

Sunday 3 January 2021 (or on the day your church would hold its covenant service)

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you. It will be helpful to have a copy of the **Methodist Way of Life** Commitment card to hand, as you begin. If you do not have one, go to: www.methodist.org.uk/mwol/ where you can see and download a copy.

Call to Worship

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

StF 443 Come let us sing of a wonderful love

Sing/read /pray /the words or listen to it here
www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCSx7ZZ3-2I

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true;
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came;
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame;
seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderer, home!
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love,
come and abide,
lifting my life, till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride;
seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Robert Walmsley (1831-1905)

Let us pray together

Gracious God,
on this day, I and many others seek to renew our covenant with You. Your love is strong and faithful. You never stop loving us. Our love for You is weak and fickle and we often fall short of what we have committed ourselves to be and do. Forgive us for our reluctance to follow Christ, our half-hearted worship, our failures in caring, service and witness, and our unwillingness to challenge injustice.

Have mercy on us, O God, and renew in us both the desire and the ability to be people of love.

Thank you for your gracious words:
'Your sins are forgiven'. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: John 15.1-9

Time to Reflect

The image of the vine is an organic picture. The branches are growing in the vine. They are connected to every other branch through the vine and fruit grows naturally on the branches. The branches have no choice. They are part of the Vine. But Jesus' use of this image to speak of our relationship with him offers choice and invites our participation. We are asked to abide in the vine and so grow and be fruitful.

Today, we choose again to trust God, to walk with Jesus and to live in the ways of the kingdom.

Take the Methodist Way of Life Card. Before you say the covenant prayer, read through the commitments on the card and reflect on which of these you want to grow in during the coming year.

As far as we are able, with God's help:

Worship

We will **pray** daily.

We will **worship** with others regularly.

We will **look and listen for God** in Scripture, and the world.

Learning and Caring

We will **care for ourselves and those around us.**

We will **learn more** about our faith.

We will **practise** hospitality and generosity.

Service

We will **help people** in our communities and beyond.

We will **care for creation** and all God's gifts.

We will **challenge** injustice.

Evangelism

We will **speak of the love of God.**

We will **live in a way that draws others to Jesus.**

We will **share our faith** with others.

A time of prayer

Take time to sit quietly. Then say the Covenant Prayer aloud:

I am no longer my own but yours.

Your will, not mine, be done in all things,

wherever you may place me,

in all that I do and in all that I may endure;

when there is work for me and when there is none;

when I am troubled and when I am at peace. Your will be done when I am

valued and when I am disregarded;

when I find fulfilment and when it is lacking;

**when I have all things, and when I have nothing
I willingly offer all I have and am
to serve you, as and where you choose.**

**Glorious and blesséd God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
May it be so for ever.
Let this covenant now made on earth
be fulfilled in heaven. Amen**

Prayers of intercession

Pray for your church ... that it may be a faithful witness to God's love.

Pray for the church worldwide ...that in word and action it may help people to see God's glory

Pray for the leaders of nations... that they act justly and guide wisely.

Pray for those pushed to the margins of society ...that they and their gifts may be made welcome.

Pray for those in need...especially people we know

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

StF 489 All I once held dear.

You can listen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r8XfE_VNb0.

Alternatively, read the words or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

All I once held dear,
built my life upon,
all this world reveres,
and wars to own,
all I once thought gain
I have counted loss;
spent and worthless now,
compared to this.

*Knowing you, Jesus,
knowing you,
there is no greater thing.*

*You're my all, you're the best,
you're my joy, my righteousness,
and I love you, Lord.*

Now my heart's desire
is to know you more,
to be found in you
and known as yours.
To possess by faith
what I could not earn,
all-surpassing gift
of righteousness.

Oh, to know the power
of your risen life,
and to know you in
your sufferings.
To become like you
in your death, my Lord,
so with you to live
and never die.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

A prayer of blessing

May the God of heaven and earth bless us and keep us; may his face shine upon us that we might know God's peace and live in ways that reflect his love, now and always. Amen

Original Materials by **Roger L Walton**
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Local Churches please insert CCCLi No here

We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team. We aim to continue to provide these resources until the end of August 2021.

Copies of Bible Reading (NRSV)

Jeremiah 31.33-34

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

John 15.1-9

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.