

Wesley Covenant Service

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The Greeting

Leader: Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations

People: **You are the one true God who reigns forever**

Opening Prayer

Almighty God,

You search our hearts and You see every part of us

All our desires are known to You and from You no secrets are hidden

By the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts so that we may perfectly love You and
worthily glorify Your holy name

We pray this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Now as God's dearly loved children, let us pray together:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is
in heaven**

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever

Amen

Scripture Lesson

Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him. And the king went up to the house of the Lord, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which had been found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book; and all the people joined in the covenant. – 2

Kings 23:1-3

The Mighty One, God the Lord, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.

Our God comes, he does not keep silence, before him is a devouring fire, round about him a mighty tempest.

He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people:

“Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!”

The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge!Selah
“Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God.
I do not reprove you for your sacrifices; your burnt offerings are continually before me.
I will accept no bull from your house, nor he-goat from your folds.
For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.
I know all the birds of the air, and all that moves in the field is mine.
“If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world and all that is in it is mine.
Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?
Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High;
and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”
But to the wicked God says: “What right have you to recite my statutes, or take my covenant on your lips?
For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you.
If you see a thief, you are a friend of his; and you keep company with adulterers.
“You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit.
You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son.
These things you have done and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself.
But now I rebuke you, and lay the charge before you.
“Mark this, then, you who forget God, lest I rend, and there be none to deliver!
He who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice honors me; to him who orders his way aright I will show the salvation of
God!”– *Psalm 50*

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappado'cia, Asia, and Bithyn'ia, chosen and destined by God the
Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:
May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living
hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled,
and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be
revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that
the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to
praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Without having seen him you love him; though you do
not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. As the outcome of your faith you
obtain the salvation of your souls.

The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they
inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of
Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things
which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent
from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” And if you invoke as Father him who judges each one impartially according to his deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake. Through him you have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for

“All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
but the word of the Lord abides for ever.”

That word is the good news which was preached to you. – *1 Peter 1*

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. 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. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. – *John 15:1-8*

The Proclamation

Dearly loved brothers and sisters,

The Christian life is a life found in Christ, redeemed from sin, and consecrated to God. We are those who have entered into this life and have been admitted into the new covenant of Jesus Christ. He is the Mediator of this covenant. He sealed it with his own blood so it would last forever.

On one side of this covenant stands God, who promises to give us new life in Jesus Christ, the Author and Perfector of our faith. Every day God proves His goodness and grace to us, showing us that His promise still stands firm.

On the other side, we stand as those who promise to no longer live life for ourselves but instead to only live for Jesus Christ because He has loved us and given His life for us.

There are times in our lives when it is important to us to remember and reaffirm our promises and vows. In this same way, we come today to renew our covenant with God. Many generations have done this before us. Today we make the covenant our own, renewing with both joy and sincerity the covenant that binds us all to God.

The Confession

We are those who seek to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ, but sometimes we fall short. Let us now examine ourselves before God, humbly confessing our sins and submitting our hearts to that we do not deceive ourselves and cut ourselves away from God. Let us pray:

Father God,

You have set for the way of life through Your Son Jesus Christ, whom you love dearly. We shamefully confess that we have been slow to learn of Him and have been reluctant to follow Him. You have spoken and called to us but we have not listened. You have revealed Your beauty to us, but we have been blind. You have stretched out Your hand to us through our friends, but we have passed by them. We have accepted Your gifts and offered little thanks. We are unworthy of Your unchanging love.

We now confess to You our sins:

- Please forgive us for the poverty of our worship
- For the selfishness of our prayers
- For our inconsistency and unbelief
- For the ways we neglect fellowship and Your grace
- For our hesitation to tell others about Christ
- For the ways we deceive others

Forgive us for wasting time and misusing the gifts You have given us. Forgive us for making excuses for the wrong things we have done and for purposefully avoiding responsibility.

Forgive us for being unwilling to overcome evil with good and for not being ready to carry our cross. Forgive us, for we have not allowed Your love to work through us to help others and we have not made their suffering our own. Forgive us for those times when, instead of working for unity, we made it hard for others to live with us because of our lack of forgiveness, inconsiderate judgement, and quick criticism.

Forgive us for our times when we have not tried to reconcile with others and when we have been slow to see redemption.

Forgive us also for these sins that we silently confess to you now.

A moment of silent confession

Words of Assurance and Pardon

Hear the good news: God, the Father of all mercies, is faithful to cleanse us from our sins and restore us to Christ's image. Praise and glory be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord! Amen.

The Invitation

Let us gathered here before the Lord now in covenant commit ourselves to Christ as His servants. Let us give ourselves to Him so that we may fully belong to Him.

Christ has left us with many services to be done. Some of these services are easy and honorable, but some are difficult and disgraceful. Some line up with our desires and interests, others are contrary to both. In ways we please both Christ and ourselves, but in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.

Jesus Christ, we offer You this prayer

Let me be Your servant. Let me follow Your commands. I will no longer follow my own desires. I give myself completely to Your will.

The power and strength to live as true servants is given to us in Christ. We accept the place and work that He gives us, acknowledging that He alone will be our reward.

I am not my own.

I am Yours alone.

Make me into what You will.

Rank me with those You will.

Put me to use for You.

Put me to suffering for You.

Let me be employed for You.

Let me be laid aside for You.

Let me be lifted high for You.

Let me be brought low for You.

Let me be full or let me be empty

Let me have all things or let me have nothing

With a willing heart, I freely give everything to Your pleasure and disposal.

Christ is Savior to those who are His true servants. He is the source of all salvation to those who obey. To be His servants is to consent fully to His will. Christ accepts nothing less. Christ will be all in all or He will be nothing.

Now confirm this truth in holy covenant. Make it a reality in your life in these ways:

First, set apart time in your day, more than once, to be spent alone before the Lord. Seek to perceive God's special care for you and gracious acceptance of you. Carefully think through the words of this covenant and its conditions. Examine your heart, even if you have freely given your life to Christ. Name the sins in your life. Reflect on whether you are willing to choose Christ's holy laws and strict commands. Be sure you are clear in all of these so you do not lie to God.

Second, uphold a serious spirit of holy awe and reverence.

Third, claim God's covenant. Do not trust in your own strength and power but rely upon God's promise of giving grace and strength. In this way, He will empower you to keep your promise.

Fourth, be determined to be faithful. You have given your heart and life to God. You have opened your mouth dedicate yourself to the Lord. With God's power, never go back to your former way of living

And last, be then prepared to renew your covenant with God. Fall on your knees. Lift your hands. Open your hearts.

The Covenant Prayer

Let us pray together:

My righteous God, for the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, see me as I fall down before You. Forgive my unfaithfulness when I have not done Your will. You have promised mercy if I turn to You with my whole heart.

God requires that you rid yourself of every idol in your life:

From the bottom of my heart, I here and now renounce every idol in my life, covenanting with You that I will not commit any known sin. By turning against Your will I have turned my love toward the world. In Your power, I will watch for any temptations that will lead me away from You.

Through Jesus Christ, God offers to be your God again if you will allow Him to be.

Before all heaven and earth, I here and now acknowledge You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as my Lord and God. I vow to give all myself, body, mind, and soul, to be Your servant and to serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

Jesus Christ is the only way and means to God. God has given Jesus as the way and means to salvation.

Jesus, I here and now accept You as the only new and living Way. I join myself in covenant with You. I come to You hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked, unworthy even to wash the feet of your servants. With all my power, I accept You and my Lord and Head. I renounce my own unworthiness, 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

Jesus, I here and now make this covenant with You and accept whatever comes in life. Through Your grace I promise that neither life nor death will separate me from You.

God has given holy laws as the rule of your life.

I here and now willingly take on Your yoke and burden. All Your laws are holy, just, and good. I accept them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions, promising I will strive to order my whole life around Your direction. I will not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.

The almighty God searches and knows you, even the thoughts of your heart.

O God, You know that we have made this covenant today in sincerity without deceit or reservation.

If you find anything false in us, guide us and help us to set it right.

And now, glory be to You, O God the Father.

From this day forward, I shall look upon You as my God and Father.

Glory be to You, God the Son.

You have loved me and washed me from my sins in Your own blood

From this day forward, I shall look upon You as my Savior and Redeemer.

Glory be to You, O God the Holy Spirit.

By Your almighty power, You have turned my heart from sin to God.

From this day forward I shall look upon You as my Comforter and Guide.

O mighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, You have now become my covenant Friend.

And I, through Your infinite grace, have become Your covenant servant.

You are mine and I am Yours.

So be it.

May this covenant that I have made here on earth be ratified in heaven.

Amen

Dismissal with Blessing

May our God, who establishes covenant relationship with those who seek to enter the kingdom, be with you always. May Jesus Christ, who seals the new covenant with His blood on the cross, bring you peace. May the Holy Spirit guide your life both now and forever

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God! Amen.