



PRAYER OF APPROACH:

Leader: Lord of time and eternity, we stand on the threshold of a new year. Strengthen our resolve to dedicate our lives afresh in your service leaving behind all that would distort your image within us and lead us astray. Keep us in peace, guide us in justice, sustain us through all this year may bring, for in you is our hope and our salvation, our lasting joy and fulfilment through Jesus Christ.

Taken from Prayers for All Occasions by Ian Blac

ALL: Holy One, a New Year begins so we gather this day to greet the New Year, to remember your promises fulfilled, and to give thanks for all that the future brings, that we may live and worship you in 2023.

HYMN: 'Our God, we are a church reformed. Tune: Winchester Old' ("While Shepherds watched their flocks")

1. Our God, we are a church reformed, a church reforming still: we long to grow in your true Word, and follow more your will.
2. How awesome is your sovereign rule; You reign from heav'n above. yet you knelt down in Jesus Christ, in sacrificial love.
3. In love, you bring your people here, and call your church to you, that we may know salvation's joy and serve in all we do.
4. You call us to community; by faith our hearts are stirred. in church, we seek an ordered life, according to your Word.
5. As faithful stewards we find joy; We need no rich display. Lord, teach us all to use with care, he gifts you give each day.

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OPENING PRAYER

All: God, surprise us again

Leader: When we miss the beauty and the joy of earth's goodness. . . When we grow too accustomed to life's busyness. . . When the goodness of others gets lost in the rush. . . When our frailty outruns our strength. . . When the hope in our heart fades away. . .

When the call to serve others loses its flavor. . .
When we search for the way home to you. . .
When loneliness pursues us. . . When it seems the darkness will never give way to the light. . . When the ache of the world wears our compassion thin. . .
When the troubles of others seem more than we can carry. . . When even you seem far away from us. . .

All: Walk closely with us, God.

Leader: As we strive to live our lives well. . . As we enjoy the treasures we've found in the field of faith. . . As we continue to surrender ourselves to you. . . As we journey into the unknown territory of a new year. . . As we hurt in the process of loving our enemies. . . As we learn to accept our weaknesses and our strengths. . . As we open our hearts to the messengers you send to us. . . As we stay faithful to our relationship with you. . . As we give ourselves to the poor and the powerless. . . As we keep searching for the truth. . . As we try to live in the heart of the scriptures. . . As we accept your constant love for us. . . Almighty God, Walk with us, guide, comfort and protect us, Lead us and help us to conquer, as we read in the Bible, 'By the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (Revelation 12:11). In Jesus, name Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BIBLE READINGS AND BRIEF REFLECTION

This is the confidence that we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. (1 John 5:14)

After another year of uncertainty and restrictions, as we continue to recover from Covid-19, let's press into the new year with prayer and thanksgiving. Together, we look to God to bring more blessings and opportunities to serve him in 2022. We can ask anything according to his will. And we can approach his throne with confidence, seeking justice and mercy in the name of Jesus.

The turning of the year is a time to give thanks for God's provision and to pray for breakthroughs in the year to come. We can also call on our mighty Father about issues that are holding our brothers and sisters back: global poverty and the climate crisis. Because our God is sovereign over all the earth!

Tear Fund

A NEW YEAR PRAYER/ POEM by Julie Palmer

A New Year

So there I stood, on this piece of land,
a new year stretched out before me,
galloping fast and full.
Could God's love really transform the landscape
of my heart and seep into the ground here?
Could love stop me in my tracks,
could it hijack the dates and times
and allow me to breathe in the new?
I felt both the warmth of shelter
and the distant chill of harsher weather.
Could this man Jesus really stand between me
and this incoming storm?
Or become part of my intimate family treasure?

How I look and wonder at the flaming colours of dawn,
a dawn that breaks again and again
across the face of a broken world.
Can this unconditional love really cradle such a
discordant and desperate globe in saving hands?

Yet at this moment,
I feel the depth of ground beneath me.
I stand upon words of truth, the book of life.
And as I allow the Gospels, tales of Jesus of Nazareth
to come alive in my mind they awaken my heart.
If love really did overcome when Christ died
on the cross, this piece of land is redeemed,
restored and forgiven.
Yes!! I can walk forward with a peaceful heart.
And I do hold in my hands a piece of that land,
a fragment of that legacy.
Faith leaps in my heart,
order reigns in my mind and hope grows in my spirit.
A new year, new beginnings and new dreams,
can all be made possible
through God's transforming love.

REFLECTION

**OFFERING/ HYMN: LORD BE MY VISION,
SUPREME IN MY HEART (BE THOU MY VISION)**
<https://youtu.be/-zhqS1A3JB4>

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

This prayer from Billy Graham, written for The Saturday Evening Post in 2008, is just as relevant as we head into 2023.

Our Father and our God, as we stand at the beginning of this new year we confess our need of Your presence and Your guidance as we face the future. We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us—but You alone know what it holds for us, and only You can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges. So help us to humbly put our hands into Your hand, and to trust You and to seek Your will for our lives during this coming year.

In the midst of life's uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of Your unchanging love. In the midst of life's inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to You for the stability and comfort we will need. In the midst of life's temptations and the pull of our stubborn self-will, help us not to lose our way but to have the courage to do what is right in Your sight, regardless of the cost. And in the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and injustices of our hurting world, and help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need. May our constant prayer be that of the ancient Psalmist: "Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end" (Psalm 119:33).

We pray for our nation and its leaders during these difficult times, and for all those who are seeking to bring peace and justice to our dangerous and troubled world. We pray especially for Your protection on all those who serve in our armed forces, and we thank You for their commitment to defend our freedoms, even at the cost of their own lives. Be with their families also, and assure

them of Your love and concern for them. Bring our divided nation together, and give us a greater vision of what You would have us to be. Your Word reminds us that "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12).

As we look back over this past year we thank You for Your goodness to us—far beyond what we have deserved. May we never presume on Your past goodness or forget all Your mercies to us, but may they instead lead us to repentance, and to a new commitment to make You the foundation and centre of our lives this year. And so, our Father, we thank You for the promise and hope of this new year, and we look forward to it with expectancy and faith. This I ask in the name of our Lord and Saviour, who by His death and resurrection has given us hope both for this world and the world to come. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: ALL MY HOPE ON GOD IS FOUNDED
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3LCGh02Vew&t=29s>

1. All my hope on God is founded
All my trust He shall renew
He my guide through changing order
Only good and only true

**Chorus: God unknown, He alone
Calls my heart to be His own**

2. Pride of man and earthly glory
Sword and crown betray His trust
All that human toil can fashion
Tower and temple fall to dust
But God's power, hour by hour
Is my temple and my tower
3. Day by day our mighty giver
Grants to us His gifts of love
In His will our souls find pleasure
Leading to our home above
Love shall stand, at His hand
Joy shall wait for His command
4. Still from man to God eternal
Sacrifice of praise be done
High above all praises praising
For the gift of Christ His Son
Hear Christ's call, one and all
We who follow shall not fall

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BENEDICTION AND AMEN

**All: God of this new year, we are walking into mystery.
We face the future, not knowing what the days and months will bring to us or how we will respond. Be love in us as we journey. May we welcome all who come our way. Deepen our faith to see all of life through your eyes. Fill us with hope and an abiding trust that you dwell in us amidst our joys and sorrows. Thank you for the treasure of our faith life. Thank you for the gift of being able to rise each day with the assurance of your walking through the day with us. God of this new year, we praise you.**

MAY THE GRACE AMEN

