

Charter Members COVENANT SERVICE

WELLSPRING CHURCH

April 28, 2024

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we ask that You make Your presence known to us now in a special way as you preside over this covenant service. You made covenants with Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, the Israelites, David, Jesus, and the apostles. You are a covenant-making God. You are loyal, steadfast in your love, and fulfill all your promises. Your word is true.

Following the tradition set forth in the Holy Scriptures, we—Wellspring Church—now wish to publicly enact and confess our covenant with You—and with one another—as we join together in union with Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Be with us now we pray. Amen.

DECLARATION OF MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Leader: Wellspring Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. In the church, Jesus Christ is proclaimed and professed as Lord and Savior. All who proclaim and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are eligible to receive sacraments, and—upon taking the vows of membership—become members of the church.

The membership of Wellspring Church shall include all people who have been baptized and all people who have professed their faith.

DECLARATION: THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

Leader: Reading from *The Faith Once Delivered: A Wesleyan Witness to Christian Orthodoxy*.

CHARTER MEMBERS

Leader: Please stand and remain standing when your name is read.

CONFESSION OF THE APOSTLES' CREED

Leader: As you stand, I invite you to confess your faith as contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments represented in the Apostles Creed:

Leader: Do you believe in God the Father?

People: **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

People: **I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was**

crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

People: **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

MEMBERSHIP VOWS

Leader: Faithful membership in the local church is essential for personal growth and for developing a deeper commitment to the will and grace of God. As members involve themselves in private and public prayer, worship, the sacraments, study, Christian action, regular giving, and holy discipline, we grow in our appreciation of Christ, understanding of God at work in history and the natural order, and an understanding of ourselves. Faithful discipleship includes the obligation to participate in the corporate life of the congregation with fellow members of the body of Christ. A member is bound in sacred covenant to shoulder the burdens, share the risks, and celebrate the joys of fellow members. A Christian is called to speak the truth in love, always ready to confront conflict in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of your life as a faithful member of Christ's holy church?

People: **I do.**

Leader: Will you be loyal to Christ through Wellspring Church and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness as Christ's representative in this world?

People: **I will.**

Leader: Let us pray

PRAYER

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

People: **You are the one true God who reigns forever.**

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

People: **Our Father in Our Father 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, the power, and the glory forever.
Amen**

THE PROCLAMATION

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 Perfector 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

Leader: We are those who seek to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ, but sometimes we fall short. Let us now examine ourselves before God, humbly confessing our sins and submitting our hearts so that we do not deceive ourselves and cut ourselves away from God. Let us pray:

People: **Father God, You have set forth the way of life through Your Son Jesus Christ, whom You love dearly. We shamefully confess that we have been slow to learn of Him and have been reluctant to follow Him. You have spoken and called to us but we have not listened. You have revealed Your beauty to us, but we have been blind. You have stretched out Your hands to us through our friends, but we have passed by them. We have accepted Your gifts and offered little thanks. We are unworthy of Your unchanging love.**

Leader: We now confess to you our sins.
Please forgive us for the poverty of our worship...
for the selfishness of our prayers...
for our inconsistency and unbelief...
for the ways we neglect fellowship and Your grace...
for our hesitation to tell others about Christ...
for the ways we deceive others...

People: **Forgive us for when we waste time and when we misuse the gifts you have given us. Forgive us for when we have made excuses for the wrong things we have done and when we have purposefully avoided responsibility.**

Leader: Forgive us that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good and that we have not been ready to carry our cross. Forgive us that we have not allowed Your love to work through us to help others and that we have not made their suffering our own. Forgive us for those times when instead of working for unity we made it hard for others to live with us because of our lack of forgiveness, inconsiderate judgment, and quick criticism.

People: **Forgive us for when we have not tried to reconcile with others and when we have been slow to seek redemption.**

Leader: Forgive us also for these sins that we silently confess to you now.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND PARDON

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.

INVITATION

Leader: 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.**

Leader: 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.**

Leader: 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.

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

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!

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

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.

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.

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

THE COVENANT PRAYER

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.**

BENEDICTION

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.**