

## Resolution and Renewal

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I don't know why, but I have never liked New Year's resolutions. It's not because there aren't a multitude of things I could resolve to do better. Perhaps it's because I know that my chances of success are rather slim, or maybe it's because so many New Year's resolutions are rather shallow self-improvement aids. Not that I couldn't use a healthy dose of improvement.

But I do enjoy the tradition in our local congregation of starting the New Year with a Wesleyan Covenant Renewal service on the first Sunday in January. It's something we do together, recognizing that we need each other, and that we need God's guiding presence if we hope to achieve the commitment we make together. It's something we do every year, recognizing our human condition and the tendency we have to forget.

We pray this prayer together:

*I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.  
Let me be full. Let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things  
to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen*

This year I am especially struck by the words, "*I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.*" That's a stewardship commitment if I have ever heard one. Another way to put it is to paraphrase the words of the marriage liturgy, "With all that I am and with all that I have, I honor God."

What would it mean for the mission and ministry of our church if we all heeded the words of John Wesley's prayer? Imagine the ways we could be in ministry in our local congregations and through our connection. God is calling us to give, to give of ourselves and of the resources God has temporarily entrusted to each of us.

This is the time of year when many of our churches are evaluating the results of stewardship programs. Many are asking whether the financial commitments of members and friends will be sufficient to fund ministry in the coming year. Hard decisions await.

If you have made a commitment to your church we thank you. If you haven't yet made your commitment, take a minute and pray Mr. Wesley's prayer. "*Thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.*"

May all that we resolve and renew, and everything we do, help bring God's peace, justice and saving grace to a world in need.

As the stewardship voice of the Florida Conference, the Foundation is ready to help you, your family and your church with anything related to stewardship. Please call, click or write us at 1-800-282-8011, extension 106; [www.fumf.org](http://www.fumf.org); or PO Box 3767, Lakeland, FL 33802.