

A THOUSAND
Years IN THY
SIGHT



A Service for the
Turning of the Year

LEADER'S GUIDE

A THOUSAND *Years* IN THY SIGHT

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About the Service

A Thousand Years In Thy Sight includes not only a sermon, but a children's sermon as well. Hymns include O God, Our Help In Ages Past, and several original hymns written to popular tunes (including Tallis' Canon and Regent Square). Prayers acknowledge, in order, God's gifts of seconds, minutes, hours, days, years, decades, centuries, millennia and eternity.

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Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Newsletter Notice

Join us for a very special New Year's service entitled, "A Thousand Years In Thy Sight." Hymns, prayers, sermon, a children's message and Scripture readings celebrate time, and the many blessings that time brings by God's gracious hand. Parts of the service acknowledge, in order, God's gifts of seconds, minutes, hours, days, years, decades, centuries, millennia and eternity.

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to this very special New Year's service entitled, "A Thousand Years In Thy Sight." Hymns, prayers, sermon, a children's message and Scripture readings celebrate time and the many blessings that time brings by God's gracious hand. Acknowledge together in word and song in this service God's gifts of seconds, minutes, hours, days, years, decades, centuries, millennia and eternity.

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Complete Script For Worship Leaders

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/hourglass-sunset-317474312>

- **A Celebration of God's Gift of Time** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation with verses being sung by the congregation to the tune St. Anne CM:

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

Before the hills in order stood or earth received its frame,
From everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

P You know what time it is.

C Time to waken from sleep; for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

P The time has come for judgment to begin within the household of God.

C If it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

P It is time to seek the Lord,

C that he may come and pour out blessings upon us.

P Hear what God says: “When the time came for me to show you favor, I heard you; when the day arrived for me to save you, I helped you.”

C Behold, this is the time to receive God’s favor; today is the day to be saved.

P The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.

C When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.

P When the time is right, God will complete his plan, to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as the head.

C My times are in your hands. I trust in you, O Lord. I say, “You are my God.”

P For a thousand years in your sight are like a day gone by, like a few hours in the night.

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,
Still be our guard while troubles last and our eternal home!

• The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P God of every time and place, period and space, we thank you for bringing us to the end of another year. We praise you for the ways you worked within the days of these last twelve months to spread your Gospel message through us and to draw us ever closer to you. Help us to grow in faith and in our love for you in the months and years to come. Remind us day after day that our times are in your hands and you have a plan in place within our time frames to make your salvation known to all the world through the life, death and resurrection of your Son, who came in the fullness of time to accomplish reunion with you and us for all time. In your eternal name we pray. Amen.

- The **Children's Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ *(Speaking to one of the children) Can you give me a minute? (The child will probably say "Yes." If not, keep asking others until one child does say "Yes.") Good! Can I see it? (This will befuddle the child as the congregation chuckles.) What do you mean you can't give it to me? I asked for a minute. Let's see it! (Turning to another child) Can you give me a second? Just one second? (Again, find a child who will say "Yes.") Excellent! (Holding out your hand) I'll take it right now. (Again, expect a befuddled look.) What? You can't give me the second I just asked you for?*

A minute is a funny sort of a thing, isn't it? You can't hold it in your hand. You can't put it in a box. You can't wrap it up with paper and a bow. Oh, you can give someone a wristwatch, or even a clock. And a lot of people give and receive pretty calendars at Christmastime. But a minute ... even a second ... those are more difficult to "put your fingers on." Yet ... we can still give them away. And everyone knows when we've gotten a minute of someone else's time.

A minute is a funny sort of a thing. What is it, exactly?

I'll tell you what I think a minute is: It's a gift of God! ALL of our time is a gift from God. All of our LIVES are gifts from God. In fact, time is one of the most precious gifts God has given us. We can't put it in a box. We can't tie it up with a ribbon. But it's a gift, nonetheless. A great and wonderful gift.

I have another question for you. Do you have salvation? *(Hopefully you will receive several positive responses. If not, explain that salvation is what our Savior, Jesus, came to bring us—freedom from our sins and eternal life in heaven).* So ... do you have salvation? ("Yes!") That's wonderful news! *(Again, holding out your hand.)* Can I see it? C'mon ... let me see your salvation! I want to hold it ... to see what it looks like. *(By now even the kids are probably giggling.)*

Salvation is sort of like time, isn't it? It's real. It's one of the very greatest gifts our Lord has given us. But it can't be put in a box. A bow can't be tied around it. You can't hand it to me so that I can hold it ... look at it.

But it's real! REALLY real. Your salvation is so real that Jesus came down as a real human being ... a BABY. He was born in a real stable. He was wrapped in real swaddling clothes. He was laid in a real manger. And real shepherds came to worship him because a real angel had told them to do so.

Because of Jesus and the very real salvation he brings to us, we will live in heaven forever and ever.

Now ... you can't put heaven in a box. And you can't put forever and ever in a box, either. But,

just like a minute ... just like salvation ... heaven and forever are yours—a great gift from God.

And so we say, "Thank you, God, for the gifts of minutes, seconds, time, salvation, Jesus, heaven, forever and ever. Forever and ever! Amen!" (The children may return to their seats.)

- The **First Reading**, Ecclesiastes 3:1-14, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Ar Hyd Y Nos 84 84 88 84:

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 pathways guide us,
Never be your smile denied us, all through the day.

Guard us waking, guide us sleeping, and, when we die,
May we 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.

- The **Second Lesson**, 2 Peter 3:8-9, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

- The **Alleluia** is sung by the congregation to the tune Tallis' Canon LM:

Alleluia! The hours and days,
The months, the years proclaim your praise;
And centuries, millennia
Sound forth your love. Alleluia!

Into this moving tide of time
You stepped, O Christ, with grace sublime;
You shared our birth, our flesh, our breath;
You shared our days, our years, our death.

A thousand years, Lord, in your sight
Are like the passing of the night;
A century, when it is gone,
Is like the breaking of the dawn.

- The **Gospel Lesson**, John 8:25-32, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ They said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Why do I speak to you at all? I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him." As he was saying these things, many believed in him. Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

- The **Gospel Response** is sung by the congregation to the tune Tallis' Canon LM:

The child of God in wonder sees
The turning of the centuries.
The years, the decades—how they fly
As quickly as a passing sigh!

So teach us, Lord, to count our days
That we may live them in your praise,
And pray in each millennium,
O gracious Lord, thy kingdom come!

“Before the days of Abraham,
Behold,” O Christ, you say, “I am!”
That we, whose years so quickly flee,
May rise to live eternally.

- The **Homily** is delivered by the pastor:

☐ “So teach us to COUNT,” we pray, in the ancient words of Psalm 90, the Psalm that refers to “a thousand years in thy sight”: “Teach us to count our days.”

The end of the year is an appropriate time to do just that, to count our days. So is the turning of a century, by the way. And so, especially, is the observance of a millennium—something we did more than a decade ago!

But before we begin counting over 2,000 (or even 100, or 365) in our gratitude to God, perhaps we could begin with something simpler. Like 2, for example, the number of many of the gifts God has given us: 2 eyes, 2 ears ... 2 arms, 2 legs ... 2 hands, 2 feet ... 2 lungs, 2 kidneys.

Or 5 — for fingers and toes.

Or even one — for heart, brain, liver, spleen, stomach, throat.

At which point God says, "Even the hairs of your head are numbered"!

Did you know that during the last year the average person has drawn more than 4 million breaths? That your heart has beat more than 36 million times? Most of the time you probably weren't counting.

God was. And multiplying those numbers by a lifetime.

Perhaps this is easier to comprehend: If you are a family of five, and you each managed to eat 3 meals a day — during this past year your family has experienced "the feeding of the 5,000." If your family is smaller, that takes a little longer, of course ... but the blessing is most surely there, and the end of a year is a good time for counting such blessings (so is the end of a decade, a century, and especially a millennium).

We could spend this whole service finding things to count, of course, things for which to give God thanks. How many rooms are in your house? How many grandparents do you remember? How many years did you go to school? How many teachers do you think you had? How many

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Music Guide

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Tune..... Ellers 10 10 10 10

The image displays a piano accompaniment for a piece titled "Ellers 10 10 10 10". The music is written in E-flat major (three flats) and common time (C). It is organized into three systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system begins at measure 1, the second at measure 7, and the third at measure 13. The notation consists of chords and simple melodic lines, typical of a piano accompaniment for a vocal or instrumental tune.

- The **Closing Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Ellers 10 10 10 10:

Savior, again to your dear name we raise
With one accord our parting hymn of praise;
Once more we bless you ere our worship cease,
Then, lowly bending, wait your word of peace.

Grant us your peace, Lord, through each coming night;
For us transform the darkness into light.
Keep us from harm and danger till the dawn;
Your evening presence promise to your own.

Grant us your peace throughout our earthly life,
Our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;
Then, when your voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to your eternal peace.