

## 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

The second Sunday of Christmas.

### 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*

[https://www.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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Local churches please insert CCLI no. here.

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

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