



Welcome

We welcome you today whatever your reason for coming

**‘A global Christian family following
Jesus at the heart of London’**



**Annual Methodist Parliamentary
Covenant Service
with prayers for Parliament**

**Online at mchw.live
6pm Sunday, 31st January 2021**



**METHODIST
CENTRAL HALL**



ONLINE SERVICE

Annual Methodist Parliamentary Covenant Service – with Love Feast

**Hosted by Methodist Central Hall
Westminster (mchw.live)**

Leading the ‘Covenant’: Revd. Richard Teal

President of the Methodist Conference

And Carolyn Lawrence

Vice President of the Methodist Conference

Preacher: Revd Tricia Hillas

Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons

Presiding Minister: Revd Anthony D. Miles

Superintendent MCHW

Reflections:

Cat Smith MP & Sir Gary Streeter MP

Readings:

Emma Hardy MP; Derek Thomas MP

Phoebe Parkin – Methodist Youth President

Meg Read - JPIT/House of Commons Intern

Prayers

Revd Lansford Penn-Timothy

Deputy Superintendent Minister MCHW

Deacon Ali McMillan

Minister, MCHW

Rachel Lampard MBE

Leader of the Joint Public Issues Team

Welcome

On behalf of Cat Smith MP, Emma Hardy, MP; Derek Thomas MP, and Sir Gary Streeter MP, I warmly welcome you to this online Methodist Parliamentary Covenant Service. This year, due to the pandemic, we regret that we are unable to meet in the Chapel of St. Mary Undercroft in the Palace of Westminster.

For many years, this service took place under the aegis of the Parliamentary Methodist Fellowship which has, to use a Methodist term, 'ceased to meet' - temporarily we hope.

On 25th December, and on many other occasions, John Wesley strongly urged Methodists to renew their Covenant with God. This practice has now become a tradition embraced and valued by many Christian denominations. We are pleased that you are sharing in this service with us. The past year has taught us that we can never know what the future holds for ourselves, our families, our communities, nations and our world. There will, no doubt, be both blessings and trials, expected and unexpected. We hope this service will be a time for us to reflect upon the challenging times we face and together, before God, prepare for the year ahead.

This booklet contains everything you will need to follow the service through and assist you to renew your covenant with God. Though we are not gathered together in person, please do sing with confidence and join with the responses in **bold**.

The service will involve us sharing in a Love Feast (or Agape), rather than Holy Communion. Love Feasts are a means of Christian fellowship, recalling the meals Jesus shared with disciples during his ministry.

The service expresses the 'koinonia' (sharing, belonging, and fellowship) enjoyed within the body of Christ. Typically, Love Feasts include prayer, praise, scripture, preaching, and mutual fellowship. In addition, Love Feasts contain the sharing of a simple meal and testimony. This evening, two of our MPs will share testimony by way of a short reflection. It would be helpful if you could have something to eat or drink to hand: perhaps a biscuit or a piece of cake; followed by a cup of tea or coffee, or a glass of water or fruit juice.

Revd Tony Miles

SERVICE ORDER

COUNTDOWN AND ONLINE CHURCH BUMPER

LIVE STREAM WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Revd Tony Miles

VIDEO CALL TO WORSHIP - Be Still And Know Floodgate Productions

VIDEO HYMN – And Are We Yet Alive

STF 456

And are we yet alive,
And see each other's face?
Glory and praise to Jesus give
For his redeeming grace!

Preserved by power divine
To full salvation here,
Again in Jesu's praise we join,
And in his sight appear.

What troubles have we seen,
What conflicts have we passed,
Fightings without, and fears within,
Since we assembled last!

But out of all the Lord
Hath brought us by his love;
And still he doth his help afford,
And hides our life above.

Then let us make our boast
Of his redeeming power,
Which saves us to the uttermost,
Till we can sin no more.

Let us take up the cross,
Till we the crown obtain;
And gladly reckon all things loss,
So we may Jesus gain.

Praise ye the Lord, alleluia!
Praise ye the Lord, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
Praise ye the Lord!

Charles Wesley

OPENING PRAYERS

Led by Revd. Lansford Penn-Timity
Deputy Superintendent Minister

Let us pray.

Glory to the Father, the God of love, who created us;
who continually 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.

Blessèd be God for ever.

Glory to Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who, though he was rich,
yet for our sake became poor,
and was tested in every way as we are, yet without sin;

who proclaimed the good news of the kingdom,
and was obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross;
who was raised from the dead and is alive for ever,
and has opened the kingdom of heaven
to all who trust in him;
who is seated at God's right hand in glory,
and will come to be our judge.

Blessèd be God for ever.

Glory to the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the 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 will do for us more than we can ask or think.

Blessèd be God for ever.

To the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be praise and glory for ever. **Amen.**

Silence

God of grace, through the mediation of your Son,
you call us into a new covenant.
Help us therefore to draw near with faith
and join ourselves in a perpetual covenant with you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Jeremiah 31:31-34

Read by Emma Hardy MP

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my

covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord.

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbours, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord, “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

VIDEO SONG - Dear Lord And Father Of Mankind

STF 495

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
In purer lives, thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word
Rise up and follow thee.

Drop thy still dews of quietness
Till all our strivings cease:
Take from our souls the strain and stress
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire
O still small voice of calm!

*Charles Hubert Hastings Parry and John
Greenleaf Whittier*

GOSPEL LESSON John 6:35-40

Read by Derek Thomas MP

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day."

POEM from John O'Donohue

Read by Meg Read, JPIT / House of Commons Intern

I arise today
In the name of Silence
Womb of the Word,
In the name of Stillness
Home of Belonging,
In the name of the Solitude
Of the Soul and the Earth.

I arise today
Blessed by all things,
Wings of breath,
Delight of eyes,
Wonder of whisper,
Intimacy of touch,
Eternity of soul,
Urgency of thought,
Miracle of health,
Embrace of God.

May I live this day
Compassionate of heart,
Clear in word,
Gracious in awareness,
Courageous in thought,
Generous in love.

ADDRESS

Revd Tricia Hillas
Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons

THE COVENANT

Led by the President and Vice President of Conference

Revd Richard Teal:

God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation, chosen to bear witness to God's steadfast love by finding delight in the law.

The covenant was renewed in Jesus Christ our Lord, in his life, work, death and resurrection. In him all people may be set free from sin and its power, and united in love and obedience.

In this covenant God promises us new life in Christ. For our part we promise to live no longer for ourselves but for God.

We meet, therefore, as generations have met before us, to renew the covenant which bound them and binds us to God.

Let us then seek forgiveness for the sin by which we have denied God's claim upon us.

Carolyn Lawrence:

Let us pray.

God of mercy, hear us as we confess our sins.

For the sin that has made us slow to learn from Christ,
reluctant to follow him, and afraid to bear the cross:

Lord, have mercy,
Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has caused the poverty of our worship,
the formality and selfishness of our prayers,
our neglect of fellowship and the means of grace,
and our hesitating witness for Christ:

Lord, have mercy,
Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has led us to misuse your gifts,
evade our responsibilities,
and fail to be good stewards of your creation:

Lord, have mercy,
Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has made us unwilling to overcome
evil with good, tolerant of injustice, quick to condemn,
and selfish in sharing your love with others:

Lord, have mercy,
Lord, forgive.

Silence

**Have mercy on me, O God,
in your constant love;
in the fullness of your mercy
blot out my offences.
Wash away all my guilt,
and cleanse me from my sin.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Give me the joy of your help again
and strengthen me with a willing spirit.**

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just,
and will forgive our sins,
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Therefore to all who truly repent this is his gracious
word: 'Your sins are forgiven'.

Amen. Thanks be to God

VIDEO HYMN – Come, Let Us Use The Grace Divine

STF 549

Come, let us use the grace divine,
and all, with one accord,
in a perpetual covenant join
ourselves to Christ the Lord:

Give up ourselves, through Jesu's power,
his name to glorify;
and promise, in this sacred hour,
for God to live and die.

The covenant we this moment make
be ever kept in mind:
we will no more our God forsake,
or cast his words behind.

We never will throw off his fear
who hears our solemn vow;
and if thou art well pleased to hear,
come down, and meet us now.

To each the covenant blood apply,
which takes our sins away;
and register our names on high,
and keep us to that day.

Charles Wesley

Revd Richard Teal:

Beloved in Christ, let us again claim for ourselves the covenant which God has made with his people, and take upon us the yoke of Christ.

This means that we are content that he appoint us our place and work, and that he himself be our reward.

Christ has many services to be done:
some are easy, others are difficult;
some bring honour, others bring reproach;
some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests, others are contrary to both;
in some we may please Christ and please ourselves;
in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ who strengthens us.

Therefore let us make this covenant of God our own.
Let us give ourselves to God, trusting in God's promises and relying on God's grace.

Lord God, holy Father, since you have called us through Christ to share in this gracious covenant, we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience and, for love of you, engage ourselves to seek and do your perfect will.

We are no longer our own but yours.

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.

Silence

Introduction to the Intercessions

Rachel Lampard MBE

Leader of the Joint Public Issues Team

Deacon Ali McMillan, Minister, MCHW:

As we have entered this covenant not for ourselves
alone,
but as God's servants and witnesses,
let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Loving God, hear us as we pray for your holy catholic
Church:

make us all one, that the world may believe.

Inspire and lead all who govern and hold authority in
the nations of the world:

establish justice and peace among all people.

Have compassion on all who suffer from any sickness,
grief or trouble:

deliver them from their distress

We praise you for all your saints who have entered
your eternal glory:

bring us all to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray in silence for our own needs and for those of others ...

Silence

THE PRAYER FOR PARLIAMENT

Rachel Lampard MBE:

Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our Queen and her government, to Members of Parliament and all in positions of responsibility, the guidance of your Spirit.

May they never lead the nation wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but laying aside all private interests and prejudices keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all humankind; so may your kingdom come and your name be hallowed. **Amen.**

Lord our God, you have helped us by your grace to make these prayers, and you have promised through Christ our Lord that when two or three agree in his name you will grant what they ask. Answer now your servants' prayers according to their needs; in this world grant that we may truly know you, and in the world to come graciously give us eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Using your own language or the version you prefer:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

THE PEACE

The Lord has made an everlasting covenant of peace
with his people. The peace of the Lord be always with
you.

And also with you.

VIDEO HYMN – O Thou Who Camest From Above

STF 564

O thou who camest from above
the pure celestial fire to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return,
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up thy gift in me —

Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat,
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley

Epistle Lesson: Romans 12:1-2

Read by Phoebe Parkin

Methodist Youth President

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Reflections/Testimony

Sir Gary, Streeter MP

Cat Smith MP

The Love Feast (Agape)

Led by Revd Tony Miles

VIDEO HYMN – Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

STF 503

Love Divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley

OFFERING FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO GIVE

To be taken during the concluding voluntary

www.give.net/mchw

Revd Tony Miles

THE BLESSING

Revd Richard Teal,

President of the Methodist Conference

ORGAN VOLUNTARY:

Bach 'St. Anne' Fugue in Eb

Organist - Gerard Brooks

The Origins of the Methodist Covenant Service

From the earliest days of the Methodist societies, John Wesley invited the Methodist people to renew their covenant relationship with God. Wesley drew much of his material for the service from seventeenth-century Puritans and subsequently made changes to it. The text has been further revised in the years since. The present service moves from praise of the Trinity to listening to the word in scripture, read and preached, and then follows a penitential approach to the words of the Covenant.

The emphasis of the whole service is on God's readiness to enfold us in generous love, not dependent on our deserving. Our response, also in love, springs with penitent joy from thankful recognition of God's grace. The covenant is not just a one-to-one transaction between individuals and God, but the act of the whole faith community. The prayers of intercession which follow emphasise our unity with all humanity. The service is meant to lead us to that commitment which all worship seeks both to inspire and strengthen.

Methodists throughout the world hold a Covenant Service such as this one at the start of each year. Such a service has taken place in the Palace of Westminster since 1995. We hope to return to the St. Mary Undercroft Chapel next year.

The **Flowers** have been donated by **Judith Mitchell**.

"Celebrating the marriage of David and Judith Mitchell at the Grove Methodist Church, Horsforth, on 30th January 1971."

If you would like to make your offering – please go to www.give.net/mchw

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The **Methodist** Church 

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CHURCH 

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