

# John Wesley's Covenant Service

First reading August 11, 1755

Let the people kneel, or bow in silent prayer upon entering the sanctuary.

PRELUDE *The people in devout meditation*

HYMN *The people standing*

COLLECT FOR PURITY *Here let the people unite with the minister in prayer.*

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through 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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON *John 15:1-8 or a selected responsive reading*

HYMN

THE INVITATION *The minister. Let the people remain standing*

Dearly beloved, the Christian life, to which we are called, is a life in Christ, redeemed from sin by him, and through him consecrated to God. Upon this life we have entered, having been admitted into that new covenant of which our Lord Christ is Mediator, and which he sealed with his own blood, that it might stand forever.

On one side, the covenant is God's promise that he will fulfill in and through us all that he declared in Jesus Christ, who is the author and perfecter of our faith. That his promise still stands we are sure, for we have known his goodness and proved his grace in our lives day by day.

On the other side we stand pledged to live no more unto ourselves, but to him who loved us, and gave himself for us, and called us to serve him that the purposes of his coming be fulfilled.

From time to time we renew our vows of consecration, especially when we gather at the table of the Lord; but on this day we meet expressly, as generations of our fathers have met, that we may joyfully and solemnly renew this covenant which bound them and binds us to God.

Let us then, remembering the mercies of God and the hope of his calling, examine ourselves by the light of his Spirit, that we may see wherein we have failed or fallen short in faith and practice and, considering all that this covenant means, may give ourselves anew to God.

Let us pray.

THE ACT OF ADORATION *The minister, the people responding. Here let the people kneel, be seated or bow.*

Let us adore the Father, the God of love who created us;  
Who every moment 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.

**We praise you, O God, we acknowledge you to be the Lord.**

Let us glory in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;  
Who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor;  
Who went about doing good and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom;  
Who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin;  
Who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;  
Who was dead, and lives forevermore;  
Who opened the Kingdom to all believers;  
Who sits at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.

**You are the King of Glory, O Christ.**

Let us rejoice in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and 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 waits to  
do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

**All praise to you, O Holy Spirit. Amen.**

ANTHEM *Gloria in Excelsis (To be read in unison, if not sung.)*

**Glory be to God on high,  
And on earth peace, good will toward men.**

**We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we glorify you, we give thanks to you for  
your great glory,**

**O Lord God, Heavenly King; God the Father Almighty!**

**O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ;**

**O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takes away the sins of the world, have  
mercy upon us.**

**You that take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.**

**You that take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.**

**You that sit at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.**

**For you only are holy; you only are the Lord;**

**You only O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,**

**Are most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

THE ACT OF THANKSGIVING *The minister, the people responding. Here let the people stand.*

O God our Father, the fountain of all goodness, who has been gracious to us through all the  
years of our life;

We give you thanks for your loving-kindness which has filled our days and brought us to this  
time and place.

**We praise your holy name, O Lord.**

You have given us life and reason,

and set us in a world which is full of your glory.

You have comforted us with family and friends, and ministered to us through the hands and minds of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

**We praise your holy name, O Lord.**

You have set in our hearts a hunger for you, and given us your peace.

You have redeemed us and called us to a high calling in Christ Jesus.

You have given us a place in the fellowship of your Spirit and the witness of your church.

**We praise your holy name, O Lord.**

In darkness you have been our light, in adversity and temptation a rock of strength, in our joys the very spirit of joy, in our labors the all-sufficient reward.

**We praise your holy name, O Lord.**

You have remembered us when we have forgotten you, followed us even when we fled from you, met us with forgiveness when we turned back to you.

For all your long-suffering and the abundance of your grace

**We praise your holy name, O Lord. Amen.**

ANTHEM OR HYMN

THE ACT OF CONFESSION *The minister, the people responding.*

Let us now examine ourselves before God, humbly confessing our sins and watching our hearts, lest by self-deceit we shut ourselves out from His presence.

Let us pray.

*Here let all kneel or bow*

O God, our Father, who has set forth the way of life for us in your beloved Son; we confess with shame our slowness to learn of him, our reluctance to follow him.

You have spoken and called, we have not given heed.

Your beauty has shone forth, and we have been blind.

You have stretched out your hands to us through our fellowmen, and we have passed by.

We have taken great benefits with little thanks, we have been unworthy of your changeless love.

**Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.**

Forgive us, we beseech you, the poverty of our worship, the formality and selfishness of our prayers, our inconstancy and unbelief, our neglect of fellowship and the means of grace, our hesitating witness for Christ, our false pretenses, and our willful ignorance of your ways.

**Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.**

Forgive us where we have wasted our time or misused our gifts.

Forgive us where we have excused our own wrongdoing or evaded our responsibilities.

Forgive us that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good, that we have drawn back from the cross.

**Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.**

Forgive us that so little of your love has reached others through us, and that we have borne so lightly the wrongs and sufferings that were not our own.

Forgive us where we have cherished things that divide us from others, and where we have made it hard for them to live with us, and where we have been thoughtless in our judgments, hasty in condemnation, grudging in forgiveness.

**Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.**

If we have made no ventures in fellowship,

If we have kept in our heart a grievance against another,

If we have not sought reconciliation,  
If we have been eager for the punishment of wrongdoers  
And slow to seek their redemption,  
**Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.**

Let each of us in silence make confession to God.

SILENT MEDITATION

*Then let the minister and the people unite in saying:*

**Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; according to the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Amen.** *(The people continue kneeling.)*

THE WORDS OF ASSURANCE *The minister shall rise and say:*

This is the message we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

COVENANT HYMN

THE COVENANT *Let the people remain standing*

And now, beloved, let us bind ourselves with willing bonds to our covenant God, and take the yoke of Christ upon us.

And taking this yoke upon us means that we are heartily content that he appoint us our place and work, and that he alone shall be our reward.

Christ has many services to be done.

Some are easy, others are difficult; some bring honor, others bring reproach; some are suitable to our natural inclinations and temporal 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 things is assuredly given us in Christ, who strengthens us.

Therefore, let us make the covenant of God our own. Let us engage our heart to the Lord, and resolve in his strength never to go back.

Being thus prepared, let us now, in sincere dependence on his grace and trusting in his promises, yield ourselves anew to him.

Let us pray

THE COVENANT PRAYER *Here let the people kneel or bow.*

O Lord God, holy Father, who has called us through Christ to be partakers in this gracious covenant; we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience, and engage ourselves, for love of you, to seek to do your perfect will. We are no longer our own, but yours.

*Here let the minister and the people unite in saying:*

**I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with who 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 heartily yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.**

**And now, O glorious and blessed Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it.**

**And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.**

THE SURSUM CORDA AND SANCTUS *Here let the people stand and join in singing or saying the responses.*

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

**It is good and right to do so.**

It is very good, right, and our bounden duty that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God.

**Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we praise and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and saying:**

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Glory be to you, O Lord most high! Amen.**

HYMN OF DEDICATION

*Here may follow the Holy Communion, beginning with the prayer of Consecration, or here may follow a sermon.*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE