



First United Methodist Church
Sunday, January 1, 2023
A Covenant Service to Begin a New Year

*Children will remain in worship today. There are activity bags at the entrance to the Sanctuary.
Sunday School resumes next week.*

Prelude Variations on the hymn tune *Slane*
Mary Anne Korsch, piano

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Jeanine Alexander

* Hymn *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing* UM Hymnal #240

Children's Message/Introduction to the Covenant Service Pastor Jeanine Alexander

Unison Opening Prayer

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 inmost 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.

* Hymn *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing* UM Hymnal #57; v. 1-3, 7

Praise

Scripture Reading Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands! Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into God's presence with singing. Know that the Lord, who made us, is God. We are the Lord's; we are the people of God, the sheep of God's pasture. Enter God's gates with thanksgiving and God's courts with praise! Give thanks and bless God's name. For the Lord is good; God's steadfast love endures forever; God's faithfulness to all generations.

Praise Meditation Pastor Jeanine Alexander

Written Reflection

Prayer of Praise

*Each time the pastor prays, ending with the phrase "And so...", the congregation responds,
"We praise your holy name, O God."*

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art 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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Offering of Praise and Weekly Offering

Our lists of blessings as well as the earnings from our labors are testimonies of our praise.

Music

MaryAnne Korsch

Confession

Scripture Reading

John 3:19-21

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his or her deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he or she has done has been done through God.

Confession Meditation

Pastor Jeanine Alexander

Written Reflection

Prayer of Confession

Creative God, you make all things new in heaven and on earth. We come to you in a new year with new desires and old fears, new decisions and old controversies, new dreams and old weaknesses. Because you are the God of faith, we confess to you our faltering and failings. Because you are the God of love, we know that you forgive all the mistakes of the past. Because you are the God of hope, we trust that the smoke of our past errors gives way to the light of our future. Amen.

Offering of Confession

As our sins, worries, regrets and failures are set down on paper and then burned with the flame of the Christ Candle, we symbolically put them behind us. It is an image of God's grace that offers new beginnings. Please be in prayer during this time of confession.

Music

Love Divine, All Love Excelling

Brandon Veale, soloist

Covenant

Scripture Reading

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – God's good, pleasing and perfect will.

Covenant Meditation

Pastor Jeanine Alexander

Written Reflection

Prayer of Covenant

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. Almighty God, the Lord Omnipotent, 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.

* Hymn *Jesus, United by Thy Grace*

UM Hymnal #561; v. 1-2, 5-6

Words of Blessing

Offering of Covenant Sealed with Holy Communion

Sealing your commitments with Communion testifies to a life in unbroken covenant with God. Keep this paper as a reminder of the holy agreement between you and God, that you may remember it during doubts and temptation.

Following Communion, please leave in silence so those wishing to remain to pray may do so.

Postlude

MaryAnne Korsch

** please stand as you are comfortable*



All of today's hymns were written by Charles Wesley. Born in 1707, Charles Wesley became famous for the hymns he wrote and the movement he helped found with his older brother, John, which grew to become The United Methodist Church. Charles did not compose music but wrote the words for 6,500 hymns during his lifetime. Our current United Methodist hymnal contains 51 of his hymns. In addition to the ones in today's service, some of his best-known hymns include *Christ the Lord is Risen Today* and *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*. Taking quantity and quality into consideration, Charles Wesley is often considered the greatest hymn writer of all time. His faith was communicated through the hymns he wrote and those hymns have inspired people for nearly 300 years. Early Methodists took their hymnals home during the week to use as daily devotions.

Information taken from *Charles Wesley's Gift of Music* (a United Methodist Communication video), Hymnary.org and *The United Methodist Hymnal*

Sermon Series, January 8 – February 5: Being Created Anew