

COVENANT RENEWAL SERVICE

*Individual copies of the Covenant Service are recommended for all worshipers
so that they may sign and keep them as reminders.*

OPENING PRAYER

**Almighty God, You search my heart and You see every part of me.
All my desires are known by You, and there are no secrets hidden from
You. I come today acknowledging that You are sovereign and I thank You
for Your grace. As I enter into covenant with You, I confess my sin and ask
you to reveal any falsehood or reluctance within me. I pray that the Holy
Spirit will impress truth within me. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,
cleanse my heart so I may perfectly love you and glorify Your holy name.
I pray this through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen.**

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us give thanks for how merciful God is.

**Almighty God, all through the years of my life
You have been gracious to me.
Thank You for the ways You have filled my days with loving care
and how You have helped bring me to this time and place.
I praise Your name today.**

**You have given me life and reason,
and set me in a world filled with Your glory.
You have comforted me with family and friends,
and ministered to me through the hands of others who love You.
I praise Your name today.**

**You have filled my heart with a hunger for You,
and have given me Your peace.
You have redeemed me, and called me to a high calling
as a disciple of Jesus.
You have given me a place in the fellowship of your Spirit
and the witness of your Church.
I praise Your name today.**

**You have been my light in times of darkness
and a rock of strength in adversity and temptation.**

**You have been the very Spirit of joy in my joys
and the all-sufficient reward in all my labors.
I praise Your name today.**

**You remembered me when I forgot you.
You stayed with me even when I tried to run away from you.
You met me with forgiveness when I returned to you.
For all your patience and overflowing grace,
I praise Your name today. Amen.**

PROCLAMATION

Pastor: Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Christian life is a life found in Jesus, 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 perfecter of our faith. Every day God proves His goodness and grace to us, showing us that His promise stands firm.

On the other side, we stand as those who promise to no longer live life for ourselves but instead to 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 for 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.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS:

Assemble the people—men, women, and children, as well as the aliens residing in your towns—so that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God and to observe diligently all the words of this law, and so that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land that you are crossing over the Jordan to possess.

Deuteronomy 31:9-13 NRSV

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But 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.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 NRSV

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.

John 15:1-8 NRSV

CONFESSION

Pastor: 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 so that we do not deceive ourselves and cut ourselves away from God. Let us pray together in confession:

Congregation: Father God, You have set forth the way of life through Your Son Jesus Christ. It is with some shame we confess how slow we have been to learn of Him and sometimes been reluctant to follow Him. You have spoken and called to us but we have not always listened. You have revealed Your beauty to us, but we have been blind at times. You have stretched out Your hands 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. Forgive us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Pastor: 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...

Congregation: Forgive us for when we waste time and when we misuse the gifts you have given us. Forgive us for when we have made excuses for the wrong things we have done and when we have purposefully avoided responsibility.

Pastor: Forgive us for times that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good and that we have not been ready to carry our cross. Forgive us when we have not allowed Your love to work through us to help others and when 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 judgment, and quick criticism.

Congregation: Forgive us for when we have not tried to reconcile with others and when we have been slow to seek redemption.

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

INVITATION

Pastor: 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. Jesus 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 some we please both Christ and ourselves, but then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. So it is necessary that we consider what it means to be a servant of Christ. Jesus Christ, we offer You this prayer:

Congregation: 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.

Pastor: 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.

Congregation: 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.

Pastor: Christ is Savior to those who are His true servants. He is the source of all salvation to those who obey. To be His servant 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 with 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 to dedicate yourself to the Lord. With God's power, never go back to your former way of living.

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

THE COVENANT PRAYER

Pastor: Let us pray together:

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

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

Congregation: 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 temptation that will lead me away from You.

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

Congregation: 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 of myself, body and soul, to be Your servant and to serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

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

Congregation: Jesus, I here and now accept You and 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 as 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.

Pastor: Christ has told you that you must suffer with him.

Congregation: 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.

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

Congregation: 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.

Pastor: The Almighty God searches and knows you, even the thoughts of your heart.

Congregation: O God, You know that we have made this covenant today in sincerity, without deceit or reluctance. If You find anything false in us, guide us and help us to set it right. And now, glory be to You, 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.

Pastor: You are advised to make this covenant not only in your heart, but in word; not only in word, but in writing. Therefore, with all reverence, lay the service before the Lord as your act and deed. And when you have done this, sign it. Then keep it as a reminder of the holy agreement between God and you that you may remember it during doubts and temptations.

HOLY COMMUNION AND HYMN

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastor: 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 serve the Lord!

Congregation: Amen.

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