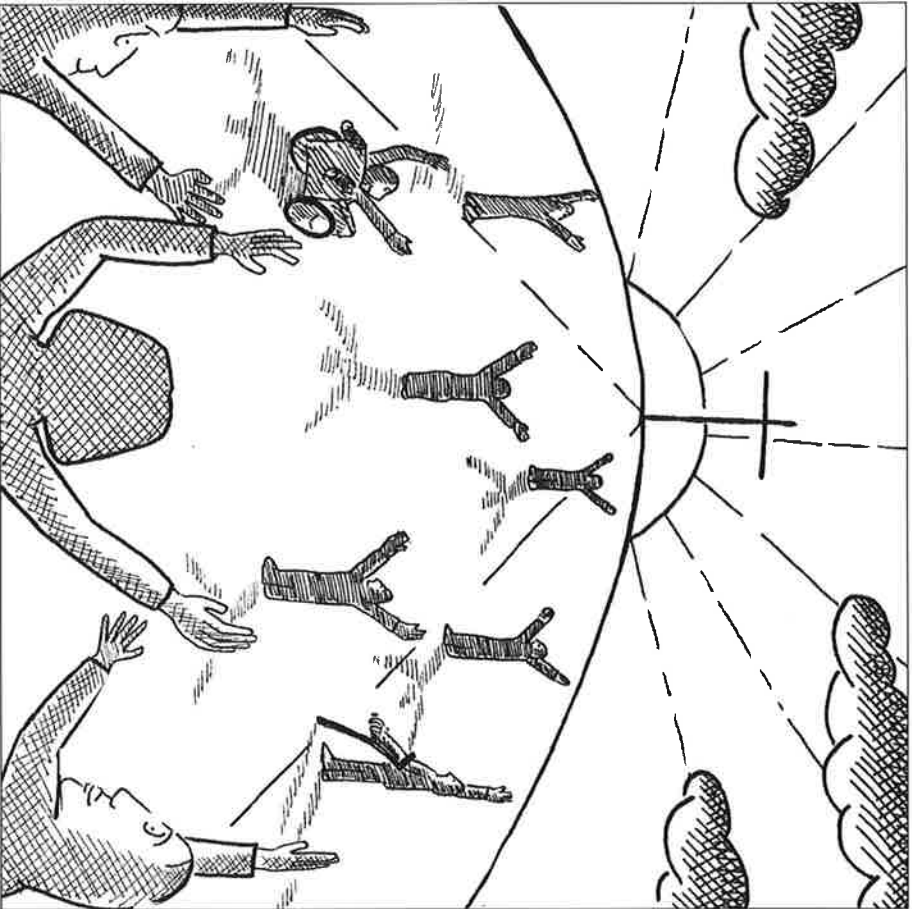
God you are very special:
You made us,
And you go on loving us every day of our lives

we give you thanks and praise
for your covenant of grace



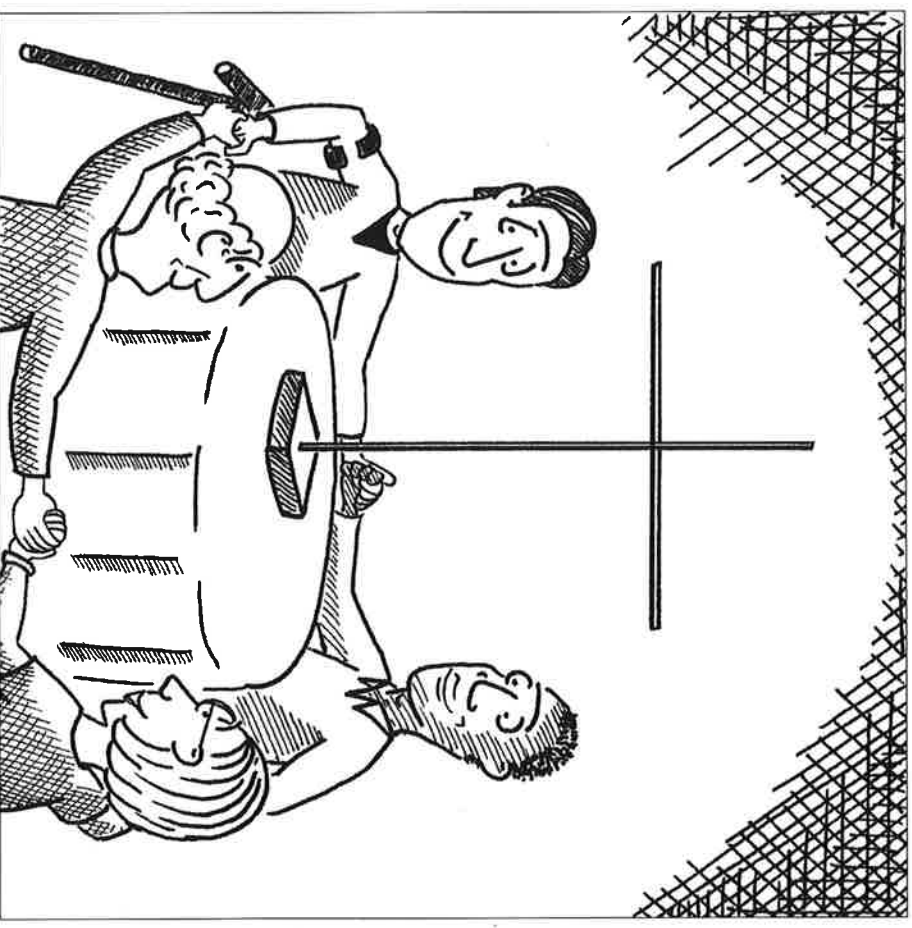
There are so many reasons to say Thank you, God;
You work hard to keep your friendship with us alive.

made for our salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.



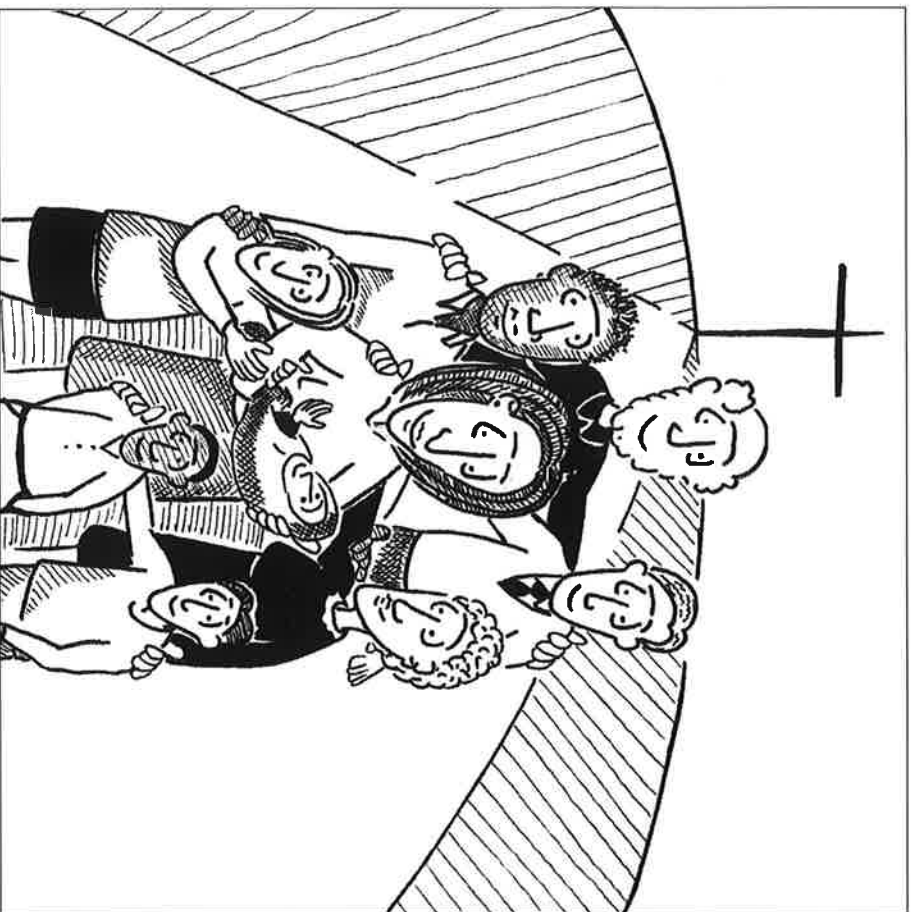
Your Son, Jesus, has set us free from everything that can harm us.

We come this day to covenant with you and with companion disciples



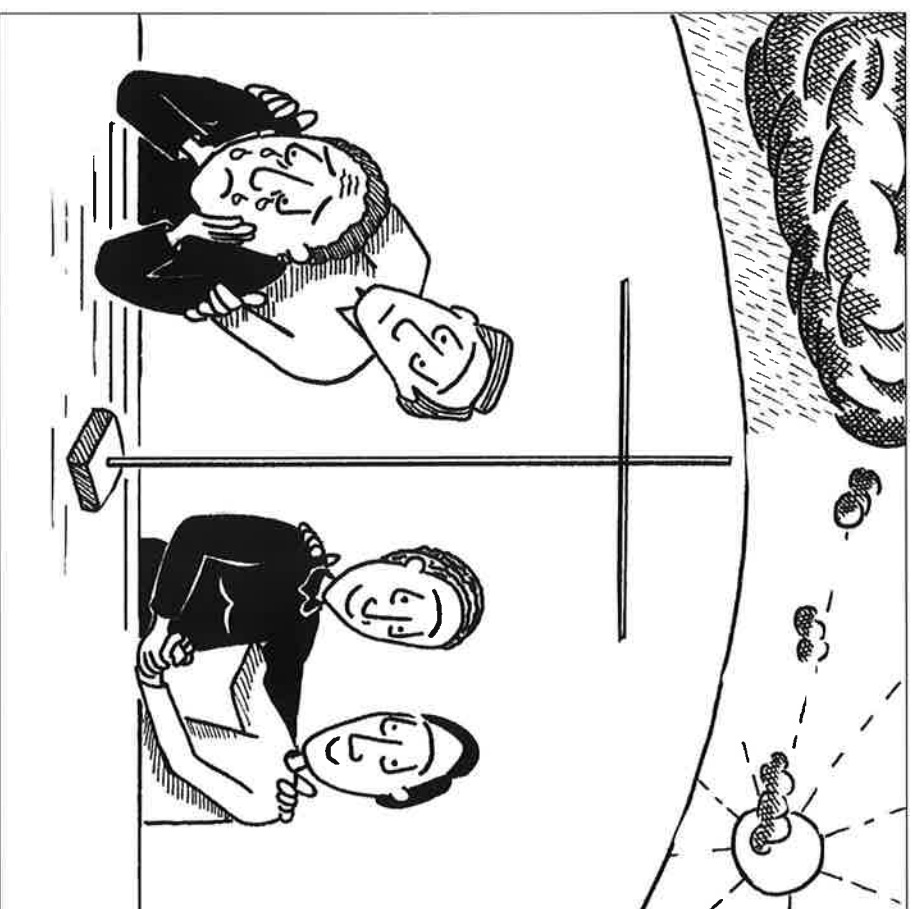
Today we are going to make promises: to you, God, and to our Christian friends.

to watch over each other



We promise to take care of each other;

and to walk together before you



And to work together for you.

WE SHARE

The Peace

John 16:27

THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVES YOU

Slowly $\text{♩} = 69$

Tony Phelps-Jones

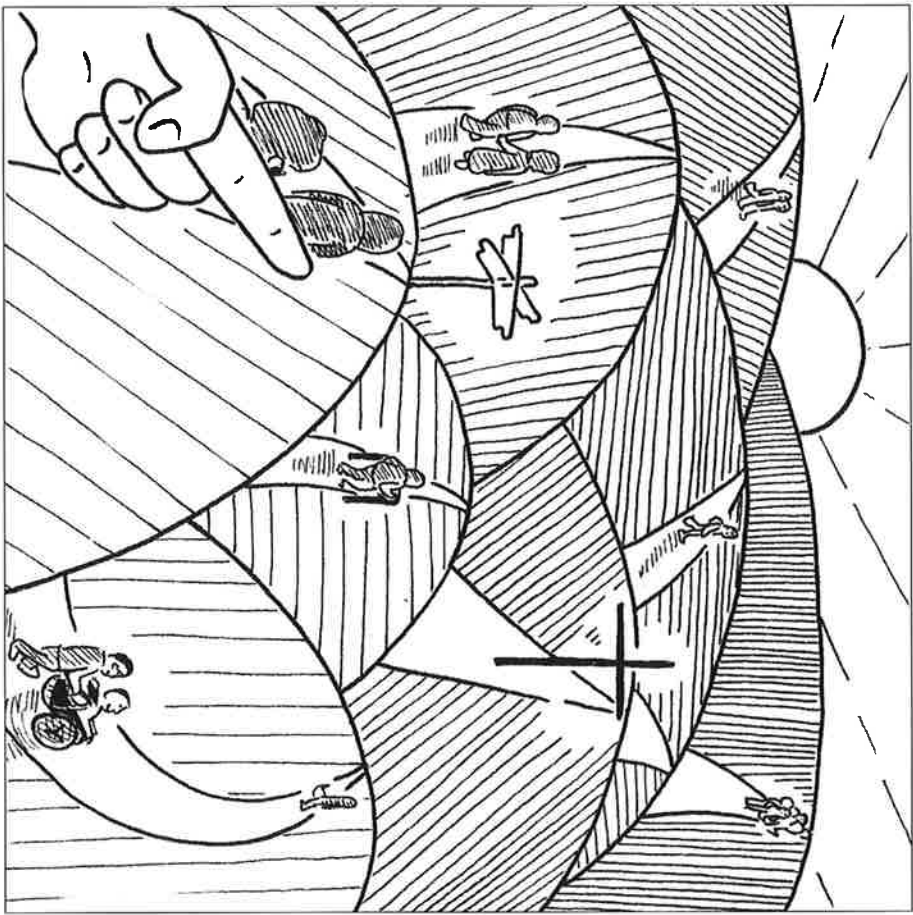
Musical notation for the first system of "The Father Himself Loves You". It consists of a treble and bass clef staff with lyrics: "The Fa ther Him-self loves you, the Fa ther Him-self loves". Chords indicated above the staff are D, G, Asus, A7, D, G.

Musical notation for the second system of "The Father Himself Loves You". It consists of a treble and bass clef staff with lyrics: "you, the Fa ther Him-self loves you, the". Chords indicated above the staff are Asus, A7, D, G, Asus, A7.

Musical notation for the third system of "The Father Himself Loves You". It consists of a treble and bass clef staff with lyrics: "Fa ther Him-self loves you. The you." Chords indicated above the staff are D, Cma7, A7, D, G/D, D. Includes markings "to go back" and "to end".

Benediction The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with us all evermore, Amen.



in ways known and to be made known.
Amen.

Please help us to keep these promises each new day.
Amen.

(One sentence prayers for help can be added.)

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