

**The Church in Westbury Park**  
**The Covenant Service online.**  
**17th January 2021**

From the earliest days of Methodist societies, John Wesley invited the Methodist people to renew their covenant relationship with God. Today's service is our opportunity to participate in this, to thank God for his generous love for us and to respond to him in joy.

**Introduction, Notices and Welcome**

**Opening Prayer**

Glory to the Father, the God of love, who created us;  
who continually 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.

**Blessèd be God for ever.**

Glory to Jesus Christ our Saviour,  
who, though he was rich, yet for our sake became poor,  
and was tested in every way as we are, yet without sin;  
who proclaimed the good news of the kingdom,  
and was obedient to the point of death,  
even death on a cross; who was raised from the dead  
and is alive for ever,  
and has opened the kingdom of heaven  
to all who trust in him;  
who is seated at God's right hand in glory,  
and will come to be our judge.

**Blessèd be God for ever.**

Glory to the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the 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;

*Silence*

God of grace, through the mediation of your Son,  
you call us into a new covenant.  
Help us therefore to draw near with faith  
and join ourselves in a perpetual covenant with you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **The Ministry of the Word**

A reading from the Law. - *Exodus 24.3-11*

*at the end of the reading:*

For the wisdom that guides us  
**we praise you, O God.**

A reading from the Prophets. - *Jeremiah 31.31-34*

*at the end of the reading:*

For the word that inspires us  
**we praise you, O God.**

A reading from the Epistles. *Romans 12.1-2*

*at the end of the reading:*

For the truth that enlightens us  
**we praise you, O God.**

## **Gospel Reading**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to Mark. (*Mark 14:22-25*)

*We all respond*

**Glory to you O Lord**

*at the end of the Gospel*

This is the Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you O Christ**

## **The Sermon**

### **The Covenant**

God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation, chosen to bear witness to his steadfast love by finding delight in the law.

The covenant was renewed in Jesus Christ our Lord, in his life, work, death and resurrection. In him all people may be set free from sin and its power, and united in love and obedience.

In this covenant God promises us new life in Christ. For our part we promise to live no longer for ourselves but for God.

We meet, therefore, as generations have met before us, to renew the covenant which bound them and binds us to God.

Let us then seek forgiveness for the sin by which we have denied God's claim upon us.

Let us pray.

God of mercy, hear us as we confess our sins.

For the sin that has made us slow to learn from Christ,  
reluctant to follow him, and afraid to bear the cross:

Lord, have mercy, **Lord, forgive.**

For the sin that has caused the poverty of our worship, the formality and  
selfishness of our prayers, our neglect of fellowship and the means of grace, and  
our hesitating witness for Christ:

Lord, have mercy, **Lord, forgive.**

For the sin that has led us to misuse your gifts,  
evade our responsibilities, and fail to be good stewards of your creation:

Lord, have mercy, **Lord, forgive.**

For the sin that has made us unwilling to overcome evil with good, tolerant of  
injustice, quick to condemn, and selfish in sharing your love with others:

Lord, have mercy, **Lord, forgive.**

*Silence*

**Have mercy on me, O God,  
in your constant love;  
in the fullness of your mercy  
blot out my offences.  
Wash away all my guilt,  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Give me the joy of your help again  
and strengthen me with a willing spirit.**

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just,  
and will forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all  
unrighteousness. Therefore to all who truly repent  
this is his gracious word: 'Your sins are forgiven'.

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

### **Covenant Hymn**

Come, let us use the grace divine,  
And all, with one accord,  
In a perpetual cov'nant join  
Ourselves to Christ the Lord:

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

The cov'nant we this moment make  
Be ever kept in mind:  
We will no more our God forsake,  
Or cast his words behind.

We never will throw off his fear  
Who hears our solemn vow;  
And if thou art well pleased to hear,  
Come down, and meet us now.

To each the cov'nant blood apply,  
Which takes our sins away;  
And register our names on high,  
And keep us to that day.

*The people remain standing and the minister says:*

Sisters and brothers in Christ,  
let us again claim for ourselves this covenant  
which God has made with his people, and take upon us the yoke of Christ  
This means that, we are content that he appoint us our place and work,  
and that he himself be our reward.

Christ has many services to be done:  
some are easy, others are difficult;  
some bring honour, others bring reproach;  
some are suitable to our natural inclinations  
and material 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 these things is given to us in  
Christ, who strengthens us.

Therefore let us make this covenant of God our own.

Let us give ourselves to him,  
trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.  
Lord God, holy Father, since you have called us through Christ  
to share in this gracious covenant,  
we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of  
obedience and, for love of you,  
engage ourselves to seek and do your perfect will.

We are no longer our own but yours.

**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 blessed 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.**

*Silence, all seated*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

As we have entered this covenant not for ourselves alone, but as God's servants and witnesses, let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Loving God, hear us as we pray

for your holy catholic Church:

**make us all one, that the world may believe.**

Inspire and lead all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world:

**establish justice and peace among all people.**

Have compassion on all who suffer from any sickness, grief or trouble:

**deliver them from their distress.**

We praise you for all your saints who have entered your eternal glory:

**bring us all to share in your heavenly kingdom.**

Let us pray in silence for our own needs and for those of others ...

*Silence*

Lord our God, you have helped us by your grace to make these prayers,

and you have promised through Christ our Lord that when two or three agree

in his name you will grant what they ask. Answer now your servants' prayers

according to their needs; in this world grant that we may truly know you,

and in the world to come graciously give us eternal life;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **The Peace**

The Lord has made an everlasting covenant of peace with his people.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

## **The Preparation of the Gifts**

*The offerings of the people are presented. Bread and wine are brought to the table. The presiding minister takes the bread and wine and prepares them for use.*

## **The Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them to the Lord**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**It is right to give thanks and praise**

God our Father, fountain of goodness, creator of all that is,  
you have made us in your own image.

You have given us life and reason, and love for one another,  
setting in our hearts a hunger for you.

In darkness you are our light, in adversity and temptation our strength.

You bear patiently with our folly and sin,

granting us your law to guide us and your prophets to renew our faith.

In the fullness of time you came to us in love and mercy  
in Jesus Christ, your living Word, full of grace and truth.

He lived among us, declaring your forgiveness and revealing your wisdom  
in works of mercy and in his word of power.

For us he suffered and died upon the cross, by death destroying death.

You raised him from the dead and exalted him to your right hand on high.

Through him you sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your people,  
gathered together in every time and place to glorify your holy name.

With them and all the company of heaven  
we join in the unending hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord**

**God of power and might**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory**

**Hosanna in the highest**

**Blessed is he who comes**

**In the name of the Lord**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy God, pour out your Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine  
may be for us the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who, on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, gave thanks, broke it,

and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take this and eat it.  
This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'  
In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you.  
This is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many,  
for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.

And so, Lord, we obey his command with this bread and this cup,  
by which we recall his death and resurrection, the source of our life and  
salvation. Grant that we, who share in this holy sacrament,  
may be united by your Spirit and grow into perfect love.

Bring us, with those who have done your will in every age, into the light of your  
presence and the joy of your kingdom.

**Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the power of the Holy  
Spirit, we worship you in songs of everlasting praise.  
Blessing and honour and glory and power  
be yours for ever and ever. Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

We say together the prayer that Jesus gave us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ

**Though we are many we are one body  
because we all share in one bread**

The things of God for God's holy people.

**Jesus Christ is holy; Jesus Christ is Lord.  
Glory to God the Father.**

## **The Sharing of the Bread and Wine**

*The Priest holds up the bread and wine and says*

The Body of Christ      **Amen**

## **The Sharing of the Bread and Wine**

*Because of the new ways we are currently called to be church we are not able to meet together and receive the bread and wine. The president will receive it on behalf of all of us and we each receive the sacrament spiritually - in a practise known as spiritual reception which has been practised for hundreds of years by those who for many reasons are unable to be at church.*

## **Act of Spiritual Reception**

**In union, dear Father, with Christian people throughout the world and across the centuries gathered to make Eucharist, hearing your holy Word and receiving the Precious Body and Blood, I offer you praise and thanksgiving. Even though I am exiled from tasting the Bread of Heaven and drinking the Cup of Life I pray that you will unite me with all the baptised and with your Son who gave his life for us. Come Lord Jesus, dwell in me and send your Holy Spirit that I may be filled with your presence. Amen**

## **Prayers and Dismissal**

**Faithful God, with these holy gifts you have fed and strengthened us in Jesus Christ your Son.**

**Guide us on our way, that with all your faithful people we may come to share the feast of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **The Blessing**

The blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

## **The Dismissal**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**