



# 'Worship at home' January 1<sup>st</sup> 2023



Happy New Year!  
**Light a candle** as a reminder  
of Christ's ongoing presence and love,  
with you as you begin this new year.

## Opening

On this first Sunday of the New Year  
we have celebrated the birth of Christ;

**Christ has come.**

Signs of hope, peace, joy, love and new life surround us,  
sometimes unexpectedly.

**Christ is risen and with us.**

We are called to live as a people  
of transformation and new beginnings.

**Christ will come again.**

Come, and fill us with new life.

**Amen**

New Year can be a time to reflect on the  
year that has been and the one that is to  
come.



**Take some time to give thanks for that which has brought  
joy and love and light to your life during the past year.**

**Reflect on how you have brought  
joy and love and light to others during the past year.**

New Year can also be a time to intentionally take stock and  
consider our lives and our priorities and consider how we might  
live differently into the future to align with those priorities: what  
matters most to us?

**Take some time to consider your priorities.**

**Are these priorities reflected in how  
you spend your time?**

### **Ecclesiastes 3:1-13**

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be*

*silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace. What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.*

*New International Version*

New Year can also be a time to let go of what has been and embrace new opportunities.

**Reflect on what in your life might be ready to be pruned or uprooted.**

**What would it take for you to allow that to happen?**

**What new opportunities might emerge?**

**What might you plant this year that will align with your priorities?**

For many, this past year has been another year of ups and downs and uncertainties. Many of us have experienced times of weeping and mourning and scattering and searching. Many of us have also experienced times of laughing and dancing and gathering and healing. Our assurance is that God is present with us in all of these times, holding us and all things together in love. God has it all in hand, and our lives are God's gift.

**Unexpected joy bursting in  
birthing new beginnings  
creating love  
renewing life  
All will be well  
God is here**  
*- Rev Sue Ellis*

## **Prayer**

God of time and space, God beyond all that is;  
as we stand on the threshold between the end of one year  
and the beginning of a new year,  
grant us the gift of self-reflection  
that we might review our year with honesty.



Help us confess those things that were,  
that took us away from the things of your kingdom,  
that did not reflect your great love for us and all creation  
or denied the image of God in the other.

Help us give thanks  
for the times we have followed the way of Christ,  
for the acts of kindness, mercy and compassion  
we experienced and offered,  
our participation in acts of justice and repair of creation.

God of time and space, God beyond all that is,  
travel with us into the New Year  
as you have been with us in the old one,  
that You might grant us courage to live freely,  
following the way of Jesus,  
generosity to love more abundantly,  
and hope to sustain our living for justice and peace

We pray in the name of Christ, our wisdom and hope.

Amen

*Rev Sharon Hollis, President of the Uniting Church in Australia*

We do not know what the coming year holds: life often contains uncertain and unexpected surprises. However, we can know that God continues to be with us, guiding and upholding us, whatever our circumstances. We can trust in God's faithfulness and love.

**Reflect on how you might choose to live differently throughout this coming year.** You might commit yourself to a daily practice of gratitude, giving thanks at the end of the day for your joys and blessings. You might find a simple prayer to start each day with, or decide to phone a friend or family member each week just to check how they are.

Consider what it might mean for you to pray this prayer taken from the Wesleyan Covenant Service, and often used as a New Year commitment.

*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 for thee or laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low for 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 - Wesley Covenant Prayer*

### **Closing**

May the God of surprise and new life bring you hope; may the Christ of faithfulness and righteousness bring you love; may the Spirit of steadfastness and peace fill, restore, renew and refresh you throughout the New Year and always. Amen.

*adapted from Christine Sine [godspacelight.com](http://godspacelight.com) 4*

I KNOW NOT WHAT  
THE FUTURE HOLDS,  
BUT I KNOW WHO HOLDS  
THE FUTURE.