

and commit to accept my lot, as it falls, with You, and by Your grace to risk everything for You. It is my purpose that neither life nor death shall part You and me.

Now, Almighty God, Searcher of Hearts, You know that I make this covenant with You this day, without any known deception or reservation. I humbly beg You that if You see any flaw or falsehood in my resolve, reveal it to me and help me to put it right.

HYMN 249 "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart"

ALL: And now, I praise You, O God, my Father, whom I shall be bold from this day forward to look upon as my God and Father.

Glory be to You, Lord Jesus, O God the Son, who loved me and washed me from my sins by Your death and resurrection, and Who is now my Savior and Redeemer.

Glory be to You, O God the Holy Spirit, who by Your almighty power and inescapable presence have turned my heart from sin to God.

O Eternal, Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, You are now my Covenant-Friend, and I, through Your infinite grace, am Your Covenant-Servant. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

*CLOSING HYMN 366 "I Surrender All"

BENEDICTION

Worship and Commitment Service For the New Year

The John Wesley Covenant Renewal Service
Originally published by John Wesley in 1780
Revised, 2021 Wilmore Free Methodist Church
*congregation, please stand if able

INTRODUCTION

ALL: "Let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant which will never be forgotten."
(Jer. 50:5)

*HYMN 92 "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

*HYMN 52 "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

ALL: "Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hidden; 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."

ALL: The Lord's Prayer (Using "Sins")

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON: John 15:1-8

PASTOR: Friends, we need to fix these three principles in our hearts: that eternal things are more enduring and real than earthly things; that the things not seen are as certain as things that are seen; and that our eternal destiny depends upon our choice. Choose Christ and His ways, and we are blessed forever; refuse Him, and we are lost forever.

And then, we must make our choice. Turn either to Christ with His yoke, His cross, and His crown; or to the devil with his wealth, his pleasure, and his curse. Then we must ask ourselves, "Which way will we go? Will we choose the crown or the curse?" If we choose the crown, remember that we must also submit to the cross and yoke, the sufferings and the service Christ, which are linked to it.

So how will you choose? Would you rather take the pleasures of sin and risk the curse? Or will you yield yourself a servant to Christ and so make sure the crown?

Do not delay in the choice, or put off the matter. If you are unresolved, then you are resolved. All who are undetermined for Christ remain determined for the devil. Do not rest until the choice for Christ is made.

And then, begin with Christ. Cast yourself upon His righteousness. As you are, you are an exile from the

presence of God. Your sins rob you of that relationship, and if you stay in them, you will perish. Christ offers to bring you to God. So take His offer to heart and say to Him, “Jesus, I will risk myself with you. I cast myself upon You, upon Your blood, upon Your righteousness.”

This is coming to Christ as your Priest. And by this you now renounce your own righteousness.

CONFESSION

PASTOR: Whether we are already forgiven sinners or still far from God, let us confess together our total dependence on Him.

ALL: We confess that we have, here and now, a deep sense of sin. We are miserable people and in need of a Savior. The Spirit of God has awakened us, and so we cry, “Lord, what am I! How is it that I’m bound by these chains! Lord, where am I! Is there no hope of escaping out of this wretched state? I am dead, if I continue as I am. What may I do to be saved?”

PASTOR: Being made aware of their sin and it’s danger, sinners will look for help and deliverance, but will look everywhere else before looking to Christ. Nothing will bring a sinner to Christ but absolute necessity. He will try to simply quit sinning on his own; she will go to worship and prayer services—becoming very active in the Church. He will receive Holy Communion...all of this to try to find salvation in these activities. But all these, though they are useful in their places, are of no help. Engaging in works of righteousness, even Church practices, cannot help; these are all empty. They all say, “You knock at the wrong door; salvation is not in us.”

Are you now at a place where you no longer trust in your own goodness that is based on works? Have you given up trusting in anything or anyone for salvation apart from Jesus?

HYMN “Lord, Have Mercy”

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy on me.

PRAYER

ALL: Lord, be merciful to me. What shall I do? I dare not remain as I am, and I cannot help myself. My praying will not help me. My worship and service will not help me. If I give all I own to the poor; if I should give my body to be burned, all this would not save my soul. What shall I do?

And because You require, as the condition of our peace with You, that we put away our idols, we here and now, from the bottom of our hearts, renounce them all.

We firmly covenant with You not to allow ourselves to continue in any known sin.

We will, instead, use all the means that we know to bring death and utter destruction to everything that seeks to corrupt us.

Here and now, it is the firm resolution of our hearts to forsake all that is dear to us in this world, rather than to turn away from You. We will guard ourselves against all temptations, whether from prosperity or poverty, pleasure or pain, so that they may never draw our hearts away from You.

And since, out of Your boundless mercy, You have offered graciously to be our God through Christ, we call heaven and earth to record this day that we do here solemnly acknowledge You as the Lord our God.

And now, speaking not only as one in this sacred assembly, but speaking for myself alone, I do take You, Eternal God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — to be my God. I give up myself, body and soul, to be Your servant, promising and vowing to serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

And since you have appointed Jesus Christ the only means of coming to you, I do solemnly join myself in the holiest of unions to Him.

Jesus, I come to You hungry, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked, unworthy to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord, much less to be solemnly united with the King of Glory. But since such is Your unparalleled love, I do here with all my power accept You and take You for my Head...to love, honor, and obey You before all others, even if the path leads to death.

I renounce my own worthiness and do here acknowledge You as the Lord, my righteousness.

I renounce my own wisdom and do here take You for my only Guide.

I renounce my own will and take Your will for my law.

And since Your word has told me that I must suffer with You if I am to reign with You, I do here promise

Give up ourselves, through Jesus' power,
His name to glorify;
And promise, in this sacred hour,
For God to live and die.

The covenant we this moment make,
Be ever kept in mind;
We will no more our God forsake,
Or cast His words behind.

To each the covenant blood apply,
Which takes our sins away;
And register our names on high,
And keep us to that day!

PASTOR: Friends, search your hearts before you make this commitment to God in Christ.

First, consider what your sins are and examine whether you can resolve to let go of them all. Consider what God's laws are — how holy, strict, and serious — and whether you can, after careful reflection, choose them all as the rule of your whole life.

Second, place yourself in the most serious frame of mind possible, suitable to a transaction of so high importance.

Third, lay hold on the covenant of God and rely upon His promise of giving grace and strength, for only through these will you be enabled to fulfill your promise. Do not trust your own strength, but take hold on His strength.

Fourth, resolve to be faithful. Having engaged your heart, opened your mouth, and offered your hand to the Lord, resolve in His strength to never go back.

Fifth and last, being thus prepared, in the most solemn manner possible, as if the Lord were visibly present here and now, open your heart to the Lord and pray:

ALL: Most holy God, we humbly beg You, accept the poor prodigals that we are here before You. All of us were once, or are even now, far from You because of our sins. We are all by nature worthy of death, and we realize that we've made ourselves a thousand times worse by our wicked practices.

Yet through Your infinite grace You have promised mercy to us in Jesus, if we will only turn to You with all our heart. Therefore, since we have heard the call of the gospel, we now come, throw down our defenses, and submit ourselves to Your mercy.

PASTOR: You must let your sins go. You must let your righteousness go. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He came to seek and save those who are lost.

So...will you now risk yourself for Christ? God has given us this assurance that we may:

First, we have God's initiative: He has made the first move. God the Father appointed and sent Christ into the world to save sinners. God has made Jesus our Savior, and through Him, He is redeeming and reconciling the world to Himself.

Second, we have God's command: God has commanded that, for the sake of our salvation, we give our allegiance to His Son, Jesus Christ.

Third, we have God's promise: He Himself said, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone...and whoever trusts in Him shall not be disappointed."

Therefore, since we have this threefold assurance of God's initiative, command, and promise, we may now be bold to risk everything for Christ and to make ourselves totally available to Him.

ALL: Lord Jesus, here am I, a lost creature, an enemy to God, under His wrath and curse. Will You, Jesus, take me as I am? Will you reconcile me to God and save my soul? Jesus, do not refuse me, because if You do, to whom then shall I go?

If I had come to you in my own name, You might well have ignored me; but since I come at the command of God the Father, do not reject me. Lord, help me and save me.

I come to you in belief and trust, Lord. Here and now, I throw myself upon Your grace and mercy and I trust in You and You alone to save me. I will trust You and rest in You and risk myself for You. I will lay all my hope for pardon, for life, for salvation upon You. If I perish, I perish on Your shoulders. If I sink, I sink in Your ship. If I die, I die at Your door. No matter what, I will not go away.

COMMITMENT

PASTOR: Give yourselves now to the Lord. As His servants, give up the rule and government of yourselves to Christ. As the Apostle Paul tells us, *Do not give the parts of your bodies as tools of unrighteousness to continue in sin. Instead, give yourselves fully to God, as those who have been made*

alive from the dead. And give every part of your whole body as instruments of righteousness to God.” “Don’t you know that you make yourself a slave to obey whoever or whatever you yield yourself to? You are God’s servants; obey Him!” Give yourselves so fully and finally to the Lord that, from now on, you may be only the Lord’s.

Those who give themselves to sin and to the thing of this world say in their hearts, “Sin, I am yours; world, I am yours; riches, I am yours; pleasures, I am yours.” Instead, with the Psalmist, let us say to the Lord:

AFFIRMATION

ALL: I am Yours. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and here and now, I dedicate myself to Your service.

***HYMN 359 “Jesus Is Lord of All”**

PASTOR: In so giving yourselves to the Lord, you affirm that you will be content that He assign you to your work...so now, let Him make that assignment. Christ has many services to be done; some are more easy and honorable, others more difficult and menial.

Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests, while others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please ourselves, as when He requires us to feed and clothe ourselves. There are some which are more pleasing than others; as to worship and praise God.

But just the same, there are other works...works in which we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves, such as enduring the sins and shortcomings of others, confronting others in their sins, even withdrawing from their company; so as to witness against their wickedness. Confessing Christ and His name is never easy when it costs us shame and ridicule. It is never easy to swim against the tide of our fallen world, but He calls us to that work of surrendering our rights and privileges because Jesus Christ is our Lord.

See what it is that Christ expects of you, and then give yourself to His whole will. Do not think of making your own terms with Christ; that will never be allowed.

Let us now approach Christ in prayer.

ALL: Lord Jesus, if You will receive me into Your house, if You will accept me as Your servant, I will not come up with special terms. Impose on me whatever condition pleases You; command me to be or do whatever You will; only let me be Your servant.

Make me what You will and set me where You will. Let me be a vessel of silver or gold or wood or stone; so I may be a vessel of honor. I am content. If I am not the head or the eye or the ear - one of the nobler and more honorable instruments - then let me be the hand or the foot, as one of the lowest and least esteemed of all the servants of my Lord.

PASTOR: Lord, put me on whatever task You will; place me with whomever you will.

ALL: Put me to doing; put me to suffering.

PASTOR: Let me be used for You or laid aside for You; exalted for You or trampled on for You.

ALL: Let me be full; let me be empty.

PASTOR: Let me have all things; let me have nothing.

ALL: I freely and heartily resign all to Your pleasure and disposal.

***HYMN 379 “Take My Life and Let It Be”**

PASTOR: Friends, such a commitment to Christ as you have now made is the essence of Christianity. When you have chosen God to be your portion; when you have laid all your hopes on Christ, casting yourself wholly upon the merits of His righteousness; when you have thoughtfully and heartily resigned and given up yourselves to Him; then you are Christians indeed...and never until then. Christ will be the Savior of none but of His servants. He is the Author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him. Christ will have no servants but by consent. His people are a willing people, and for all who will, He will be all in all, or He will be nothing.

THE COVENANT

PASTOR: And now let us confirm our commitment by a solemn covenant, beginning with the singing of a covenant hymn.

***HYMN: “Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine”**
(to the same tune as "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"
by Carl G. Glazer and Lowell Mason. Words by Charles Wesley.)

**Come, let us use the grace divine,
And all, with one accord;
In a perpetual covenant join,
Ourselves to Christ the Lord.**