



**WESLEY COVENANT PRAYER:  
REMEMBER YOUR BAPTISM**

## **Discussion Guide**

**Date: 1/4/2026**

**Sermon Title: Wesley Covenant Prayer**

**Scripture: Matthew 4:13-17**

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

### **OPENING PRAYER**

*Gracious and faithful God, as we begin this new year, we come remembering that our lives belong to you. Open our hearts to your Word and our minds to your Spirit. Shine your light into every place of darkness within us and around us. As we reflect on your call and renew our covenant with you, shape us again as people of grace, mercy, and justice. Through Jesus Christ, the light of the world, we pray. Amen.*

### **Opening Question:**

1. Share a time when you were "on autopilot" while driving or doing a routine task. What snapped you back to attention? How did it feel to suddenly become aware again?

### **Covenant Renewal:**

As we begin a new year, we gather as people who remember who we are and whose we are. In Matthew 4, Jesus begins his public ministry by stepping into a place of darkness and declaring that God's kingdom has come near. In the Wesleyan tradition, the Covenant Renewal Service and Covenant Prayer offer us a faithful way to respond. A renewing our commitment to God and recommitting ourselves to live as Christ's representatives in a world longing for light, love, and justice.

### **Digging into the Word:**

Read Matthew 4:13-17, (NRSV). Invite the group to read the passage aloud slowly. Consider having two readers: One to read Matthew 4:13-17 and one to read Isaiah 9:1-2 (the prophecy being fulfilled)

1. Matthew tells us that Jesus intentionally begins his ministry in Galilee of the Gentiles, a place often overlooked, politically unstable, and spiritually marginalized. What stands out to you about *where* Jesus chooses to begin his ministry?
2. Where do you see "darkness" in our world today that longs for Christ's light? How might Jesus still be choosing to show up in unexpected or overlooked places?
3. Matthew 4:17 Jesus' first public words echo John the Baptist but now carry embodied authority. Repentance in Scripture is not merely about guilt; it is about turning toward God and aligning our lives with God's reign. How do you understand repentance as a gift rather than a burden?
4. How does repentance connect with hope and new beginnings?

### **Wesleyan Insight:**

John Wesley understood repentance as part of the ongoing journey of grace and not just a one-time act, but a continual turning toward God in love and obedience.

“Repentance is a change of heart and life from all sin to all holiness. — John Wesley

5. Is this consistent with your learning of repentance? If not, how has it changed?

### **Covenant Renewal Service:**

This service and prayer reminds us that our faith is not only personal but communal. We renew our promise to live as God's people together. In the prayer John Wesley wrote, “I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt...” This prayer calls us to surrender, trust, and faithful obedience and rounded in God's grace, not our own striving. ([Find the full prayer here](#))

6. What emotions or thoughts arise when you hear Wesley's Covenant Prayer?
7. Which line of the covenant prayer feels most challenging or meaningful right now?
8. How does covenant renewal help shape our identity as Christ's representatives in the world?

### **Other scriptures to consider:**

Luke 4:18–19; Romans 12:1–2; Galatians 2:20;

### **Sermon Questions:**

1. Pastor Julia talks about being on “autopilot” and not really thinking while going about life. Beyond driving, where else in your life do you find yourself on "autopilot"? What routines have become so familiar that you're numb to them?
2. The people in Jesus's time experienced centuries of oppression with seemingly no change. How do you maintain hope when circumstances appear unchanging despite persistent prayer?
3. Julia describes repentance as "turning off autopilot" and becoming more aware. How is this different from how you've understood repentance before? What makes this definition challenging or encouraging?
4. The sermon mentions how we often feel like "nothing ever changes"—same job, same house, same struggles. Where in your life do you feel stuck in "same old, same old"? How might God be inviting you to see that situation differently?
5. How is the practice of Holy Communion or remembering your baptism help you in a new year to be more aware of the divine in your everyday life?

### **Applying it:**

1. The Wesley Covenant Prayer involves giving up "status, social standing, principles, and material wealth" to God. Which of these is the hardest for you to release? What would it look like practically surrender?
2. Jesus does not only announce the kingdom; he forms a people who will live it out. As Methodists, covenant renewal sends us back into the world shaped by grace. How does renewing our covenant shape the way we live in our homes, workplaces, and communities?



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3. What would it look like for you to live this year with 'both hands on the wheel,' fully aware and awake to Christ's presence in each moment?

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Faithful God, You have called us out of darkness into your marvelous light. As we renew our covenant with you, give us courage to follow where Christ leads. Shape our lives with your grace, strengthen us for acts of love and justice, and send us into the world as signs of your kingdom. We offer ourselves again and trust not in our strength, but in your faithfulness. Amen.*

### WAYS TO RESPOND

Choose one or more of the following practices this week.

1. Prayer the Wesley's Covenant Prayer once each day this week.
2. What specific practice could help you become more aware of God's presence this week? Consider:
  - Praying during your commute
  - Pausing before meals to truly give thanks
  - Seeing household chores as service to God
  - Setting reminders to check in with God throughout the day
3. Reflect on one specific way you will live as Christ's light in the coming year.
4. Consider journaling or sharing with a trusted friend what God is stirring in you.