

**Letchworth Methodist Church
Annual Covenant Service January 10th 2021**

Welcome

Call to Worship

1 Hymn **20 Be still for the presence of the Lord**

Bible reading Jeremiah 31 v 31 - 34

A New Covenant

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.

Prayers

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.**

Covenant acrostics

2. Hymn **513 Take this moment time and space**

Covenant roots and Challenges

Law

Grace

Personal

Corporate

3. Hymn **495 Dear Lord and Father of Mankind**

The Covenant

God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation, chosen to bear witness to his 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.

Prayers of Confession

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.

The presiding minister says:

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.

4. Hymn **549** **Come let us use the Grace Divine**

Affirmation of the Covenant

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
let us again accept our place within this covenant
which God has made with us and with all who are called to
be Christ's disciples.

This means that, by the help of the Holy Spirit,
we accept God's purpose for us,
and the call to love and serve God
in all our life and work.

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 him,
trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.

Eternal God,
in your faithful and enduring love
you call us to share in your gracious covenant in Jesus Christ.
In obedience we hear and accept your commands;
in love we seek to do your perfect will;
with joy we offer ourselves anew to you.

We are no longer our own but yours.

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 am disregarded;

when I find fulfilment

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,

as and where you choose.

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.

Prayers of Intercession

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

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.**

Lord's Prayer

5. Hymn **544 As the deer pants for the water**

Love Feast

Holy God, we thank you that wherever we are you are with us. We praise you that in Christ we have new life. Unite us as we share together through your Holy Spirit that we may each know your blessing. Amen.

Matthew 22:34-40

The Greatest Commandment

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, ' "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

We share together as we eat our bread.

We share together as we drink.

We thank you that we have affirmed our covenant with you, we thank you Lord that we know ourselves to be your people and called by you to be your saints on earth. AMEN

6. Hymn **470 Lord for the years**

Blessing