



January 2, 2022

Epiphany Sunday

Liturgists: 8:30am: Angela Marsee 10:30am: Faye Henson

Prelude

Sophia Lee

Welcome & Prayer

Pastor: Throughout the history of the Methodist Revival Movement, it has been a recommended practice that every year on New Year's Eve at a Watch Night Service or on the first Sunday Worship of the New Year, that every Methodist would make or renew his or her holy covenant with God. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Revival, adapted the Covenant Service and led the Methodists to continue to solemnly make and keep the covenant. The particular words of the service and covenant have been updated through the years, but the intention and purpose for us are unchanged. There will be parts of the service that we read responsively, parts where we stand if we are able, and parts where we will kneel at our pews or come kneel at the prayer rail. If you cannot physically stand or kneel you are invited to raise your hand or bow your head as signs of your surrender to God as you make or renew the covenant.

Announcements

Liturgist

*Call to Worship

Liturgist

Liturgist: O God, You are 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.

People: 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 in your church.

Liturgist: You have filled our hearts with 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 the fellowship of your Holy Spirit and the congregation and made us part of the witness, ministries, and missions of your holy Church.

People: You have been our light in darkness and are our 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.

Liturgist: You remembered us when we forgot you. You followed us as a good shepherd even when we tried to flee from you. You met us with forgiveness when we returned to you. We thank you for all your patience and overflowing grace to us.

ALL: In the name of Jesus our Savior, receive our praise. Amen.

*Hymn

"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

UMH 117

Unison Prayer:

Liturgist

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, forever and ever. Amen.
(by DAVID TRIPP, ENGLAND, 20TH CENT.)

Scripture

John 3:1-8

Rev. Chuck Horton

Sermon

“Why Not Amazing?”

Rev. Chuck Horton

Children’s Message

Mason Carman

Introduction to the Covenant:

Liturgist: Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Christian life is redeemed from sin and is 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 forever. On the one side of the covenant, 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. Today, however, we meet, as the generations of Methodists before us have met, to renew the covenant that binds us to God. Let us make this covenant of God our own.

INVITATION TO MAKE THE HOLY COVENANT

Pastor: 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 follower of Christ. Let us, therefore, go to Christ, and pray:

People: 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.

Pastor: Be satisfied that Christ shall assign you your place and work in his Kingdom.

People (*Stand now as you pray and remain standing, or if you cannot stand you may raise your hand before God as you pray*): **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 all that I am and all that I will be to your pleasure and disposal. Amen.**

Pastor: 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 those who serve him freely by their consent and desire; Christ will not accept anything less than full consent to all that he requires. Christ will be your 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

(During a moment of holy silence the people come forward to kneel at the prayer rail, or may get on their knees at their pews or if they cannot kneel may bow before the Lord.)

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.

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,

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 have 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 have 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.

Please Return to Your Pews and Stand for the Hymn

*Hymn

“Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine”

UMH 606

Holy Communion

*Benediction

*Parting Hymn

“Jesus United by Thy Grace”

UMH 561(vs 1,5)

[It is advised that we each make this covenant not only in heart, but in word; and not only in word, but in writing. Therefore, with all reverence, lay the service before the Lord as your act and deed. And when you have done this, sign it. Then keep it as a reminder of the holy agreement between God and you that you may remember it during doubts and temptations.]

My Signature: _____

Date on which I made this Covenant to God: _____



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