

## Wesleyan Tradition of Covenant Renewal\*—Sample Introduction

*NOTE: Please customize for your setting. The instructions in the last paragraph reference “Covenant Renewal Service liturgy and journal pages.pdf” and are based on worshipers having received that document and a pen as they entered the worship space.*

In 1663 Richard Alleine, a Puritan, published “A Vindication of Godliness in the Greater Strictness and Spirituality of I.” In 1753, it was again published in John Wesley's *A Christian Library*. Wesley used portions of that text in 1755, in what probably was the first Covenant Service in the Methodist movement.

Wesley found the service so rich and meaningful that he began leading it in various places. In London these services were usually held on New Year's Day. Around the country the Covenant Service was conducted whenever John Wesley visited the Methodist Societies. In 1765 he journaled about a covenant renewal service writing, “It was, as usual, a time of remarkable blessing.”

The heart of the service, focused in the Covenant Prayer, asks us to commit or re-commit ourselves to God. Today, **in the last hours/days of this year (first hours/days of the new year)**, we will practice this tradition together **(again)**.

Please take the booklet you received as you entered today. If you need a booklet or a pen, **[insert instructions]**. We will begin by following the liturgy printed in those booklets. I'll read the plain text, and I invite you to read the bold text aloud in unison. When we complete the liturgy and the covenant prayer, there will be time for reflection. As the music plays, please personalize the covenant you make with God, writing it down and even signing it to signify the depth of your commitment.

Let us begin our time of covenant renewal.

\*Edited and adapted from info in *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, available here: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/covenant-renewal-service>.