

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 a God of hope, we know that you create all the possibilities of the future. Because you are a God of love, we know that you forgive all the mistakes of the past. Because you are a God of our faith, we enter your gates with thanksgiving and praise, we come into your presence with gladness and a joyful noise, as we serve and bless you. Amen.

COVENANT PRAYER

I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,

Exalted for thee or brought low for thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

Thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,

Let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

You are encouraged to make this covenant not only in your heart, but in word; not only in word, but in writing. Therefore, with all reverence, lay the service before the Lord as your act and deed. And when you have done this, sign it. Then keep it with you this year, perhaps in your Bible or somewhere you can revisit it often. Keep it as a reminder of the holy agreement between God and you that you may remember it during doubts and temptations.

Signature



INVITATION

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 more easy and honorable; others are more difficult and disgraceful. Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests; others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please 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.

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:

THE 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, strict, and spiritual they are, and whether you, after having carefully considered them, are willing to choose them all. Be sure 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 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 mouths to the Lord, and you have dedicated yourself to God. With God's power, never go back.

And last, be then prepared to renew your covenant with the Lord. Fall down on your knees, lift your hands toward heaven, open your hearts to the Lord. Let us therefore renounce our sin and profess our faith:

RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you: Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? **I do.**

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? **I do.**

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Jesus has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races? **I do.**

God requires that you shall put away all your idols.

I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all, covenanting with God that no known sin shall be allowed in my life. I will watch and guard against all temptations that will lead me away from God's will and way.

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

Jesus, I accept you as the only new and living Way. I come to you hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked. I do here, with all my power, accept you as my Lord. I renounce my own worthiness, 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.

COVENANT VOWS AND COMMITMENTS

As a baptized follower of Jesus and a member of this local church, we are called to “faithfully participate in the ministries of the church by our *prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.*” At Swansboro United Methodist Church, these vows have specific commitments we have made in our life together:

We commit to pray: striving to pray daily for the world, our community, the church, and our families. Public and private prayer is a critical part of daily discipleship and a means of grace.



We commit to be present: a) by faithful and regular attendance in worship, and, b) by regular participation in a small group and/or Sunday School class where we can develop spiritual friendships and mutual accountability for spiritual growth and learning.

We commit to give: cultivating a spirit of generosity in our lives together as we give of our time, talents, offerings, and energies, including a commitment to move toward the biblical tithe (or tenth) in our financial support of the church and its ministries.

We commit to serve: seeking to serve God and our neighbors both locally and around the world, especially the poor and the most vulnerable, following the example of servant leadership we have in Jesus.

We commit to witness: sharing our stories of hope, love, and faith through words and deeds that witness to the “hope that is within us.”