Renewing Our Covenant as We Remember Jesus’ Baptism

*Allan Warren writes: In the tradition of John Wesley’s “Covenant Renewal Service” at the beginning of a new year, here is a renewal pledge as a follower of Jesus. It was used in our church on the First Sunday after Epiphany to correspond with the Baptism of Jesus in the lectionary readings. Its position in the service was in place of the “Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern,” in the Response to the Word section.*

###### A Renewing of Our Pledge to Be Followers of Jesus

Please turn in your bulletin to “A Renewal of Our Pledge to Be Followers of Jesus.” We do this to remind ourselves of Jesus’ baptism and our own. We also do it to remember John Wesley’s “Covenant Renewal Service” that he instituted at the beginning of each year to remind people of their ongoing commitment to be a follower of Jesus. I would ask you to stand, if you are able, and please remain standing after the renewal of our pledge for the closing hymn.

L. Following a star.

**A. Following God’s love.**

L. Following a call, a nudge, a quest,

**A. for our lives.**

L. Help us, O God, in the decisions we make every day,

**A. in the “pegs” or the values that we decide to hang our life on,**

 **that we will reflect your love and fairness in our lives and in our world.**

L. In the presence of the New Year,

**A. and in remembrance of Jesus’ baptism and our own,**

 **I pledge to follow the teaching of Jesus in my life;**

L. to wrestle with the meanings of the stories in the Bible,

**A. and try to live them out each day**

 **in my conversations with my family, the people I meet at work,**

 **the stranger ahead of me in the check-out line at the grocery story,**

 **and in the quiet conversations I have with myself each day.**

L. I realize that I cannot do this on my own,

**A. that I am dependent on God’s love and grace in my life,**

 **and it is only by ingesting God’s love for me**

 **that I am able to love the “other” whom I meet in my day-to-day life.**

L. Help me also to learn

**A. what it means to be a prophet,**

L. God’s voice for right relations,

**A. among all those that I share this world with:**

L. the birds of the air, the fish of the seas,

**A. the green grass, the animals, and the soil from which all life came,**

L. and all the peoples of the earth,

**A. those close to me at home,**

L. and those faraway.

**A. Amen.**

***Allan Warren,*** *then at St. George U.C., St. George, Ont.*

*First published in* ***Gathering Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2005–2006****. Reproduced here with permission of the author. Please credit the author.*

A New Creed Hymn Festival for Epiphany

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Hymn:** “Born in Song” CHATSWORTH (*Voices United* 536)

**Prayer:** “A Prayer at the Opening of Worship” (*Voices United* 404)

**Affirmation of Faith – A New Creed** (*Voices United* p. 918)

We are not alone,

We live in God’s world

**Narration:** Malachi 2:10, Ephesians 2:10, Psalm 104:24

**Hymn:** “We are One” WE ARE ONE (*Voices United* 402)

**Affirmation of Faith – A New Creed** (*Voices United* p. 918)

We believe in God: who has created and is creating

**Narration:** Psalm 103:19–22

**Hymn:** “All Things Bright and Beautiful” ROYAL OAK (*Voices United* 291)

**Affirmation of Faith – A New Creed**

who has come in Jesus, the word made flesh,

**Narration:** John 1:1–5

**Hymn:** “Joy to the World” ANTIOCH (*Voices United* 59)

**Affirmation of Faith – A New Creed**

to reconcile and make new,

who works in us and others by the Spirit.

**Narration:** Acts 2:1–4

**Hymn:** “O Holy Spirit, by Whose Breath” VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS (*Voices United* 200)

**Affirmation of Faith** – **A New Creed**

We trust in God.

**Narration:** Matthew 28:5*b*–7

**Hymn:** “If you will Trust in God to Guide You” NEUMARK (*Voices United* 286)

**Affirmation of Faith – A New Creed**

We are called to be the church:

to celebrate God’s presence,

to live with respect in Creation,

**Narration:** Matthew 28:18-20

**Hymn:** “Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples” NOEL (*Voices United* 507)

**Affirmation of Faith – A New Creed**

to love and serve others

to seek justice and resist evil

**Narration:** John 3:14–17, John 15:12–13

**Hymn:** “What Does the Lord Require of You?” MOON (*Voices United* 701)

**Affirmation of Faith – A New Creed**

to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

our judge and our hope.

**Narration:** Luke 24:44–53

**Hymn:** “This Joyful Eastertide” VRUECHTEN (**Voices United** 177)

**Affirmation of Faith – A New Creed**

In life, in death, in life beyond death

God is with us.

**Narration:** John 14:1–7

**Hymn:** “Those Hearts that We have Treasured” RESIGNATION (*Voices United* 494)

**Affirmation of Faith – A New Creed**

**Narration:** Revelation 7:9–10, 13–17

**Prayer**

**Hymn:** “Lord, You Give the Great Commission” ABBOT’S LEIGH (*Voices United* 512)

**Retiring Offering**

***Sharon L. Beckstead,*** *then at Leaside U.C., Toronto, and President of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada.*

***Douglas Schalin,*** *then at Trinity United Church, Peterborough, Ontario.*

*First published in* ***Gathering Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2001–2002****. Reproduced here with permission of the authors. Please credit the authors.*