

# FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

## Wesley Covenant Service

### JANUARY 5, 2025

#### “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)

“Proclaim the Glory of the Lord”

“In Christ Alone”

arr. Millikan

arr. Hayes

#### **ORGAN PRELUDE**

(10:00 AM)

“Berceuse”

“Prelude in B Minor”

Louis Vierne

J.S. Bach

#### **WELCOME**

\***HYMN. No. 212**

“Songs of Thankfulness and Praise” St. George’s Windsor

#### **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**

“Jesus Paid It All”

arr. Robert D. Vandall

**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

**SCRIPTURE**

“Luke 7:36—47”

Pew Bible Page 941

**SERMON**

“Welcome”

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. 202**

“Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne”

Margaret

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

“Marche Romaine”

Gounod

(8:00 AM)

**POSTLUDE**

“Angels From the Realms of Glory”

arr. Demers

(10:00 AM)

**PEDESTAL FLOWERS** today are in loving memory of Richard & Mary Lowe and Nancy Siggins, given by 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 12, 2025, 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 2025 Prayer / Birthday Calendars are available. There are still calendars available in the side hall on a table outside the office.

**CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS** ~ Putting the Christmas decorations away will occur after the 10:00 AM service next Sunday, January 12th. If you can give 1 hour of your time, many hands will make light work. Please meet at the piano in the sanctuary if you are able to help. - Thank you, The Worship Commission.

**YOUTH GROUP** ~ Happy New Year! Our next youth group meeting will be this *Sunday, January 5, from 6:30-8:00* at the church. We will have fellowship time, snack, and a devotion. The other meeting in January will be *Monday, January 20th, from 11:00 AM—2:00 PM* at the church. There is no school in Warren County that day, so we will have the youth room open with the game system set up, and the gym will be available for games as well. Church staff members will be in the building that day, so we will stay on the lower level. We will order pizza for lunch, once the youth have arrived and we have a count. There will be no cost for the students.

**BOOK CLUB** ~ The Book Club will have its January meeting. Wednesday, January 8, 1:00 p.m. in the Covert Room. Come and tell us all the new books you have received for Christmas. New members are always welcome.



Our church will be celebrating Law Enforcement Appreciation Day on Sunday, January 12, 2025, during the 10:00 AM worship service.

This is our fourth year of recognizing those who work to protect all of us in our communities. Invitations have been sent to all those who are working in this area, inviting them to attend this worship service. We will be having a fellowship time in the parlors afterwards, and we hope you will consider attending the service and staying after to thank them for all they do to keep us safe.

The parlors are located across from the hallway that leads to the Sanctuary.

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|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Visitation Pastor                 | Rev. Mike Rutenber               |             |
| Director of Music                 | Ruth Nelson                      |             |
| Organist/Pianist                  | Michele Sandberg                 |             |
| Pianist                           | Cathy Peterson                   |             |
| Carillon                          | Nettie Swart                     |             |
| Office Manager                    | Debbie Giambrone                 |             |
| Office Assistant/Streaming Tech   | Barbara Young                    |             |
| Coordinator of Community Programs | Heidi Ketzko                     |             |
| Custodian                         | Bob Confer                       |             |
| Acolytes                          | Kenna Nobles and Ashlynn Zawacki |             |
| Liturgist                         | Tracy Brieger                    |             |
| Usher Captain Team 2              | Rusty Blodgett                   |             |
| Ushers                            |                                  |             |
| Jim Reynolds                      | Larry Sutton                     | Ron Casteel |
| Tom Lobdell                       |                                  | Bob White   |

# CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

**January 5, 2025 -January 11, 2025**

## **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**

## **MONDAY**

**6:45 AM Christian Men's Accountability Group**  
**8:30 AM - 4:00 PM Office Hours**  
**1:00 PM - 4:30 PM Chosen Ministry; Garage**  
**3:00 PM Eagle Knights Soccer; Gym**  
**4:30 PM Monday Nite Meal Team B; 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**

## **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**  
**1:00 PM - 4:30 PM Chosen Ministry; Garage**  
**1:00 PM Book Club, Covert Room**  
**6:00 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**

## **FRIDAY**

**8:30 AM - 12:00 PM Office Hours**  
**9:00 AM - 12:30 PM Chosen Ministry; Garage**  
**12:00 PM Senior Citizen Lunch; Founder's Hall**  
**6:30 PM Ladies Game Night; Covert Room**