

# **WARREN FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

## **Wesley Covenant Service**

### **JANUARY 1, 2023**

#### **“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. Afterwards 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 in the “Covenant Prayer,” requires persons to commit themselves to God.

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#### **ORGAN PRELUDE**

“He Is Born”  
“In Thee Is Gladness”

arr. Andre Lash  
arr. William Greene

#### **PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS AND WELCOME**

**\*HYMN. No. 618**

“Let Us Break Bread Together”

# 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.*

## SCRIPTURE

"1 Peter 1:13-2:3"

Pew Bible Page 1104

## SERMON

"Practice Makes Perfect"

Rev. Dr. Mark E. Hecht

## Covenant Service

### *The Invitation*

### *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 Spirit, 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. 383** “This Is a Day of New Beginnings” (verses 1-4)      Beginnings

## BENEDICTION

## **POSTLUDE**      “Hark the Glad Sound”      arr. William Greene

**USHERS** today are Team 5, Erik Fincher—Captain.

**MUSIC** today is provided by organist Michele Sandberg.

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

**CONCERNS FOR THIS WEEK** ~ Mrs. Jack Spencer 31 N. Park Ave., Apt. #131 Meadville, PA 16335

**LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY** ~ On Sunday, January 8, 2022, our church will be recognizing local law enforcement agencies during the 10:00 AM worship service. 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 hope you will consider attending the service and staying after to thank them for all they do for us.

**FELLOWSHIP** ~ In the new year, the fellowship time will continue on Sundays between the 8:00 Service of Word and Sacrament and the 10:00 Am Worship Service. We are looking for volunteers to supply snacks. It is more than coffee and donuts; it's fellowship and faith building. If you would like to share snacks and goodies with the congregation during this house in the new year, there is a signup sheet on the bulletin board across from the office.—Thank you!

**COLLEGE STUDENTS** ~ Please remember to submit your first semester grades to the church office so you can receive the second disbursement of your scholarship.

**BOOKS NEEDED** ~ The Warren County Jail is in need of reading material. We are collecting books over the next several Sundays to help meet this need. Please limit your contributions to the following categories; Romance, Self-Help, Mystery, Crime, Word Searches, and Crosswords. Books must be soft-covered. A tote is available outside Pastor Hecht's office. Thank you in advance for helping.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS** ~ There will be a New Member Class on Sunday evenings at 6:00 PM, beginning January 15, 2023. A light meal will be offered with this class. For those interested in attending this class, there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the office.

**HEARING DEVICES** ~ New hearing assist devices are now available. The channel selector needs to be kept on channel 1. Also, please make sure to turn them off after each use. Thank you!

**DE-HANGING OF THE GREENS** ~ The de-hanging of the greens will take place after church on Sunday, January 15th. Grab a cup of coffee and a snack in the Covert Room and get a location assignment to pack away the Christmas decorations. Everyone's help will make light work for all.

**STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN** ~ Our stewardship campaign for 2023 is well underway. Please remember to **return your pledge** card to the church office. If you have yet to receive a pledge card, you may pick one up at the office or visit our website at [www.firstumwarren.com](http://www.firstumwarren.com).

**OFFERING ENVELOPES** ~ The offering enveloped for 2023 are now available and can be found in the side hall, just outside the church office.

**PRAYER / BIRTHDAY CALENDAR** ~ The 2023 Prayer / Birthday Calendars are now available. The calendars are located in the side hall on a table just outside the office.

**BOOK CLUB** ~ The Book Club will be meeting at 1:00 on Wednesday in the Covert Room.



### **Are you looking for others to join with you in prayer?**

First UMC has a prayer chain that is activated when a prayer request is received. Each member of the prayer chain has signed a Covenant in which s/he commits to keep the requests confidential and to pray for a minimum of one month for the request.

You can submit a request (activate the prayer chain) by marking "prayer chain" on the prayer cards on Sunday mornings or by contacting Barbara, at the church office via email at [byoung@firstumwarren.com](mailto:byoung@firstumwarren.com) or 814-723-7930, or contacting prayer coordinator, Mary Schall at [rschall.mschall@gmail.com](mailto:rschall.mschall@gmail.com).

If you would like to become one of these faithful prayer warriors, please email Mary, [rschall.mschall@gmail.com](mailto:rschall.mschall@gmail.com), to request that a Covenant be sent to you. When you have signed and returned it to the church office and Mary is notified, you will be added to the email list to begin receiving requests.

# **CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK**

## **January 1, 2022 -January 7, 2022**

<b>SUNDAY</b>	10:00 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary
<b>MONDAY</b>	Office Closed 6:00 PM Incarceration Support Group for Adults; FH 7:00 - 8:30 PM Boy Scouts Troop 9; Downstairs
<b>TUESDAY</b>	8:30 AM—4:00 PM Office Hours 8:30 AM-11:15 AM Creative Preschool 12:30 PM Tuesday Afternoon Study Group; Covert Room 1:00 PM Staff Meeting; Parlor B 5:00 PM Warren High School Soccer; Gym 6:30 PM Epworth Bells; Sanctuary
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	8:30 AM—4:00 PM Office Hours 8:30 AM-11:15 AM Creative Preschool 8:45 AM Covenant Group 1:00 PM Book Club; Covert Room 3:10 PM LOGOS, New Year's Celebration 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal; Music Room
<b>THURSDAY</b>	8:30 AM—12:00 PM Office Hours 8:30 AM—11:15 AM Creative Preschool 1:00 PM Covenant Discipleship Meeting 5:30 PM Covenant Discipleship Meeting
<b>FRIDAY</b>	8:30 AM—12:00 PM Office Hours 12:00 PM Senior Citizen Lunch; Founder's Hall
<b>SATURDAY</b>	2:00 PM Private Event; Founder's Hall