

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 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

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 known

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.