

COVENANT

SUNDAY

First United Methodist Church Winter Park
January 5, 2025

WESLEY COVENANT SERVICE

ORDER OF WORSHIP

January 5, 2025

THE GREETING

Rev. Philip Allred

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

PEOPLE: You are the one true God who reigns forever.

OPENING PRAYER

Rev. Philip Allred

LEADER: 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 our hearts so we may perfectly love you and glorify Your holy name. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

OPENING SONG/PROCESSIONAL HYMN

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

Rev. Jared Tucker

LEADER: Let us give thanks for all of God's mercies. O God, our Covenant Friend, you have been gracious to us through all the years of our lives. We thank you for your loving care, which has filled our days and brought us to this time and place.

PEOPLE: We praise your holy name, O God.

LEADER: You have given us life and reason, and set us in a world filled with your glory. You have comforted us with family and friends, and ministered to us through the hands of our sisters and brothers.

PEOPLE: We praise your holy name, O God.

LEADER: You have filled our hearts with a hunger after you, and have 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.

1

PEOPLE: We praise your holy name, O God.

LEADER: You have been our light in darkness and a rock of strength in adversity and temptation. You have been the very Spirit of joy in our joys and the all-sufficient reward in all our labors.

PEOPLE: We praise your holy name, O God.

Leader: You remembered us when we forgot you. You followed us even when we tried to flee from you. You met us with forgiveness when we returned to you. For all your patience and overflowing grace.

PEOPLE: We praise your holy name, O God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Leah Gaughan & Child

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

READER: 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.

COFFEE IN THE CORNERS/PASSING THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

(9am Contemporary Only)

OFFERING

Rev. Leah Gaughan

SONG/ANTHEM

HOMILY

Rev. Philip Allred

THE PROCLAMATION

Rev. Jared Tucker

LEADER: 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 perfecter 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 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.

THE CONFESSION

Rev. Leah Gaughan

PEOPLE: Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have failed to be an obedient church.

We have not done your will,

we have broken your law,

we have rebelled against your love,

we have not loved our neighbors,

and we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Forgive us, we pray.

Free us for joyful obedience,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LEADER: 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

Rev. Jared Tucker & Teens

JARED: 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. Jesus Christ, we offer You this prayer:

PEOPLE: 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.

READER 1: 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.

PEOPLE: 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.

READER 2: 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.

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

READER 1: 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!

READER 2: Second, uphold a serious spirit of holy awe and reverence.

READER 1: 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.

READER 2: 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.

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

THE COVENANT PRAYER

Rev. Philip Allred

LEADER: Let us pray together:

PEOPLE: 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.

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

PEOPLE: 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.

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

PEOPLE: 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.

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

PEOPLE: 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 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.

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

PEOPLE: 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.

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

PEOPLE: 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.

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

PEOPLE: 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.

COMMUNION LITURGY

Rev. Leah Gaughan

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of the Promise, from the beginning you have lived in relationship with your Creation. Walking in the garden with Adam and Eve, speaking with their children and grandchildren. And as that relationship developed, you made covenants, agreements about how we would live together. Promises made so that life would flourish as you hoped.

As time went on, your people, your beloved children, did not remain faithful to the covenant. They forgot their promises, they did not live up to their side of the deal. But you remained faithful, you continued to hold up the possibility of the Promise, of the Covenant. And so, you sent prophets and messengers, faithful men and women, who reminded their neighbors about the Covenant and called them back to the path of wisdom.

As participants in that community of the faithful, we echo the ancient cry:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. You anointed him to share the wonders of your love, the glory of your forgiveness, the possibility of your Reign. Jesus invites his friends and all who would follow them, including us, to participate in the New Covenant of Life and Love.

As it would happen, the world was not ready for the message of Jesus. He was arrested, tried, and executed. But that was not the end of the story, or of the New Covenant. You raised him, breaking the bonds of death, shattering the powers of the world.

We remember that on the night before his death Jesus shared a meal with his friends. At that table he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and passed it to them saying: Take, eat, this is my body broken for you.

Then he took the cup of wine, blessed it, and passed it to them saying: Take and drink, this is the cup of the new covenant. Whenever you eat and drink, remember me.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
Through your Son Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father,
now and forever. Amen.

CLOSING SONG/HYMN

BENEDICTION

Rev. Philip Allred

LEADER: 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 for ever. Go in peace to serve the Lord.

PEOPLE: Amen.

CHECK-IN TO WORSHIP

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Returning Member or Visitor:

Text **9am** or **11am** to 407-634-1703

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Text **New** to 407-634-1703



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Give Online: fumcwp.org/give



Scan the QR code to give.

CLERGY

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For staff directory, please visit fumcwp.org/leadership



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