

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Neither the Present nor the Future

December 31, 2015

AS WE GATHER

The future looms as we creep closer and closer to a new year. What does it look like to you? Frightening? Hopeful? More of the same? Either way, you will be there in just a few hours. Are you ready? When we look at where this world seems to be headed, it is so easy to get discouraged. But tonight we are reminded that the same God who guided His Old Testament people, the same God who died for us, is the same God who will return for us. This God rules over all time, even today and tomorrow. Neither what is happening today, nor what happens tomorrow, will be able to separate us from His love. You need not fear the future; it will not separate you from God's love.

✕ PREPARATION ✕

HYMN #877 "God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven" *Rise for last stanza*

God, who made the earth and heaven, Darkness and light:
You the day for work have given, For rest the night.
May Your angel guards defend us, Slumber sweet Your mercy send us,
Holy dreams and hopes attend us All through the night.

And when morn again shall call us To run life's way,
May we still, whate'er befall us, Your will obey.
From the pow'r of evil hide us, In the narrow pathway guide us,
Never be Your smile denied us All through the day.

Guard us waking, guard us sleeping, And when we die,
May we join in Your mighty keeping All peaceful lie,
When the last dread call shall wake us, Then, O Lord, do not forsake us,
But to reign in glory take us With You on high.

(Rise) Holy Father, throned in heaven, All holy Son, Holy Spirit, freely given,
Blest Three in One: Grant us grace, we now implore You,
Till we lay our crowns before You And in worthier strains adore You
While ages run.

INVOCATION & OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: We are weary, Lord.

People: Stay with us.

Pastor: Remain by our side,

People: for we are so tired at the end of the year.

Pastor: We do not know what the future holds,

People: but we know that you hold it.

Pastor: Increase our faith in you,

People: and bring us safely to your side.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: People of God, our Lord remains unchanging. So often, though, we forget that the God who thundered at Sinai still thunders at our sin. The God who gave the Ten Commandments remains just as serious about them today as He was then. We confess our forgetfulness.

People: Lord, we confess our sin.

(Silence for personal confession.)

Pastor: People of God, our Lord remains unchanging. Just as He protected the nation of Israel and brought them out of Egypt, He has promised to protect us. Yet we ignore His promise, and we worry and fret. We confess our anxieties.

People: Lord, we confess our sin.

(Silence for personal confession.)

Pastor: People of God, our Lord remains unchanging. He tells us that as long as it is today, we should repent. Yet we hold on to our sins. We confess our unrepentance.

People: Lord, we confess our sin.

(Silence for personal confession.)

Pastor: People of God, our Lord remains unchanging. Yet we so often give in to our sinful natures. We promise faithfulness to God and run back to old sins. We confess our sinful natures.

People: Lord, we confess our sin.

(Silence for personal confession.)

Pastor: People of God, our Lord remains unchanging. The same Jesus who chose to die for His people died for you. The same Jesus who loved you at your Baptism loves you still. The same Jesus who fought to win you from sin, death, and Satan still fights for you.

People: Lord, we thank you!

Pastor: People of God, our Lord remains unchanging. The same Jesus who died to take away your sins still declares you to be His forgiven children. By His authority as a called and ordained servant of Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Your sins of forgetfulness, your sins of habit, your sins of choice, your sins of thought, your sins of word, your sins of deed: They are all forgiven.

People: Lord, we thank you!

Pastor: People of God, our Lord remains unchanging. Just as He loved you then, nothing can separate you from His love now. Live in that unchanging love, from this year and into the next.

People: Praise be to God! Amen!

HYMN OF PRAISE #803 “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee” Stanzas 1 & 3

Joyful, joyful we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee, Praising Thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, Drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day.

Thou art giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest.
Well-spring of the joy of living, Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Fountainhead of love divine:
Joyful, we Thy heav'n inherit! Joyful, we by grace are Thine!

☩ **WORD** ☩

INTROIT *Psalm 98:1–3; antiphon: Psalm 124:8*

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the LORD,

People: who made heaven and earth.

Pastor: Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things!

Men: His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.

Pastor: The LORD has made known His salvation;

Women: He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations.

Pastor: He has remembered His steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

People: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the be- ginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the LORD,

People: who made heaven and earth.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Unchanging God, you have watched over us from eternity and set our lives so that all things happen at the proper time. In the new year, grow our trust in you as the One who provides all we need at the proper time, and who has already given us our salvation through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

(Be seated)

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Ecclesiastes 3:1–8* (God has ordered a time for all things.) There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: 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, 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.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Romans 8:31b–39* (Nothing will separate the Church from God's love.)

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL *Psalm 90:12, 14*

Pastor: Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

People: Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

(Rise)

HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 12:35–40* (Remain ready!)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the twelfth chapter.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Be seated)

HYMN OF THE DAY #878 "Abide With Me"

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.

The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.

When other helpers fail and comforts flee,

Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

I need Thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings;
Tears for all woes, a heart for ev'ry plea.
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

5 continued

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if Thou abide with me!

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

SERMON

"Nothing Can Separate Us"

Romans 8:31-39

CREEDAL HYMN #954 "We All Believe in One True God"

We all believe in one true God, Who created earth and heaven,
The Father, who to us in love Has the right of children given.
He in soul and body feeds us; All we need His hand provides us;
Through all snares and perils leads us, Watching that no harm betide us.
He cares for us by day and night; All things are governed by His might.
Amen. Amen. Amen.

We all believe in Jesus Christ, His own Son, our Lord, possessing An equal
Godhead, throne, and might, Source of ev'ry grace and blessing; Born of Mary,
virgin mother, By the power of the Spirit, Word made flesh, our elder brother;
That the lost might life inherit, Was crucified for all our sin
And raised by God to life again. Amen. Amen. Amen.

We all confess the Holy Ghost, Who, in highest heaven dwelling
With God the Father and the Son, Comforts us beyond all telling;
Who the Church, His own creation, Keeps in unity of spirit.
Here forgiveness and salvation Daily come through Jesus' merit.
All flesh shall rise, and we shall be In bliss with God Eternally.
Amen. Amen. Amen.

OFFERINGS As your offering is collected, ***please sign our attendance book*** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the book along to others in your pew, and return the book to the center aisle. You may check the register to see the names of those to greet after the service.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

PB: As we end this year, let us approach our God with humility and in repentance.

PS: Heavenly Father, over the last year we sinned against you so many times. We confess our thoughts of sin. We confess our desires to sin. We confess our unloving words. We confess our harsh actions. We confess our refusal to trust your care. We confess all our rebellions against you.

People: Father, we confess our sin. Be merciful, O Lord!

PB: As we end this year, let us approach our God with confidence.

PS: Lord Jesus, you died for us. You lived a life without sin and without worry. You took our every sin on you and gave us your robe of righteousness. Every sin we committed this past year and every sin of the next year, you already paid.

People: Jesus, you are our hope for years past and years to come.

PB: As we end this year, let us pray for those closest to us: our families and friends.

PS: Lord God, you bless us with friends and families. We praise you for this blessing! Remind us of the happy times we have shared this last year. Forgive us for the times we have failed to love our friends and families the way you would have us love. As we go forward into the new year, continue to remind us that friends and families are your blessings to us.

People: We praise you for the blessings of this year.

PB: As we end this year, let us pray for those who pointed us to you.

PS: Lord of all, you send your servants to point us to you, to help us grow in your Word. We thank you for pastors, teachers, and faithful friends who encourage us in your Word. In the new year, continue to bless us with those who point to you. Bless them as they labor for you.

People: We praise you for the blessings of this year.

PB: As we end this year, let us pray for those who lead.

PS: Sovereign of heaven, you give us every authority for our blessing. Forgive us for the times we have refused to obey our leaders. Bless them with wisdom. Be with our president, governor, mayor, police, firefighters, and others you use to protect us. We thank you for the safety you gave through them this past year. Send your angels to protect them. Move us to obey those you have placed over us.

People: We praise you for the blessings of this year.

PB: As we end this year, let us pray for the weak.

PS: Heavenly Father, be with those who cannot stand. Encourage the sick. Stand with those who despair. Warm the lonely. Use your Word to strengthen those weak in faith. Forgive us for the times we have been

callous to the needs of others. This year, open our eyes to see how we can serve and be your hands. When we are weak, remind us that you are the Lord of time; you are ever with us.

People: We praise you for the blessings of this year.

PB: As we end this year, let us pray for ourselves.

PS: Dear Savior, be with us. This year has been hard at times. Forgive our sins. Remind us that just as you loved us enough to die for us, you remain unchanged. You love us still. Continue to be with us. Strengthen us in the knowledge that nothing in this coming year can separate us from your love.

People: We praise you for the blessings of this year. Bless us this coming year! Amen.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

(Rise)

PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of all creation and Lord over time, for you have had mercy on us at just the right time. You have given your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In your judgment, you demand that all serve you while it is day. You justly condemn all who are not ready to greet you. Yet, in your great mercy, you sent Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for us.

We give you thanks for the redemption you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✕ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

People: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Pastor: O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us your body and blood to eat and to drink, you lead us to remember and confess your holy cross and passion, your blessed death, your rest in the tomb, your resurrection from the dead, your ascension into heaven, and your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PEACE OF THE LORD

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

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O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ, And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

(Be seated)

DISTRIBUTION Those guests who desire to commune who are members of another LCMS congregation may do so; if you are coming from another church background, please see the pastor or an elder first.

HYMN #900 "Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love"

Jesus! Name of wondrous love, Name all other names above,
Unto which must ev'ry knee Bow in deep humility.

Jesus! Name decreed of old, To the maiden mother told,
Kneeling in her lowly cell, By the angel Gabriel.

Jesus! Name of priceless worth To the fallen of the earth
For the promise that it gave, "Jesus shall His people save."

Jesus! Name of mercy mild, Given to the holy Child
When the cup of human woe First He tasted here below.

Jesus! Only name that's giv'n Under all the mighty heav'n
Whereby those to sin enslaved Burst their fetters and are saved.

Jesus! Name of wondrous love, Human name of God above;
Pleading only this, we flee Helpless, O our God, to Thee.

HYMN #733 "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home:

Under the shadow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone, and our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God, To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream, Soon bears us all away;
We fly forgotten as a dream Dies at the op'ning day.

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last And our eternal home!

HYMN #883 "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night"

All praise to Thee, my God, this night For all the blessings of the light.
Keep me, O keep me, King of kings, Beneath Thine own almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son, The ill that I this day have done,
That with the world, myself, and Thee, I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

Teach me to live that I may dread The grave as little as my bed.
Teach me to die that so I may Rise glorious at the awefull day.

Oh, may my soul in Thee repose, And may sweet sleep mine eyelids close,
Sleep that shall me more vig'rous make To serve my God when I awake!

When in the night I sleepless lie, My soul with heav'nly thoughts supply;
Let no ill dreams disturb my rest, No pow'rs of darkness me molest.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: For the last year, you have refreshed us with your body and blood. We give you thanks for the blessings of the past year and stand firm in your promise to continue to do so, until we eat and drink with you at the wedding feast of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #390 “Let Us All With Gladsome Voice”

Let us all with gladsome voice Praise the God of heaven,
Who, to bid our hearts rejoice, His own Son hath given.

To this vale of tears He comes, Here to serve in sadness,
That with Him in heav’n’s fair homes W may reign in gladness.

We are rich, for He was poor; Is not this a wonder?
Therefore praise God evermore Here on earth and yonder.

Christ, our Lord and Savior dear, Be Thou ever near us.
Grant us now a glad new year. Amen, Jesus, hear us.

Preacher
Liturgist
Acolyte
Organist

Pastor Harold Bender
Pastor Gregg Stanton
Sophie Moravec
Roger Gottschalk

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