

The Covenant Service

What is the Covenant Service?

On Sunday the 20 January 2019 we celebrate our "Covenant Service". For over 260 years Methodists have held an annual Covenant Renewal Service. At the heart of the service is the Covenant Prayer:

*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 pass unnoticed;
when I find fulfillment
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,
just as you choose to use me.*

*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.*

In the Covenant Service we are reminded that, in Jesus Christ, God has established a "New Covenant" with us. In the "New Covenant" sins are forgiven and God's law is written on our hearts (Jer. 31:31ff).

Why do we pray the Covenant Prayer?

The Covenant Prayer helps us to respond to this wonderful gift of grace. We say to God: "Yes, *this is what we want to be part of. We love you, we trust you and we give ourselves completely to you*". We express our absolute trust in Jesus and our faith in God's constant

presence, protection, provision and guidance.

What about those who are not ready to pray this prayer?

If you don't yet feel ready to pray the Covenant Prayer then, during the service when we stand for the prayer, we'll simply ask you to pray silently for those around you who do pray it.

How do we live faithfully to such a challenging prayer?

On reading the prayer we realize immediately how challenging it is! It speaks of a life completely surrendered to God. It won't do to simply pray it passionately, however sincere we may feel. We'll have to organize our lives in such a way that we can a) grow in knowing and trusting the God that Jesus reveals and b) learn how to do the things Jesus tells us to do. In other words, we will need to train ourselves for this way of life (or at least allow the Holy Spirit to train us).

I'd recommend you join the Small Group starting Wednesday 23 January. There we'll learn to follow Jesus in very accessible, practical ways.

If you are already part of a small group then be sure to hold one another lovingly accountable to this life of trust and obedience that we are called to.

If you cannot join on Wednesdays but desire to mature in your ability to faithfully follow Jesus give me a call or send an email and we'll look for alternatives.

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A Covenant Prayer for Young People:

Morag Venter, our Sunday School Superintendent, has written this version of the Covenant Prayer with younger people in mind. It might be meaningful for you to pray with your children or grandchildren.

*I know that I belong to you, God.
Help me to trust you and to leave it up to you
to decide:*

*whether I become important or not;
what I must do and when I must do it;
whether my life will be easy or hard..*

Help me to remember you at all times:

*when I have am busy;
when I have nothing to do;
when I am successful;
when I don't succeed;
when I am full of joy;
when I am sad;
when life is going well;
and when things are in a mess.*

I am your child and you are my Father.

I want to serve you my whole life long.

Please help me keep this promise.

Amen

The Traditional Covenant Prayer:

Those of you who grew up in the Methodist Church will be more familiar with this version of the prayer:

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will,

rank me with whom you will;

put me to doing,

put me to suffering;

let me be employed for you

or laid aside for you,

exalted for you

or brought low for you;

let me be full,

let me be empty;

let me have all things,

let me have nothing;

*I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to
your pleasure and disposal. And now,
glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and
Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So
be it. And the covenant now made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.*

Amen