

The courage to pray

John Wesley is thought to have been adapting another prayer when he brought the Covenant Prayer (*Methodist Worship Book* p290) into being. It is regarded as a jewel of Methodism and one of its most distinctive gifts to the wider Church. Wesley hoped that people would use the prayer at the outset of each calendar year and many churches across the denominations do this as part of a Covenant Service, in which those present commit their lives afresh to God as the new year begins. It is a famously demanding – even difficult - prayer to pray.

In recent years, the material has been adapted again by Traidcraft for its *Fair Trade Covenant Service* and now, in this early stage of the first year of our new Diocesan Vision, we are adapting it again, retaining the spirit of Wesley's prayer and many of his phrases and cadences while re-working the content for a very specific context here in Norfolk and Waveney.

As we envision our first year of being *Transformed by Christ*, the newly-adapted Covenant prayer helps us in the Diocese of Norwich to focus our commitment on deepening our life of prayer. You may like to build a whole service around it and use it at some stage during the first few weeks of January or whenever is good for you. In the same service, you may also like to use the new hymn (*'Transform, O Christ, your people, assembled in this place'*) which has been specially written for our year of living more prayerfully.

I am no longer my own but yours.

Put me to prayer.

Put me to deepening my life with you

by deepening my life of prayer.

Put me to the faithful setting aside of time;

put me to listening;

put me to wonder;

put me to holding a broken world in your love;

put me to trusting.

I willingly expect to be changed by prayer:

I freely and wholeheartedly yield to being transformed by Christ.

Let me be changed by you and so change the world for you.

Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours.

So be it.

And this covenant now made on earth,

let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen