

Worship at Home - Sunday 2 January 2022 (Covenant Sunday)

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Call to Worship

I will walk among you, and will be your
God, and you shall be my people.

(Leviticus 26:12)

Hymn StF 127

Read the words or sing to the organ:

[youtube.com/watch?v=mN8_Bqj78w0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mN8_Bqj78w0)

Sing to the great Jehovah's praise;
all praise to Him belongs;
who kindly lengthens out our days
demands our choicest songs.

His providence has brought us
through
another various year;
we all with vows and anthems new
before our God appear.

Father, thy mercies past we own,
thy still continued care;
to Thee presenting, through thy Son,
whate'er we have or are.

Our lips and lives shall gladly show
the wonders of thy love,

While on in Jesus' steps we go
to see thy face above.

Our residue of days or hours
thine, wholly thine, shall be
and all our consecrated powers
a sacrifice to thee.

Charles Wesley (1707-88)

Prayer

Father, we declare our love for you as
we mark another year completed,
another year of discovering your love
and wisdom in all that you have
created,
another year closer to the time we
shall be fully like Jesus when we see
him as he is,
another year lived in the assurance of
forgiveness and hope that your
Spirit gives us even when we have
failed.

Thank you that today we may renew
our life as disciples of Christ, people of
your covenant, accepting once again

the call to love and serve you to the full. **Amen.**

Today's Gospel Reading: John 1:10-18

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."') From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Time to Reflect

When this passage is introduced as the final reading in a festival of lessons and carols its content, particularly

verse 14, is described as "the great mystery of the incarnation", namely that the child born to Mary is none other than the God who created the world.

But I'm struck by another mystery stated in verses 10-11, that neither the world nor even the particular people whom God had long prepared for the event recognised him when he came. For it is our ongoing experience that despite centuries of Christian influence for the great good of our quality of life the vast majority of the people around us do not accept the claim that God in Christ makes upon their lives.

Covenant Sunday emphasises the great gulf between those of us who see a new year as an ideal time to confess our failures to fully live out that claim upon us and to pledge ourselves afresh to the covenant, and all the others who pack away Jesus with the Christmas decorations until next December.

The reason many reject Jesus is because God as a human being looks so different from the god people wrongly expect him to be.

Think for a while about the expectations of Jesus's Jewish contemporaries, and about how people today imagine God to be and to act. How do these ideas differ from the truth about God?

Wrong expectation is not something we are immune from when once we have recognised God in Jesus. He himself reminded us, in his picture of the sheep and the goats, that he comes to us in the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick and the prisoner. There will be many who say to him at the judgement, 'Lord when did we see you in need and do nothing for you?' You know his reply.

May we not once in this new year fail to recognise him because we are looking in the wrong places.

A time of prayer

When you feel ready speak aloud the covenant prayer:

**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**

Continue praying silently or in whatever words come for:

- the church worldwide and locally
- the world's peoples and leaders
- those who are sick, sad or in need
- those you know who do not recognise Jesus as their Saviour and Lord

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father...

Hymn StF 555

*Listen or join in at
[youtube.com/watch?v=kr_aU9prkcE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr_aU9prkcE)*

Jesus, all for Jesus;
all I am and have and ever hope to be.
Jesus, all for Jesus
all I am and have and ever hope to be.

All of my ambitions, hopes and plans,
I surrender these into Your hands.
All of my ambitions, hopes and plans,
I surrender these into Your hands.

For it's only in Your will that I am free,
For it's only in Your will that I am free.

Jennifer Atkinson and Robin Mark

A prayer of blessing

May the covenant love of God be our daily strength, the saving grace of our brother Jesus inspire our own loving actions, and the life-giving Spirit empower us to achieve far beyond our expectations as we embrace the opportunities of this new year. **Amen.**

Original Materials by Stephen
Mosedale

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We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team.

For more worship resources see
[The Bible \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)
[Singing the Faith Plus](http://methodist.org.uk)
 [\(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)