

**Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit**  
**Sunday Worship Sheet – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

Our Worship was written by Ellie Jones, a Local Preacher and member at St. John's, Bangor. You may wish to have your Bible to hand. Please note the hymns are now at the back of the sheet for ease of printing. CCLI licence 556292

**Call to worship**

Holy Lord, help us to a new understanding of your word, as we open our hearts to you in our praise and worship, on this the first service of the New Year. **Amen.** Today we will be using some of the words of the annual **Covenant service** to rededicate ourselves to God.

**1<sup>st</sup> Hymn** 175 Singing the Faith "Light of the world,"

**Prayer of adoration**

Glory be to God who made and supports us and loves us with an everlasting love. **Blessèd be God for ever.** Glory to Jesus Christ our Saviour, who, though he was rich, became poor for our sake to save us from ourselves, brought us the good news of the kingdom, and was obedient even to the point of death on the cross, was raised from the dead and is alive for ever, and has opened the kingdom of heaven to all who trust in him. **Blessèd be God for ever.** Glory to the Holy Spirit, by whom we are born into the family of God, and made members of the body of Christ, who will do for us more than we can ask or think. **Blessèd be God for ever.** To the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be praise and glory for ever. God of grace, help us to renew our promise to join ourselves in a holy covenant with you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Reading 1:-** Jeremiah 31:31-34

**Prayer of confession**

God of mercy, when are slow to learn from Christ, reluctant to follow him, and afraid to bear the cross. **Lord, have mercy, Lord, forgive.** God of love, when our prayers are self-centred and we neglect to keep in touch with others, Lord, have mercy, Lord, forgive. When we are slow to witness to our faith, when we evade our responsibility to be good stewards of your creation, when we are tolerant of injustice, and selfish in sharing your love with others: **Lord, have mercy, Lord, forgive.** O God, in your constant love, create in us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us. **God is faithful and just, and says to all who truly repent, "Your sins are forgiven."** Amen.

**The covenant promise**

God has made a special covenant or agreement with all who are called to be Christ's disciples. God will always be there for us if we accept his call to love and serve him, with the help of the Holy Spirit. God calls us to work for him in all sorts of ways, some easy, some difficult, but whatever they are, Christ will strengthen and empower us to see them through. So we will read aloud the words of the Covenant Promise and make them our own.

Eternal God, in your faithful and enduring love you call us to share in your gracious covenant in Jesus Christ. In obedience we hear and accept your commands; in love we seek to do your perfect will; with joy we offer ourselves anew to you. We are no longer our own but yours.

### **Covenant promise**

**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**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Hymn 224 Singing the Faith "As with gladness men of old"**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:- John 1:(1-9) 10-18**

### **Reflection – Back to basics at the start of a New Year**

We may be new to the Christian faith or we may have been attending church regularly and studying the Bible and trying to live a Christian life for many many years. Whichever, it never hurts to get back to basics and examine again what brought us first to God. Perhaps we are cradle Christians, following our parents' guidance. Perhaps we have just heard God's call on our lives for the first time and are working out for ourselves what being a disciple of Jesus Christ means and how we should live as such.

So as we start this new year, we are asked to read the famous first verses of St John, which announce the arrival of one long promised who would restore the people, and sets this arrival in a context vast beyond our imagining, describing the Word who was there "from the beginning" as instrumental in the creation of all things and entirely one with the creator God. Not only had the promised saviour arrived but he was as significant and important in human history as any prophesy had ever suggested, and even more so!

John's words strongly suggest that this being which he describes as the Word was coming into the world to bear witness to the light, the light of the knowledge of God, not just for the people of Israel but for all humanity, not just for then but for all people everywhere, throughout time.

What an enormous stage to be set upon.....from the beginning of time at the creation of all things. What a beautiful image to use to try to explain what Christ had come do when he came to live as one of us. He came to show us the light, as if people were all living in the dark until he let them see, like shining a laser light into a pitch-black night sky, or like watching the dawn unfold on a cloudless morning and surge across a dark sky, or lighting a candle in a power cut.

The Word would enlighten us about God's endless compassion and concern for us, summed up in the idea of grace, the purely unbidden generosity and mercy of his love for us, with which he calls us back time and again, whenever we stray from him, and the just and caring and self-effacing way of life he wishes for us.

John the writer of the Gospel and John the Baptist both knew this way of life was something most would strive for and rarely achieve. We are still struggling today but the great news is, the most wonderful news is, that God loves us in our struggling and forgives us again and again and will always forgive us. Even if we die and we are not that much further forward in our faith lives, but have tried our best, God will still smile a welcome and give each of us a big warm hug when we get to wherever death takes us!

Today we have just committed ourselves to the Christian way of life for another year by praying the covenant promise. God keeps his promises so we will try to keep ours as best we can and step into the new year knowing Christ taught us how to live so that his peace and joy might be ours, and died that we might live forever. May God bless us all in our daily efforts to share this good news.

Why not light a candle now, if it is safe to do so, and let its light shine out as our Covenant Promise will, into our homes and into our daily lives. Why not give a little candle to a friend and neighbour and tell them why you have lit yours, as a sign of a renewed commitment to our very loving God. Tell them a bit about the meaning of the special birth we have just celebrated and suggest they light their candle too, as a sign of God's light shining into their lives also?  
Amen

### **Prayers for ourselves and others**

Today we have renewed this covenant with God, not just for ourselves, but because we are God's servants and witnesses. As we pray this promise we are all one in each other. So let us pray for the Church that it may all be one that the world may believe. Let us pray for the peace of the world and an end to conflict in all its war-torn regions. and for the establishment of justice and peace among all people, especially in Syria, Israel/Palestine, and the rest of the Middle East, Russia/Ukraine and Africa. Have compassion on all who suffer from any sickness, grief or trouble, and deliver them from their distress. We pray for all your saints who have gone before us into your eternal glory, and ask that you bring us all to share in your heavenly kingdom. Lastly we pray for our own needs and for those of others we know who are in need of God's love and compassion. We ask these things in the name of God the Creator, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen

**3<sup>rd</sup> Hymn** 238 Singing the Faith "Lead us, heavenly Father lead us"

### **Closing Prayer**

Lord Jesus, we commit ourselves to you once again. Help us to walk in your name, to be your light in the world and to share your love with those we meet. Amen. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and evermore. Amen.

### Hymn 175

1 Light of the world,  
you stepped down into darkness,  
opened my eyes, let me see  
beauty that made this heart adore you,  
hope of a life spent with you.

*So here I am to worship,  
here I am to bow down,  
here I am to say that you're my God,  
and you're altogether lovely,  
altogether worthy,  
altogether wonderful to me.*

2 King of all days  
oh so highly exalted,  
glorious in heaven above.  
Humbly you came  
to the earth you created,  
all for love's sake became poor.

*So here I am to worship ...*  
And I'll never know how much it cost  
to see my sin upon that cross.  
And I'll never know how much it cost  
to see my sin upon that cross.  
*So here I am to worship ...*

Tim Hughes

### Hymn 224

1 As with gladness men of old  
did the guiding star behold,  
as with joy they hailed its light,  
leading onward, beaming bright,  
so, most gracious Lord, may we  
evermore be led to thee.

2 As with joyful steps they sped,  
Saviour, to thy lowly bed,  
there to bend the knee before  
thee, whom heaven and earth adore,  
so may we with willing feet  
ever seek thy mercy-seat.

3 As they offered gifts most rare  
at thy cradle rude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy,  
pure, and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

4 Holy Jesus, every day  
keep us in the narrow way ;  
and, when earthly things are past,  
bring our ransomed souls at last  
where they need no star to guide,  
where no clouds thy glory hide.

5 In the heavenly country bright  
need they no created light ;  
thou its light, its joy, its crown,  
thou its sun which goes not down ;  
there for ever may we sing  
alleluias to our King.

William Chatterton Dix (1837–1898)

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### Hymn 238

1 Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
o'er the world's tempestuous sea ;  
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,  
for we have no help but thee,  
yet possessing every blessing  
if our God our Father be.

2 Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us ;  
all our weakness thou dost know,  
thou didst tread this earth before us,  
thou didst feel its keenest woe ;  
tempted, taunted, yet undaunted,  
through the desert thou didst go.

3 Spirit of our God, descending,  
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,  
love with every passion blending,  
pleasure that can never cloy ;  
thus provided, pardoned, guided,  
nothing can our peace destroy.

James Edmeston (1791–1867)

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