

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

Wesley Covenant Service

JANUARY 7, 2024

“The Wesley Covenant Renewal Service”

In 1663, Richard Alleine, A Puritan, published *Vindiciae Pietatis: or, A vindication of Godliness in the Greater Strictness and Spirituality of it*. In 1753, it was again published in John Wesley’s *A Christian Library*. Wesley used one chapter, “The Application of the Whole,” on Monday, August 11, 1755, in what probably was the first real celebration of the Covenant Service in the Methodist movement.

Wesley found the service rich and meaningful, as expressed in his journal: “Many mourned before God, and many were comforted” (April 1756); “It was, as usual, a time of remarkable blessing” (October 1765); It was an occasion for a variety of spiritual experiences...I do not know that ever we had a greater blessing. Afterward, many desired to return thanks, either for sense of pardon, for full salvation, or for fresh manifestation of His graces, healing all their backslidings” (January 1, 1775).

In London, these services were usually held on New Year’s Day. Around the country, the Covenant Service was conducted whenever John Wesley visited the Methodist Societies. In our service, the liturgy beginning with the “Invitation” is taken directly from Wesley’s service of 1780. The heart of the service, focused on the “Covenant Prayer,” requires persons to commit themselves to God.

PRELUDE

(8:00 AM)

“In Christ Alone”
“How Many Kings”

arr. Tornquist
arr. Tornquist

ORGAN PRELUDE

(10:00 AM)

“Meditation from Thaïs”
“Organ Sonata 1: Adagio”
“Rejoice The Lord is King”

Jules Massenet
Felix Mendelssohn

***HYMN. No. 209**

“As with Gladness Men of Old”

Dix

WELCOME

ANTHEM

“Three Wise Men Came to Bethlehem”

Ed Pickell

CONCERNS AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

UNISON PRAYER:

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open and all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name; through Christ our Lord, Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (using sins)

*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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.*

OFFERTORY MUSIC

“We Three Kings”

John Hopkins, Jr.

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

(10:00 AM only)

*Doxology No. 682

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Offertory Prayer

CHILDREN'S DISMISSAL TO CHILDREN'S CHURCH

SCRIPTURE

“1 Thessalonians 5:1 - 11”

Pew Bible Page 1077

SERMON

“Awake!”

Rev. Dr. Mark E. Hecht

Covenant Service

The Act of Adoration

L: Let us adore the Father, the God of love who created us;
Who every moment 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

P: We Praise you, O God: we acknowledge you to be the Lord.

L: Let us glory in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;
Who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor;
Who went about doing good and preaching the gospel of the kingdom;
Who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin;
Who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross
Who was dead, and lives for evermore;
Who opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers;
Who sits at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father

P: You are the King of Glory, O Christ

L: Let us rejoice in the fellowship of the Holy Sprit, the Lord and 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;
Whose power enables us; Who waits to do for us exceeding abundantly
above all we Ask or think.

P: All praise to thee, O Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Act of Thanksgiving

L: Let us give thanks to God for his manifold mercies. O God our Father, the
fountain of all goodness, who has been gracious to us through all the years of
our life; we give you our thanks for your loving kindness which has filled our
days and brought us to this time and place.

P: We praise your holy name, O Lord.

L: You have given us life and reason, and set us in a world which is full of
your glory. You have comforted us with kindred and friends, and
ministered to us through the hands and minds of our neighbors.

P: We praise your holy name, O Lord.

L: You have set in our hearts 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 us a place in the fellowship of your Spirit and the witness of
your Church.

P: We praise your holy name, O Lord.

L: In darkness you have been our light, in adversity and temptation a rock of
strength, in our joys the very spirit of joy, in our labors the all-sufficient
reward.

P: We praise your holy name, O Lord.

L: You have remembered us when we have forgotten you, followed us even when we fled from you, met us with forgiveness when we turned back to you. For all of your long suffering and the abundance of your grace.

P: We praise your holy name, O Lord.

The Act of Confession

L: O God our Father, who has set forth the way of life for us in your beloved Son; we confess with shame our slowness to learn of him, our reluctance to follow him. You have spoken and called, and we have not given heed; your beauty has shown forth, and we have been blind; you have stretched out your hands to us through our neighbors, and we have passed by. We have taken great benefits with little thanks; we have been unworthy of your changeless love.

P: Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

L: Forgive us, we pray, the poverty of our worship, the formality and selfishness of our prayers, our inconstancy and unbelief, our neglect of fellowship, and of the means of fellowship and of the means of grace, our hesitating witness for Christ, our false pretenses, and our willful ignorance of your ways.

P: Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

L: Forgive us when we have wasted our time or misused our gifts. Forgive us when we have excused our own wrongdoing or evaded our responsibilities. Forgive us that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good, that we have drawn back from the cross.

P: Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

L: Forgive us that so little of your love has reached others through us and that we have borne so lightly wrongs and sufferings that were not our own. Forgive us when we have cherished the things that divide us from others, and when we have made it hard for them to live with us, and when we have been thoughtless in our judgments, hasty in condemnation, grudging in forgiveness.

P: Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

L: If we have made no ventures in fellowship, if we have kept in our heart a grievance against another, if we have not sought reconciliation, if we have been eager for the punishment of wrongdoers and slow to seek their redemption.

P: Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

L: Let each of us, in silence, make confession to God.

(Silent meditation)

Unison: Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your loving kindness; according to the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Amen.

The Words of Assurance

* *The Covenant* (please stand, if able)

L: O Lord God, holy Father, who has called us through Christ to be partakers in this gracious covenant; we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience, and engage ourselves, for love of thee, to seek and do thy perfect will. We are no longer our own, but thine.

ALL: I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thou are mine, and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

***HYMN No. 208**

“We Three Kings of Orient are”

Kings of Orient

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

(8:00 AM)

“Air”

Handel

POSTLUDE

(10:00 AM)

“Angels From the Realms of Glory”

USHERS today are George Lilja, Michael Giambrone, Nicholas Giambrone, Henry Dahl, and Morris Kintner.

MUSIC today is provided by guest organist Judd Demers, percussionist Holden Demers, and our Chancel Choir. The piano duet is played by Judd and Ruth Nelson. The carillon is played by Nettie Swart. The 8:00 AM pianist is Cathy Peterson. Judd is a sophomore at Grove City College and a member of our church family.

PEDESTAL FLOWERS today are in memory of Richard & Mary Lowe, given by Nancy Siggins and Tracey & Brandon Westmoreland.

CONCERNS FOR THIS WEEK ~ Joyce O'Connor 615 Rouse Ave., Room #113 Youngsville, PA 16371

LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY ~ On Sunday, January 14, 2024, our church will recognize local law enforcement agencies during the 10:00 AM worship service. Invitations have been sent to those working in this area, inviting them to attend this worship service. We will have fellowship time in the parlors afterward, and we hope you will consider attending the service and staying after to thank them for all they do for us.

PRAYER / BIRTHDAY CALENDAR ~ The 2024 Prayer / Birthday Calendars are now available. The calendars are in the side hall on a table outside the office.

EPIPHANY CONCERT ~ At 4:30 PM today, there will be an Epiphany Concert at the Holy Redeemer Church, Russell Street, Warren. This concert will feature Christine Porter and guests.

Holiday Hot Meals ~ We thank all those who volunteered to help, financially supported, or provided names of persons who would be blessed in receiving a hot meal at Christmas. A group gathered the day before Christmas to get the food ready to cook and to prepare the meal delivery materials. Early Christmas morning, a group started cooking. The packers and drivers arrived later, and over 330 Christmas meals were soon on the road. The next Holiday Hot Meal will be delivered the Saturday before Easter (March 30th). Please watch for volunteer signup sheets (in February) and sign up to join this ministry of love. Thank you again. Peace, George and Ardelle Mason HHM

BOOK CLUB ~ Please note, the Book Club will meet on Wednesday, January 10th at 1:00 PM in the Covert Room.

*Hospitality
Winter Lunch
Fellowship*

Following the 10:00 AM

Worship Service

January 28, 2024

February 25, 2024

March 17, 2024



Chancel Choir is beginning rehearsals for a cantata which will be shared on Palm Sunday, March 24th. If you would like to join the Chancel Choir for this, please call Ruth Nelson at 814-688-8238.



CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

January 7, 2024 -January 13, 2024

SUNDAY **8:00 AM Service of Word and Sacrament; Crary Chapel**
8:45 AM Fellowship; Covert Room
9:00 AM Class Meeting; Parlors
9:45 AM Prayer; Crary Chapel
10:00 AM Worship Service; Sanctuary
11:15 AM Confirmation Class; Everts Room

MONDAY **6:45 AM Christian Men's Accountability Group**
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM Office Hours
4:30 PM Monday Nite Meal; Founder's Hall

TUESDAY **8:20 AM - 11:15 AM 3 Year Old Preschool**
8:30 AM - 11:30 AM Pre K Class
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM Office Hours
1:00 PM Program Staff Meeting; Mark's Office
5:00 PM Warren High School Soccer; Gym
6:00 PM Protestant Church History; Covert Room
6:00 PM Girl Scout Cookie LOTO; Founder's Hall
6:30 PM Epworth Bells; Sanctuary

WEDNESDAY **8:20 AM - 11:15 AM 3 Year Old Preschool**
8:30 AM - 11:30 AM Pre K Class
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM Office Hours
9:30 AM Protestant Church History; Covert Room
1:00 PM Book Club, Covert Room
6:00 PM Youth Group; Everts Room
6:30 PM Chancel Choir; Music Room

THURSDAY **8:20 AM - 11:15 AM 3 Year Old Preschool**
8:30 AM - 11:30 AM Pre K Class
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM Office Hours
4:15 PM Hospitality Meeting; Covert Room
5:00 PM 4th Grade Soccer; Gym
6:00 PM DivorceCare; Covert Room

FRIDAY **8:30 AM - 12:00 PM Office Hours**
12:00 PM Senior Citizen Lunch; Founder's Hall