

## **Meditation for the New Year**

"New Year's Day. A fresh start. A new chapter in life waiting to be written. New questions to be asked, embraced, and loved. Answers to be discovered and then lived in this transformative year of delight and self-discovery. Today carve out a quiet interlude for yourself in which to dream, pen in hand. Only dreams give birth to change." ~ Sarah Ban Breathnach

### Letting God In

*During this time, we invite you to prepare your heart and your mind for worship. We want you to be able to use this quiet time to settle your thoughts, set aside any distractions that may be troubling you, and focus your whole self on God. Open your heart, your mind, and your spirit, and let God into your life.*

#### \* Opening Praise

One: This is the place,

**Many: The place where God is joyfully worshipped.**

One: This is the time,

**Many: The time we know that God is with us in the coming year.**

One: These are the friends,

**Many: The friends who celebrate with us and stay with us when the testing comes.**

One: This is the faith,

**ALL: The faith in Jesus Christ, which challenges us and shapes our future.**

#### \* Gathering Hymn #115 – Away in a Manger

(from Glory to God, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

#### \* Opening Prayer

**The year is fast ending, O God, and we seek a new beginning. Gracefully grant us the gift of careful reflection. Where we have harbored bitterness, give us the ability to put into words our deepest feelings. Where we have nursed grudges, give us the strength to let them go. Where we have lacked the courage of our convictions, give us the ability to stand up and be counted. Where we have failed to work with others in community, give us the sense of joy in a common cause. Where we have questioned our life of faith, give us the insight to turn doubts into fresh commitment. Remind us that your grace is sufficient for us, O God. And as we look to a new year, gracefully grant us a new vision. Amen.**

#### \* God's Promise of Grace

#### \* Passing the Peace of Christ

#### \* Song of Peace – "Let There Be Peace on Earth" (back of the hymnal)

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**Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.**

**Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.  
With God our Creator, we are family.  
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.**

**Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow.  
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.  
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.**

### **God WAS ~ Remembering Where We've Been**

Scripture – Isaiah 40:27-31 (from the Common English Bible, © 2011)

<sup>27</sup> Why do you say, Jacob, and declare, Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord, my God ignores my predicament”? <sup>28</sup> Don't you know? Haven't you heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He doesn't grow tired or weary. His understanding is beyond human reach, <sup>29</sup> giving power to the tired and reviving the exhausted. <sup>30</sup> Youths will become tired and weary, young men will certainly stumble; <sup>31</sup> but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will fly up on wings like eagles; they will run and not be tired; they will walk and not be weary.

Time of Remembering – Where was God in your year?

*Please feel free to come forward and share with the congregation anywhere you've seen or felt God's presence in your life or the lives of loved ones over the past year. This is a time to celebrate where God has been with us – the joy as well as the sorrows. With each remembrance, we will light a candle.*

Prayer for the Year Behind (unison)

**God of wholeness, we bring you the ragged fragments of our lives – the patches of darkness that give shape to the light; the memories of spaces, of blessings, of pain. God of discovery, we bring you the scattered pieces of our hearts – the hopes we carry, fractured or whole; the places of welcome that bring healing and life. As the old year comes to a close and a new year begins, God, we lay all these things at your threshold. We ask that you hold them, bless them, and use them. We ask that you tend them, mend them, and transform them to enliven our spirits, make us whole, and send us forth. This we ask through Jesus. This we ask forever and ever. Amen.**

\* Opening Hymn #113 – Angels We Have Heard on High  
(from Glory to God, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Angels we have heard on high,  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains.  
Glo - ria in excelsis Deo!  
Glo - ria in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heavenly song?  
Glo - ria in excelsis Deo!  
Glo - ria in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose voice the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.  
Glo - ria in excelsis Deo!  
Glo - ria in excelsis Deo!

## Prayer of Gratitude and Blessing

*Our offering plates are located at the entrance to the sanctuary. This offering allows us to continue our outreach and mission both here in the community of Oronoco and beyond – in the greater Rochester area, in Minnesota, and even around the world. We are grateful for your willingness to join us in this mission and thank you for your generosity.*

## **God WILL BE ~ Looking Ahead in Hope**

Scripture – Mark 13:28-37 (from the Common English Bible, © 2011)

<sup>28</sup> “Learn this parable from the fig tree. After its branch becomes tender and it sprouts new leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup> In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that he’s near, at the door. <sup>30</sup> I assure you that this generation won’t pass away until all these things happen. <sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will certainly not pass away. <sup>32</sup> “But nobody knows when that day or hour will come, not the angels in heaven and not the Son. Only the Father knows. <sup>33</sup> Watch out! Stay alert! You don’t know when the time is coming. <sup>34</sup> It is as if someone took a trip, left the household behind, and put the servants in charge, giving each one a job to do, and told the doorkeeper to stay alert. <sup>35</sup> Therefore, stay alert! You don’t know when the head of the household will come, whether in the evening or at midnight, or when the rooster crows in the early morning or at daybreak. <sup>36</sup> Don’t let him show up when you weren’t expecting and find you sleeping. <sup>37</sup> What I say to you, I say to all: Stay alert!”

Time of Anticipation – What are your hopes for the new year?

*Please feel free to come forward and share with the congregation what your hopes and prayers are for the coming year. Where do you anticipate needing or seeing God in the days, weeks, and months to come? Again, with each account, we will light a candle.*

Prayer for the Year Ahead from Pax Christi (unison)

**Come Spirit of God, grant us the power to be gentle, the strength to be forgiving, the patience to be understanding, and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding on to what is right. Come Spirit of God, help us to put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil, the power of love to overcome hatred. Come Spirit of wisdom and love, Source of all good, teach us your truth and guide our actions in your way of peace. Amen.**

Hymn #136 – Go, Tell It on the Mountain  
(from Glory to God, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!  
While shepherds kept their watching  
O’er silent flocks by night,  
Behold, throughout the heavens  
There shone a holy light.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!  
The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo! above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior’s birth.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain

That Jesus Christ is born!  
Down in a lowly manger  
The humble Christ was born,  
And God sent us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!

#### Prayers of the People

Sharing our Lives in Prayer  
Silent Prayer  
Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer: **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

#### God IS ~ Being God for Those Around Us

Scripture – Revelation 21:1-7 (from the Common English Bible, © 2011)

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> I heard a loud voice from the throne say, "Look! God's dwelling is here with humankind. He will dwell with them, and they will be his peoples. God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more. There will be no mourning, crying, or pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." <sup>5</sup> Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look! I'm making all things new." He also said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup> Then he said to me, "All is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will freely give water from the life-giving spring. <sup>7</sup> Those who emerge victorious will inherit these things. I will be their God, and they will be my sons and daughters.

#### \* Closing Hymn #300 – We Are One in the Spirit

(from Glory to God, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord;  
We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord,  
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:  
And they'll know we are Christians  
By our love, by our love;  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand;  
We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand,  
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land:  
And they'll know we are Christians  
By our love, by our love;  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will work with each other; we will work side by side;  
We will work with each other; we will work side by side,  
And we'll guard human dignity and save human pride:  
And they'll know we are Christians  
By our love, by our love;  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,  
And all praise to Christ Jesus, God's only Son,  
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one:  
And they'll know we are Christians  
By our love, by our love;  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

\* Charge & Benediction