

JANUARY 1, 2023
NEW YEAR'S EVE,
NEW YEAR'S DAY



Beginning a new year confident in God's care.

NEW YEAR'S BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your New Year's celebration.

Saturday	Ecclesiastes 3:1-13	For everything there is a season
	Psalms 8	Divine majesty and human dignity
Sunday	Revelation 21:1-6a	New heaven and earth
	Matthew 25:31-46	The great judgment

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR NEW YEAR'S

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Psalm 8:3-4 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the New Year:

Everlasting God, give us peace and confidence to trust your work in our lives and our world that we may praise your name and love others through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, you who have crowned us with glory and honor, we thank you for blessing us with this gift of food through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God wipe away every tear from your eyes and give you joy.



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HYMN FOR NEW YEAR'S

All Are Welcome



NEW YEAR'S MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What have you learned from this past year?
- Based on what you have learned, what would you like to do for the coming year?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Ecclesiastes 3:1-13.

The theme of Ecclesiastes is summed up in verse two of chapter one: "*Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.*" The Hebrew term for vanity is difficult to translate. It has the suggestion of something that doesn't last, like vapors that quickly escape. Our efforts, our toil, is rather inconsequential, leading to little real gain. We really don't grasp the ways of God, so there is a sense that we should enjoy the simple pleasures of life like eating, drinking, and engaging in daily activities. As we approach a new year, there is great wisdom from our biblical teacher in Ecclesiastes. Life provides a rich variety of experiences from good to bad, from joy to sorrow. We humans have not figured out what it all means. We wonder what God is up to. We enjoy what we can from the day and go to bed with gratitude. In Jesus, we see a simple directive leading us back to the basics: love God and love others. When we keep to such basic goals for life, we do well. All other pursuits feel like vanity and like vapors will disappear into thin air and be forgotten.

Discuss: How does a focus on the basics help you begin the New Year?

Pray: **Dear God, as we look to the future, help us to hold on to what really matters, trusting in your wisdom and your steadfast love for us through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this day, how might you help others enjoy the simple pleasures of life?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

When standing under the night sky and viewing the moon and the stars as God's creation, we can feel very small in comparison. Yet Psalm 8 reminds us of our role in caring for all that God has made. As the New Year begins, list ways you have cared for one another and for all creation (birds, bees, fish, plants, trees, etc.) in the past year. Take time to talk about new ways you can be aware of your role to care for God's creation. Finish your time with this blessing: **May the God of all creation guide you to care for the earth and for one another.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org