

OUR HOPE *for*  
YEARS *to* COME



*A Service  
for the  
New Year*

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# OUR HOPE *for* YEARS *to* COME



*A Service for the New Year*

## ABOUT THIS SERVICE

This worship service for the New Year greets the coming year (and the years that follow) with the great hope we have in our God to protect and keep us from day to day. Looking back at how God has blessed us in the past helps us to look forward with confidence and enthusiasm. Hymns, Scripture and the spoken word in this service beckon us to be filled with hope as we let our Lord lead us, according to his will.

Complete worship service includes everything you need with the text of all the worship service in .rtf (rich text format), newsletter/bulletin notices, hymns, visual media recommendations, contemporary music song suggestions and PowerPoint documents of the service with images and text (along with a copyright release) for use on screens.

I have something here to help you understand what I mean. What is this a picture of? (*Show the picture of the anchor and allow the children to respond.*) That's right! It is a picture of an anchor. What does an anchor do? (*Allow children to respond.*) That's right! An anchor holds a boat in place by being dropped into deep water on a chain until it hits the bottom of a body of water. The hooks at the ends of the anchor dig deep into the ground to keep the boat on the surface of the water from moving.

You might be surprised that an anchor is mentioned in the Bible. We read in Hebrews 6:19: "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain." Hope is the anchor in our lives, the Scriptures are telling us. What does this mean? It means that when we have hope—hope in Jesus—we can stay strong and sturdy and secure in our faith, like an anchor. When we have hope in Jesus, we have joy in our hearts because we know that we will always be safe from evil, like an anchor that keeps a boat safe from floating away into dangerous waters. When we have hope in Jesus, we have peace because we know that Jesus holds us firm, like an anchor that does not move even when the wind or rough seas hit. We can always be sure that hope in Jesus, our anchor of the soul, will keep us close to him year in and year out until the end of time, when we will go to be with Jesus in heaven, where we will live with him forever. Remember all year long that hope in Jesus is your anchor and that hope will get you through.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Slane irregular meter, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art;  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night;  
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
Thou my great Father, I, thy true son;  
Thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise;  
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;  
Thou and thou only, first in my heart;  
High King of glory, my treasure thou art.

High King of glory, my victory won;  
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun;  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall;  
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

- **The Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 40:25-31, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God”? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

- **The Epistle Reading**, Romans 8:19-25, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

- **The Gospel Reading**, Matthew 5:1-12, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Magdalen 88 88 88, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
 No merit of my own I claim, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
 On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils his lovely face, I rest on his unchanging grace;  
 In ev'ry high and stormy gale my anchor holds within the veil.  
 On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, his covenant, his blood sustain me in the raging flood;  
 When all supports are washed away, he then is all my hope and stay.  
 On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

When he shall come with trumpet sound, oh, may I then in him be found,  
 Clothed in his righteousness alone, redeemed to stand before the throne!  
 On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

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

**P** Grace, mercy and peace be with you, my dear Christian friends. We celebrate the end of one year and the start of a new one in this service. This is a unique time for us to look back at what has been and to look forward at what will be.

### Help

What do we see in ages past? We see help. We see help from our God. As the hymn says, "O God, our help in ages past..." How has he been our help? In many ways, of course. As part of the Passover observance, those in the Jewish faith sing a song called the Dayenu, which means, "It would have been enough." The song goes one by one through fifteen blessings of God in the story of the children of Israel. Here are the first lines of the verses:

If he had brought us out of Egypt...

If he had executed justice upon the Egyptians...

If he had executed justice upon their gods...

If he had slain their first-born...

If he had given to us their health and wealth...

If he had split the sea for us...

If he had led us through on dry land...

If he had drowned our oppressors...

If he had provided for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years...

If he had fed us manna...

If he had given us Shabbat (the Sabbath)..

If he had led us to Mount Sinai...

If he had given us the Torah...

If he had brought us into the Land of Israel...

If he built the Temple for us...

Each verse ends with “Dayenu,” it would have been enough. The point is, if God had done just one of each of these things, it would have been enough. But God blessed the Israelites in manifold ways, and he has blessed us overflowingly in a far richer way than we could ever ask or deserve. If you had to write your own Dayenu song for the past year, what would you include? Here are a few examples to get you started:

A home...

Food to eat...

Clothes to wear...

Family...

Friends...

A job...

Vacations...

A school...

A church...

Consider other blessings you would add to this list. Our God has certainly been our help in the past not just through the things on this list but through daily trials and decisions that had to be made on a regular basis or all of a sudden. He helped us through sicknesses or injuries we had or loved ones had. He helped us through griefs and losses, transitions and changes at home or at work or school. He helped us to know what to say or do in difficult situations and in joyous times too. He helped us by forgiving us through the cross of Jesus, and he helped us to forgive one another, no matter how hard that might have been. So much of life, we find ourselves looking to the Lord and only able to say this simple prayer, "Help me." And he has. Big time! We can all attest to that.

### Hope

And if he *has*, so he *will*! That is why we can have hope as we stand in this moment in time and look forward to the future. While we do not know exactly what will happen in the coming year (and years, for that matter), we do know that God will help us as he has helped us in the past. We know he will love us, as he loved us before. He will care for us and support us, encourage us and inspire us, lift us up when we are sad, and calm us down when we are scared. He will forgive us when we let sin get the best of us. He will give us words to say and things to do when we are called to witness and serve. He will speak to us through his Word, the Bible, when we are searching for meaning and courage. He will send us family and friends to listen to us and stand by us. He will be with us always, as he said he would. He will remind us regularly that Jesus died and rose for our salvation and we will have a place in heaven prepared for us, where we will live with Jesus forever.

If our God is our hope for years to come and if we know that he will help us moving forward, then what is to be our attitude, our approach to the time that spreads before us? For that we go to Jesus' special words to us in his Sermon on the Mount. We go to the statements of blessing called Beatitudes. What do we learn from the Beatitudes? Let's take a look at each one:

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Being poor in spirit means you recognize your own spiritual poverty, You know you need God. Being poor in spirit in the days and years to come means giving glory for everything in your life and leaning not on yourself.

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Being among those who mourn means knowing the sadness that sin has brought into the world and acknowledging the grief and loss that sin has caused. We mourn the sin in ourselves by confessing what we have done whenever we have disobeyed God. Whenever we confess our sins, we will find comfort from God, who takes our sins away. We live in our years to come forgiven and free.