

Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit
Sunday 1st January 2023, by Rev J.E.M. Barber

Please use your own Bible for the Scripture readings.

Call to Worship:

Lord Jesus Christ,

We celebrate today, that as wise men sought Jesus, that you continue to call us to seek faith, as year changes to year. We remember how you promised that all who seek will find, that those who ask will receive, that those who knock the door will be opened,

And so come now,

Asking for your guidance and seeking to know you better,

So that, drawing closer to you, we may offer our love and our lives in glad response,

To the Glory of your name. **Amen.**

While New Year does not have any scriptural significance the custom of New Year resolutions can be a useful reminder to us as Christians to re-examine what we have promised God and other people in the past and whether or not we are keeping our promises.

Especially think of any promises we have made as God-Parents.

Prayers:

Light of life,

Light of the world,

Come among us as we meet together, at dawn of this new year,

And flood our lives with the brightness you alone can bring.

So fill us that we may shine in turn for you,

Our words and deeds testifying to your love for all

And enlightening the lives of others.

Flow within us,

Flow through us,

To the glory of your name. **Amen.**

Take a time of silence for self examination and confession. If there are things needing action it may be wise to make a written reminder for action. Amen.

HYMN Hymns & Psalms 636.

New every morning is the love

Our wakening and uprising prove

Through sleep and darkness safely brought

Restored to life and power and thought.

New mercies each returning day
Hover around us while we pray
New perils past, new sins forgiven
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all we find
New treasures still of countless price
God will provide for sacrifice.

Old friends, old scenes will lovelier be
As more of heaven in each we see
Some softening of love and prayer
Shall dawn on every cross we bear. Amen

God plans much further ahead than we can envisage. In the Old Testament there is a lot about God's planning to settle the Jews in the promised land but it is always dependent upon man's obedience. In Luke ch.1 v 11 – 16 we read part of God's plan for the ministry of Jesus.

Read Matthew ch2 v 13 – 15

Joseph and Mary had gone to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus as they had relatives there and expected them to be supportive and that it was the will of God. For Joseph to have the dream sending them to Egypt must have been a real shock. They must have been looking forward to getting back to Nazareth and establishing their family life, not being strangers in a foreign country from which the Jews had had to escape centuries before under the leadership of Moses.

God does still speak to us in visions, or dreams and when he does it is vital that we obey Him as Joseph did. We can not expect Him always to give us a long term forecast, we must just trust Him that he has a complete plan for us and that it will be better than anything that we or anyone else might devise for us.

Do we ever think about this when making new year resolutions?
Have we asked God what he had planned for us?

Prayers of Intercession: -

Loving God, hear us as we pray for your holy Catholic Church:

make us all one, that the world may believe.

Inspire and lead all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world:

establish justice and peace among all people.

Have compassion on all who suffer from any sickness, grief or trouble:

deliver them from their distress.

We praise you for all your saints who have entered your eternal glory:

bring us all to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Silence

Lord our God, you have helped us by your grace to make these prayers and you have promised through Christ our Lord that when two or three agree in his name you will grant what they ask.

Answer now your servants' prayers according to their needs; in this world grant that we may truly know you, and in the world to come graciously give us eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN Hymns & Psalms no784

Thy hand o God has guided thy flock from age to age
The wondrous tale is written full clear on every page
Our fathers owned thy goodness,
And we their deeds record;
And both of this bear witness:
One church, one faith, one Lord.

Thy heralds brought glad tidings
To greatest, as to least;
They bade men rise, and hasten to share the great King's feast;
Their gospel of redemption.
Sin pardoned, right restored
Was all in this enfolded
One church, one faith, one Lord.

Thy mercy will not fail us,
Nor leave thy work undone;
With thy right hand to help us,
Thy victory shall be won;
And then, by men and angels,
Thy name shall be adored,
And this shall be their anthem
One church, one faith, one Lord. Amen.

When we look back over the years and think how in the past we may have celebrated the new year, and how we have failed to seek God's leading in past years not only for ourselves but also for family, friends, church and our nation. Let us make our New Year resolution to be sensitive to the leading of the holy spirit and seeking his messages for us in the scriptures. An essential part of any such resolution is daily bible reading to keep us in touch with what God may be wanting to say to us.

Hymns & Psalms 694

God be in my head and in my understanding
God be in mine eyes and in my looking
God be in my mouth and in my speaking.
God be in my heart and in my thinking
God be in my end, and at my departing.

What does this really mean?

Turn back to the Old Testament in the bible and look at Psalm 148.

Ask yourself how often do you praise God not just for what we experience but also for his care of other people.

For this to be meaningful it is vital that we not only do it in our own mind but also tell other people what a wonderful God we have. To do this we have to keep in touch with what is happening in other places as well as where we live and worship God. To do this we have to keep in touch with the activities of at least some missionary societies and support them in their work.

Surely this must also be part of our Christian life and new year resolutions if we make any. God bless you as you walk with him.

Blessing

Go now and proclaim the gospel, not just through words but deeds –
Through what you say, what you do,
And who you are.

The Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Be with you, with those you love,
and those you are called to Love, now in the name of Christ. **Amen**