

December 31, 2017

NEW YEAR'S EVE

10:00 a.m.

JOHN WESLEY'S COVENANT SERVICE

WE GATHER

PRELUDE

What Child Is This?

Purvis

WELCOME

Thomas Kitson, Lay Servant

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

People: From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

Leader: Creative God, you make all things new in heaven and on earth.

People: We come to you in a new year with new desires and old fears, new decisions and old controversies, new dreams and old weaknesses.

Leader: Because you are the God of hope,

People: we know that you create all the possibilities of the future.

Leader: Because you are the God of love,

People: we know that you accept all the mistakes of the past.

Leader: Because you are the God of our faith,

People: we enter your gates with thanksgiving and praise, we come into your presence with gladness and a joyful noise, and we serve and bless you.

All: Amen.

***HYMN**

Sing We Now of Christmas

UMH 237

UNISON PRAYER

O God, Searcher of all our hearts, you have formed us as a people and claimed us for your own. As we come to acknowledge your sovereignty and grace, and to enter anew into covenant with you, reveal any reluctance or falsehood within us. Let your Spirit impress your truth on our inmost being, and receive us in mercy, for the sake of our Mediator, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Those who are able are invited to stand.
CCLI #2250278

UMH – United Methodist Hymnal
TFWS — The Faith We Sing

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

Let us give thanks for all of God's mercies.

O God, our Covenant Friend, you have been gracious to us through all the years of our lives. We thank you for your loving care, which has filled our days and brought us to this time and place.

We praise your holy name, O God.

You have given us life and reason, and set us in a world filled with your glory. You have comforted us with family and friends, and ministered to us through the hands of our sisters and brothers.

We praise your holy name, O God.

You have filled our hearts with a hunger after you, and have 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 God.

You have been our light in darkness and a rock of strength in adversity and temptation. You have been the very Spirit of joy in our joys and the all-sufficient reward in all our labors.

We praise your holy name, O God.

You remembered us when we forgot you. You followed us even when we tried to flee from you. You met us with forgiveness when we returned to you. For all your patience and overflowing grace,

We praise your holy name, O God.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

HYMN OF ILLUMINATION *Lead Me, Lord* UMH 473

*GOSPEL READING John 15:12-17 NRSV p. 109 NT

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

MESSAGE

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

*HYMN *Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine* UMH 606

JOHN WESLEY'S COVENANT SERVICE

PROCLAMATION

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Christian life is redeemed from sin and consecrated to God. Through baptism, we have entered this life and have been admitted into the new covenant of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator. He sealed it with his own blood, that it might last for ever.

On the one side, God promises to give us new life in Christ, the Source and Perfecter of our faith. On the other side, we are pledged to live no more for ourselves but only for Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us.

From time to time we renew our covenant with God, especially when we reaffirm the Baptismal Covenant and gather at the Lord's table.

This morning, however, we meet, as the generations before us have met, to renew the covenant that binds us to God. Let us make this covenant of God our own.

INVITATION

Commit yourselves to Christ as his servants.

Give yourselves to him, that you may belong to him.

Christ has many services to be done.

Some are more easy and honorable, others are more difficult and disgraceful.

Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests, others are contrary to both.

In some we may please Christ and please ourselves.

But then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.

It is necessary, therefore, that we consider what it means to be a servant of Christ.

Let us, therefore, go to Christ, and pray:

Let me be your servant, under your command.

I will no longer be my own.

I will give up myself to your will in all things.

Be satisfied that Christ shall give you your place and work.

Lord, make me what you will.

I put myself fully into your hands:

put me to doing, put me to suffering,

let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,

let me be full, let me be empty,

let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and with a willing heart give it all to your pleasure and disposal.

Christ will be the Savior of none but his servants.
He is the source of all salvation to those who obey.
Christ will have no servants except by consent;
Christ will not accept anything except full consent to all that he requires.
Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing.

Confirm this by a holy covenant.

To make this covenant a reality in your life, listen to these admonitions:

First, set apart some time, more than once, to be spent alone before the
Lord;

in seeking earnestly God's special assistance and gracious acceptance of you;
in carefully thinking through all the conditions of the covenant;
in searching your hearts whether you have already freely given your life to
Christ.

Consider what your sins are.

Consider the laws of Christ, how holy, strict, and spiritual they are, and
whether you, after having carefully considered them, are willing to
choose them all.

Be sure you are clear in these matters, see that you do not lie to God.

Second, be serious and in a spirit of holy awe and reverence.

Third, claim God's covenant,
rely upon God's promise of giving grace and strength, so you can keep your
promise.

Trust not your own strength and power.

Fourth, resolve to be faithful.

You have given to the Lord your hearts, you have opened your mouths to
the Lord, and you have dedicated yourself to God.

With God's power, never go back.

And last, be then prepared to renew your covenant with the Lord.

Fall down on your knees, lift your hands toward heaven, open your hearts
to the Lord, as we pray:

COVENANT PRAYER

O righteous God, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, see me as I fall down before you.

Forgive my unfaithfulness in not having done your will, for you have promised mercy to me if I turn to you with my whole heart.

God requires that you shall put away all your idols.

I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all, covenanting with you that no known sin shall be allowed in my life.

Against your will, I have turned my love toward the world.

In your power I will watch all temptations that will lead me away from you.

For my own righteousness is riddled with sin, unable to stand before you.

Through Christ, God has offered to be your God again if you would let him.

Before all heaven and earth, I here acknowledge you as my Lord and God.

I take you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my portion, and vow to give up myself, body and soul, as your servant, to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

God has given the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way and means of coming to God.

Jesus, I do here on bended knees accept Christ as the only new and living Way, and sincerely join myself in a covenant with him.

O blessed Jesus, I come to you, hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked, unworthy even to wash the feet of your servants.

I do here, with all my power, accept you as my Lord and Head.

I renounce my own worthiness, and vow that you are the Lord, my righteousness.

I renounce my own wisdom, and take you for my only guide.

I renounce my own will, and take your will as my law.

Christ has told you that you must suffer with him.

I do here covenant with you, O Christ, to take my lot with you as it may fall.

Through your grace I promise that neither life nor death shall part me from you.

God has given holy laws as the rule of your life.

I do here willingly put my neck under your yoke, to carry your burden.

All your laws are holy, just, and good.

I therefore take them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions, promising that I will strive to order my whole life according to your direction,

and not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.

The almighty God searches and knows your heart.

O God, you know that I make this covenant with you today without guile or reservation.

If any falsehood should be in it, guide me and help me to set it aright.

And now, glory be to you, O God the Father, whom I from this day forward shall look upon as my God and Father.

Glory be to you, O God the Son, who has loved me and washed me from my sins in your own blood, and now is my Savior and Redeemer.

Glory be to you, O God the Holy Spirit, who by your almighty power has turned my heart from sin to God.

O mighty God, the Lord Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you have now become my Covenant Friend.

And I, through your infinite grace, have become your covenant servant.

So be it.

And let the covenant I have made on earth be ratified in heaven.

Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

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.

INVITATION

OFFERTORY HYMN

Star-Child

TFWS 2095

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH 94

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

O God, our journey has brought us once again into the light and warmth of Your presence. We bring gifts, but they seem no more than tokens. Remind us of the power that You can infuse in the gifts we offer with loving hearts, and let us be changed by the giving. We pray it in the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

WE ARE SENT FORTH

*CLOSING HYMN

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

UMH 251

*CHIMES

Auld Lang Syne

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Carol Rhapsody

Purvis

A History of the Wesley Covenant Renewal Service

In 1663 Richard Alleine, a Puritan, published Vindiciae Pietatis: or, A Vindication of Godliness in the Greater Strictness and Spirituality of It. In 1753, it was again published in John Wesley's A Christian Library. Wesley used one chapter, "The Application of the Whole," on Monday, August 11, 1755 in what probably was the first real celebration of the Covenant Service in the Methodist movement.

Wesley found the service rich and meaningful, as expressed in his Journal: "Many mourned before God, and many were comforted" (April 1756.) In London these services were usually held on New Year's Day. This morning's service has been adapted from the United Methodist Book of Worship, designed and published in 1992. The liturgy beginning with the Invitation is taken directly from Wesley's service of 1780 with some minor modernization of language.

Charles Wesley wrote the hymn "Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine" specifically for this service.

Liturgists

Thomas Kitson, Chatham UMC Lay Servant
Brian Loudermilk

Organist

Yang-Hee Song



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of the Chatham United Methodist Church

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*A Stephen
Ministry
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