

White Stone United Methodist Church

Epiphany Sunday

January 2, 2022, 11:00 a.m.

Let us enter the Sanctuary in prayerful meditation.

John Wesley's Covenant Service

Welcome

Greeting:

L – Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

C – From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

L – The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

C – The Risen Christ is with us.

All: Praise the Lord

Hymn

"Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine"

UMH #606

Psalter

Psalms 51

UMH #785

Opening Prayer:

ALL: O God, searcher of all our hearts, you have formed us as a people and claimed us for your own. As we come to acknowledge your sovereignty and grace and to enter anew into covenant with you, reveal any reluctance or falsehood within us. Let your Spirit impress your truth on our innermost being and receive us in mercy, for the sake of our Mediator, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen

Litany of Thanksgiving

L. Let us give thanks for all of God's mercies.

L. 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.

C. We Praise your Holy Name O God

L. 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.

C. We Praise your Holy Name O God

L. 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.

C. We Praise your Holy Name O God

L. You have been our light in the 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.

C. We Praise your Holy Name O God

L. 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 of your patience and overflowing grace.

C. We Praise your Holy Name O God

Prayer for Illumination:

ALL: Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the scriptures are read, and your Word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen

Scripture **2 Kings 23: 1 -3**

Proclamation

L: Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Christian life is redeemed from sin and consecrated to God. Through baptism, we have entered this life and have been admitted into the new covenant of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator. He sealed it with his own blood that it might last forever. On the one side, God promises to give us new life in Christ, the Source and Protector of our faith. On the other side, we are pledged to live no more for ourselves but only for Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us. From time to time, we renew our covenant with God, especially when we reaffirm our Baptismal Covenant and gather at the Lord's Table. Today, however, we meet, as the generations before us have met, to renew the covenant that binds us to God. Let us make this covenant our own.

Hymn **"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"**

UMH #117

Scripture **Jerimiah 31: 31 – 34**

Invitation

L: Commit yourselves to Christ as his servants. Give yourselves to him, that you may belong to him. Christ has many services to be done. Some are easy and honorable; others are more difficult and disgraceful. Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests, and others are contrary to both. In some, we may please both Christ and ourselves. But then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. It is necessary, therefore, that we consider what it means to be a servant of Christ. Let us, therefore, go to Christ and pray:

C: Let me be your servant, under your command. I will no longer be my own. I will give up myself to your will in all things.

L: Be satisfied that Christ shall give you your place and work.

C: Lord, make me what you will. I put myself fully into your hands: put me to doing, put me to suffering, let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you, let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and with a willing heart give it all to your pleasure and disposal.

Hymn **"I Am Thine, O Lord"**

UMH #419 vss. 1, 2

Scripture **Matthew 25: 31-46**

Leader:

Christ will be the savior of none but his servants. He is the source of all salvation to those who obey. Christ will have no servants except by consent; Christ will not accept anything except full consent to all that he requires. Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing.

Confirm this by a holy covenant

To make this covenant a reality in your life, listen to these admonitions:

First, set apart some time, more than once, to be spent alone before the Lord;
in seeking earnestly God's special assistance and gracious acceptance of you;
in carefully thinking through all the conditions of the covenant;

in searching your hearts, whether you have already freely given your life to Christ, consider what your sins are.

Consider the laws of Christ, how holy, how strict, and spiritual they are, and whether you, after having carefully considered them, are willing to choose them all. Be sure that you are clear in these matters, see that you do not lie to God.

Second, be serious and in a spirit of holy awe and reverence.

Third, claim God's covenant, rely upon God's promise of giving grace and strength so that you can keep your promise. Trust not your own strength and power.

Fourth, resolve to be faithful. You have given to the Lord your hearts, you have opened your mouth to the Lord, and you have dedicated yourself to God. With God's power, never go back.

And last, be prepared to renew your covenant with the Lord. Fall down on your knees, lift your hands toward heaven, open your hearts toward the Lord, as we pray:

Covenant Prayer:

ALL: O righteous God, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, see me as I fall before you. Forgive my unfaithfulness in not having done your will, for you have promised mercy to me if I turn to you with my whole heart. Amen.

Hymn

O Jesus, I Have Promised"

UMH #396 vss. 1, 4

L: God requires that you shall put away all your idols.

All: I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all, covenanting with you that no known sin shall be allowed in my life. Against your will, I have turned my love toward the world. In your power, I will watch all temptations that will lead me away from you. For my own righteousness is riddled with sin, unable to stand before you. Amen.

L: Through Christ, God has offered to be your God again if you would let him.

C: Before all heaven and earth, I here acknowledge you as my Lord and God. I take you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my portion, and give up myself, body and soul, as your servant, to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. Amen.

L: God has given the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way and means of coming to God.

All: Jesus, I do here on bended knee accept Christ as the only new and living way, and sincerely join myself in a covenant with him. O blessed Jesus, I come to you, hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked, unworthy even to wash the feet of your servants. I do here, with all my power, accept you as my Lord and Head. I renounce my own worthiness and vow that you are Lord, my righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom and take you for my only guide. I renounce my own will and take you as my law. Amen.

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

All: I do here covenant with you O Christ, to take my lot with you as it may fall. Through your grace, I promise that neither life nor death shall part me from you. Amen.

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

All: I do here willingly put my neck under your yoke to carry your burdens. All your laws are holy, just, and good. I, therefore, take them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions, promising that I will strive to order my whole life according to your direction and not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.

O God, you know that I make this covenant with you today without guile or reservation. If any falsehood should be in it, guide me and help me to set it aright.

And now, Glory be to you, God the Father, whom I, from this day forward, shall look upon as my God and Father. Glory be to you, God the Son, who have loved me and washed me from my sins in your own blood; Glory be to you, O God, the Holy Spirit, you have now become my Covenant Friend. And I, through your infinite grace, have become your covenant servant. So be it. And let the covenant I have made on earth be ratified in heaven. Amen

Scripture John 15: 1- 8

Offering Prayer

***Doxology**

Holy Communion

UMH #14

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

***Hymn "Take Up Thy Cross"**

UMH #415

Dismissal with Blessing

*We Depart to Love and
Serve Others*

*** Indicates when the congregation should stand.
Please stand as you are able.**

***Large Print Hymnals are available by
request.***