



January 2025 | Volume 30, Issue 1

MONTHLY Newsletter

A PUBLICATION OF OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

*The Mission of Our Savior:
That all may know Christ,
grow in Christ
and joyfully go with Christ.*

Adopted 11/1998

FROM OUR PASTOR...

The Significance of Christmas and Epiphany in the Christian Church

In the Christian tradition, the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany carry profound significance as they celebrate and reflect upon the coming of Jesus Christ into the world and His revelation to humanity. These two liturgical seasons are not just festive occasions but are filled with profound spiritual meaning, inviting believers to embrace the message of hope, love, and salvation.

The Season of Christmas

Christmas, which begins on December 25th and traditionally lasts for twelve days until January 5th, celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. This period, known as Christmastide, is one of the most joyous times in the Christian calendar. The word "Christmas" itself comes from the Old English term "Cristes mæsse," meaning "Christ's Mass," signifying the worship of Christ.

The significance of Christmas lies in the Incarnation. Christians believe God took human form in Jesus, becoming fully divine and fully human. This extraordinary act demonstrates God's immense love for humanity, bridging the gap between God and people. The Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke describe the humble circumstances of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, emphasizing humility and simplicity. Born in a stable and laid in a manger, Jesus' arrival shows that God's grace is accessible to all, regardless of status or wealth.

Central to the Christmas celebration is the idea of light overcoming darkness. Jesus is often called the "Light of the World," bringing hope and salvation to a world in need. This theme is reflected in traditions such as lighting candles,

decorating with bright lights, and singing carols that proclaim the joyous news of Christ's birth.

The Christmas season also focuses on the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—as a model of faith, obedience, and love. Feasts such as the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, on January 1st, honor Mary's pivotal role in the story of salvation. Other days, like the Feast of the Holy Innocents on December 28th, remind believers of the challenges and sacrifices surrounding Jesus' arrival into the world.

The Season of Epiphany

Epiphany, which begins on January 6th, concludes the Christmas season and opens a new chapter in the liturgical year. The word "Epiphany" comes from the Greek word "epiphaneia," meaning "manifestation" or "appearance." It commemorates the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of all people.

The primary focus of Epiphany is the visit of the Magi, or Wise Men, to the Christ child. According to the Gospel of Matthew, these travelers from the East followed a star to find and worship Jesus, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Each gift held symbolic meaning: gold signified Jesus' kingship, frankincense His divinity, and myrrh His future suffering and death.

(Continued on page 2)



PLAN TO ATTEND!

The Annual Meeting of Our Savior Lutheran Church will be held on **Sunday, January 19, 2025**, following worship. The Annual Report will be available at the information desk or in the church office mid-January.

Please plan to be present as we embrace the wonderful opportunities God has given us to do ministry.

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.OSLCWAYNE.ORG

(Continued from page 1)

The Magi's journey represents the universal nature of Christ's mission—He came not only for the Jewish people but for all nations and cultures.

Epiphany also celebrates other manifestations of Jesus' divine nature, such as His baptism in the Jordan River and His first miracle at the wedding in Cana. These events reveal Jesus' identity and mission, showing how God's grace works through Him to transform the world.

Spiritual Lessons

Together, Christmas and Epiphany emphasize key themes of revelation, joy, and mission. Christmas focuses on God's love made visible in the birth of Jesus, while Epiphany highlights the wider world's recognition of this gift. Both seasons call Christians to respond to God's gift with faith, gratitude, and action.

One of the most important lessons of these seasons is the universality of God's salvation. The humility of Christ's birth and the homage of the Magi remind believers that God's love is for everyone, regardless of background or status. They also invite Christians to carry this message of hope and light into their own lives, sharing it with others through acts of kindness, service, and faith.

Conclusion

The seasons of Christmas and Epiphany are rich with meaning and offer profound opportunities for reflection and celebration. They remind Christians of God's incredible gift of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, and His call to bring light and love to all people. By embracing the lessons of these seasons, believers are encouraged to deepen their faith and share the joy of God's presence with the world.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Chad



- January 4 & 5 Shelly Armstrong, pianist
- January 11 & 12 Connie Webber, organist
- January 19 & 20 Connie Webber, organist
- January 25 & 26 Sue Olson, pianist (Sat)
Joyful Noise handbells (Sun)
Connie Webber, organist



JOIN OUR CHURCH FAMILY!

Do you or someone you know have an interest in joining the church? We will host a new member orientation this spring for anyone interested in joining the church. Please contact Pr. Chad or the church office to let us know of your interest.



DAILY DEVOTIONAL BOOKS

The January, February, March issue of the Christ In Our Home devotional books are at the information desk; both regular and large print are available.

CHILDREN'S OFFERING JAR HAS RETURNED!



The glass offering jar—you might remember it as the Tanzania jar!— is back up front! Children are invited to take forward an offering when they come up for the Children's Sermon. Adults, feel free to send your pocket change with any of the children coming forward. It's always so heartwarming to see the children joyfully give to the work of the church and to hear the "clink, clink, clink" of change hitting the bottom of the jar.

ALTAR GUILD MEETING

There will be an informational meeting for Altar Guild members on Saturday, January 11, 2025 at 10am. With some new members to the Altar Guild team, this will be an opportunity to review a few things with the whole group and to discuss set-up for communion as we transition back to having baked bread for communion! If you have any questions, please contact Joan Baier (375-4038) or Melia Hefti (375-2157).

THANK YOU'S...

Wayne Food Pantry—Thank you so much for your generous donation of \$960 dated November 26, 2024, to the Wayne Food Pantry. Your donations help to enable us to provide nutrition to individuals and families in need in Wayne County, Nebraska.

Jenny Hammer,
Wayne Food Pantry Coordinator

Thank you received for donation made—

Lutheran World Relief: \$308.40 (Dollar Door Offering-LWR Quilt & Kit Shipping Fund)



Pr. Chad Rademacher—I am grateful for all the Christmas cards, gift cards, goodies, phone calls, and text messages this Christmas season. Your generosity, care, and compassion are greatly appreciated. Thank you for thinking of Sara and me and for extending your hospitality. Warm blessings as we continue to dwell in the love of the babe born in the manger.

Bill and Valerie Koeber—Thank you so much for the poinsettia. It is very beautiful and also reminds us the poinsettia is a Christmas flower symbolizing the Star of Bethlehem. " Oh, Come, oh, Come, Emmanuel!

Kris Robinson—I'd like to thank the Church Council, WELCA and others for the Christmas cards, gifts and goodies! Jerry & I appreciate all of the kindness shown to us throughout the year. Blessings to all and Happy New Year!

Mary Stalling—Thank you to the Church Council, WELCA, and all who remembered me this Christmas! It was very much appreciated!



POINSETTIAS

THANK YOU to all who furnished **POINSETTIAS** to enhance the Christmas season. You may pick them up anytime. Please leave the plastic dish that is under the plant. If you do not find your poinsettia, please check the east hallway near the multi-purpose room.

BREAD FOR COMMUNION

This January, *communion bread is transitioning from wafers back to unleavened bread.* **THANK YOU** to all who volunteered to bake bread; what a tremendous response to our request! We appreciate your willingness to serve God and our congregation.



CHRISTMAS VISIT

On Tuesday, December 17, the Outreach Ministry Team and other members of the congregation traveled to the Juvenile Services Center in Madison for their annual **CHRISTMAS VISIT**. Pastor Chad led a short Christmas Program that included group singing and readings by adults and youth. We served cookies, popcorn, and pop-treats that they do not ordinarily have. As always, we had the opportunity to visit with the residents. We gave a cash gift for the center that comes from the Dollar Door Offering and from the Outreach budget. We find this visit a rewarding experience.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

The Outreach Ministry Team would like to thank all who helped with **CHRISTMAS CAROLING** and the soup supper on Wednesday, December 18; more than 70 attended! We split into two groups and caroled at Kinship, Countryview, and the homes of six shut-ins. We returned to church for a soup supper hosted by Charity Circle; **THANK YOU** to all who helped provide the soup and snacks. We enjoyed the great turnout; it was wonderful!



SOUPER BOWL SOUP COOK-OFF!

Join us for a Soup-er Bowl Sunday Soup Lunch on Sunday, February 9, following worship.

For a free will donation, you can take part in the judging AND get to enjoy a warm lunch. The Fellowship Team will provide cinnamon rolls and relishes.

We are looking for "Soup-er" cooks to enter the contest by making a crockpot of soup to share. Winner of the soup contest will win the first ever traveling trophy! A sign-up sheet to enter the contest will be at the information desk.

CIRCLE & MINISTRY GROUP MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

- Tuesday, January 7, 10am

JOY CIRCLE

- Wednesday, January 8, 2pm
Program: Greeting Cards
Leader: Dorothy Wert
Hostess: Dorothy Wert

CHARITY CIRCLE

- Wednesday, January 15, 7pm
Program: Valentines and Easter Cards for Shut-Ins
Leaders: Sue Olson, Kris Robinson

VISITATION MINISTRY GROUP

- Wednesday, January 15, 1pm

QUILT MINISTRY GROUP

- No Meetings until Spring

All women of the congregation are always welcome and invited to participate.



ALTAR GUILD

Altar Guild workers for January: Joan Baier, Melia Hefti, Karen Zach, Denise Broders, Trisha Peters, Martina Swanson, Paula Gemelke, Julie/Jim Hansen, Virginia Backstrom, Debbie Bargholz, Peggy Hank, Cheryl Henschke, Rhonda Blecke, Madge Brufat, Marsha Roth, Janet Sievers, Julie Grone, Mary Hansen Please check the worship assistant schedule for the date and time.



GREETINGS!

Happy New Year, Ladies!

I hope you had a Christmas filled with peace, joy and family, as you attended one of our beautiful church services.

We had a nice turnout of ladies for our Women's Christmas luncheon and thank them for coming and bringing the salads and desserts. I also, want to thank Lynette, Margaret and Sue for the help in making the main meal and to Sue and Lynette for the nice program they presented. We were able to deliver some meals to home-bound afterwards with the leftovers. An extra big thank you to Dave and Sue for setting up and taking down the tables and for cleaning all of the white tablecloths. I am blessed to have all of you on the Executive Board.

The Executive Board also wants to thank Chele M. for the kitchen towels she screen printed and embroidered. They are lovely and so needed!

The 2025 Winter Retreat will be held on Saturday, January 18, from 9:30am to 3pm, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Grand Island. This year's theme is "The Fire in Your Heart?" *-I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart. Psalm 40:8 NRSV.* Plans are still being developed for the day but details will be released soon on the WELCA website and Facebook page. There will of course, be a Bible Study, speakers and lunch, plus a few surprises. Registration is due by Saturday, January 11; cost is \$20. If you are interested in going, please get in touch with me.

If you aren't already coming to a circle program, start your New Year by checking them out: JOY Circle is January 8th at 2pm with making Greeting Cards and CHARITY Circle is January 15th at 7pm to make Cards for Shut-ins. Hope to see you at one or both of them!

Dorothy Wert,
WELCA President

WELCA PURPOSE

As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.



PASTORAL ACTS

† A memorial service was held Friday, December 20, for **Linda Young**. Linda died December 16, 2024.

WITH SYMPATHY



Our sympathy is extended to the family of **Mark Wiltse**. Mark passed away December 30, 2024. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

WORSHIP SERVICES— at Wayne Countryview & Kinship

Worship with Communion is offered on the first Tuesday of the month—**January 7**.

- Wayne Countryview at 2pm
- Kinship at 3:30pm.

Worship is also offered the third Tuesday of the month at Kinship at 3:30pm.

- Tuesday, January 21

WACAM Worship Services

- **December 30-January 3**—Radio Devotions
- **January 15**—Devotions at Kinship
- **January 19**—Worship at Countryview, 1:30pm



IN OUR PRAYERS

We remember in prayer those who were hospitalized in the last month: Sandra Henschke, Pr. Bill Koeber, Jon Haase, Lyndy Labenz.

“YOU VISITED ME...”

The Visitation Ministry Group meets to sign and send cards to church members and to share a visit with friends. Please come and be a part of our Visitation Ministry Group. The group will meet on **Wednesday, January 15, at 1pm**.

For more information about this wonderful ministry, please contact Rhonda Blecke, Sandra Lutt or the church office.

OWL'S BIBLE STUDY

Owls Bible Study will resume on Wednesday January 15, 2025. We will meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, at 10am to study the New Testament book of Romans.

If you haven't been a part of our Bible Studies in the past, now is a great time to join us as we begin a new course of study. You do not have to be 70 years old to join us; we welcome all ages of people and look forward to growing our group.

KINSHIP BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study at Kinship meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays, at 3:30pm. This study led by Sharon Garvin uses Lectionary Bible readings and a resource from the ELCA entitled, *Daily Discipleship*. Join them on **Thursdays, January 9 & 23**. Everyone is welcome.



SLEEPING MAT MINISTRY

Sleeping mats are made from plastic shopping bags. This is a great way to recycle all those plastic grocery bags! (A basket is available in the narthex to collect CLEAN bags.) There are several steps to preparing the bags before the mats can be crocheted...so there are opportunities for all to participate! Join us on **Thursday, January 2, and Monday, January 20, from 9–11am**.

Consider being a part of this wonderful ministry; both the VA in Omaha and Orphan Grain Train look forward to receiving the mats!

2025 RADIO BROADCASTS

Consider sponsoring a radio broadcast in 2025. We continue to offer the option of having a co-sponsor for the weekend broadcast. If you would prefer to be the only sponsor for the weekend; the cost is \$75. If you would like to share the broadcast with another sponsor; the cost would be \$40 for each sponsor. Please contact the church office (kris@oslwayne.org or 402-375-2899) for more information or to reserve a date. Thanks to all who support this ministry of the church!

Note: The first available dates are March 2, 9, 16 & 30, 2025.



- 1 Amy White
- 3 Easton Blecke
- 4 Dawn Nelson
- 5 Lori Dickes, Logan Milligan
- 6 Erin Wieland
- 7 Connie Meyer, Terri Test
- 9 JoAnne Benshoof, Alexis Frye
- 10 Joyce Hoskins, Don Preston, Liza Wacker
- 11 Amy Schweers
- 12 Shelly Armstrong, Jerry Robinson
- 13 Aiden Petersen, Annette Ping
- 15 Corliss Krusemark, Nancy Reinhardt
- 16 Peggy Grosz
- 18 Reagan McGuire
- 19 Dianne Frye
- 20 Wes Blecke, Betty Morris
- 21 Katie Hoskins, Sue Olson, Eric Robbins
- 22 Harold Fleeer, April Victor
- 23 Dennis Baier, Mike Lutt, Robert Woehler
- 25 Christian Legler
- 28 Sandra Wriedt
- 30 Karen Longe, Steve McLagan, Carlyle Young
- 31 Evan Greve



- 4 Bill & Rhonda Blecke (56)
- 6 Tom & Jennifer Sievers (22)
- 11 Bob & Marilyn Carhart (66)
- 17 Vince & Vicki Kniesche (27)
- 27 Byron & Liza Wacker (31)

If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please accept our apology and let the church office know.



DOLLAR DOOR OFFERING —WACAM

The January Dollar Door Offering recipient will be WACAM (Wayne Association of Congregations and Ministers).

Together our dollars can help them help others!

YOU'RE INVITED... TO COFFEE with Council



Coffee with Council is an opportunity to meet with members of the church council for coffee, refreshments and discussion. Join them prior to worship, 9am, **Sunday morning, January 12**, in the church narthex.

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

If you're an eligible Thrivent Financial member and have Choice Dollars® available to direct, please consider designating your available funds to Our Savior. For more info or to direct Choice Dollars, call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice." Or go to: <http://thrivent.com>.



You can give electronically to OSLC—just download the Vanco Mobile app OR go to our website at <https://oslcwayne.org/give/>

GENERAL FUND FINANCIAL REPORT

	As of	
	December 15, 2024	Year-to-Date
Beginning balance, 11/15/2024	\$47,582.04	\$26,252.03
Add: Income	24,586.86	390,045.39
Less: Expenses	-26,861.61	-370,990.13
Ending balance, 12/15/2024	<u>\$45,307.29</u>	<u>\$45,307.29</u>

If you have any questions about this report or other church finance matters, please contact Tom Hansen (402-518-0640) or Paula Gemelke (402-369-2176).

COUNCIL CORNER

—Monday, December 9, 2024 Meeting

- Council learned that our insurance premium will increase by almost 30%. The deductible will change from \$2,500 to \$7,500. For hail and wind damage, the deductible will be set at 1% of the replacement value or \$100,000. In the best interest of the church, the council decided to rename the Bargholz Estate to the Contingency Fund.
- Council learned about a short program being held to honor St. Lucia, a young Christian martyr who died for her faith. Confirmation girls, along with their mothers and grandmothers, will be invited to attend and learn about St. Lucia, followed by a small breakfast. We hope to establish this as a yearly tradition held on/near December 13.
- Council learned that the Fellowship Team will host a Soup-er Bowl party on Sunday, February 9, following worship.
- Council received feedback that the *Harvest of Hope* confirmation service project was a huge success, and the confirmation students had a great experience. A big thank you goes out to the congregation for their support in making the event successful.
- The date for the Annual Meeting has been set for Sunday, January 19, following worship.
- Council was informed of a tentative Fish Fry date, scheduled for Friday, April 4. More information will be provided in the coming months.

The next meeting of the Church Council will be **Monday, January 13, 2025**.

CALENDAR ITEMS



Reminder...please contact the church office regarding any meetings or gatherings scheduled; especially those held after office hours, so that they can be added to the master calendar. If no evening activities are listed, the church building is locked at approx. 5pm.

PUBLICATION DEADLINES

For the Weekend Bulletin: by 11am each Thursday.

For the Monthly Newsletter: 20th of the month.

RESOURCES

- Wayne County Family Coalition (402-375-2200)
- Wayne Food Pantry & Backpack Program (402-375-2669 – fpcwayne.org/food-pantry) In order to use the Wayne Food Pantry, please call or email in advance if you need assistance. All inquiries are confidential.
- Wayne Food Truck – Saturday, January 25, at Journey Christian Church



This newsletter is published monthly as an update on the life and activities of

Our Savior Lutheran Church

421 N Pearl Street
(located at the corner of 5th & Main Street)
Wayne, Nebraska 68787
402/375-2899

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Weekly Worship Opportunities:

Saturday Evening: 5:30pm

Sunday Morning: 10am

(streamed live and posted to our Facebook page:
Our Savior Lutheran Church, Wayne NE (ELCA)
and broadcast live on AM 1590 and FM 98.9)

Sunday School: (N-5th)

Sundays—10am; Fall/Winter/Spring

Confirmation: (6th-8th)

Wednesdays—6pm; Fall/Winter/Spring

- Staff -

Rev. Chad Rademacher
Pastor

Connie Webber
Director of Music

Bridget Vaith
Coordinator of Youth & Family Ministry

Virginia Kniesche
Coordinator of Children's Ministry

Kris Robinson
Administrative Assistant

- Church Council -

Kelly Grone *Interim President*

Larry Lueders *Vice President*

Paula Gemelke *Treasurer*

Jessica Wieland *Secretary*

Marion Arneson **Ron Carnes**

Kim Dunklau **Jim Hansen**

Mary Mohl

Our Savior Lutheran Church

5th & Main Street | Wayne, Nebraska 68787
402/375-2899



“WE...have come to WORSHIP HIM.”

Matthew 2:2

JANUARY 2025









Our Savior Lutheran Church
421 N. Pearl Street
Wayne NE 68787

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Giving Thanks For:

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<p>1</p>  <p>Office Closed Radio Devotions</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Radio Devotions 9:00am Sleeping Mat Ministry</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Radio Devotions</p>	<p>4</p> <p>5:30pm Worship</p>
<p>5</p> <p>9:00am Fellowship Hour 10:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>10:30am Staff Meeting 5:30pm Property Team Meeting 5:45pm Executive Committee</p>	<p>7</p> <p>10:00am Cluster Text Study 10:00am WELCA Executive Board</p>  <p>2:00pm Communion @ Wayne Countryview 3:30pm Communion @ Kinship Pointe</p>	<p>8</p> <p>10:30am WACAM 2:00pm Joy Circle 6:00pm Confirmation 6:00pm Joyful Noise</p>	<p>9</p> <p>3:30pm Bible Study @ Kinship</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10:00am Alter Guild Mtg 5:30pm Worship</p>
<p>12</p> <p>9:00am Coffee with Council 10:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship</p>	<p>13</p> <p>10:30am Staff Meeting 6:00pm Christian Ed Meeting 6:00pm Fellowship Team Mtg 7:00pm Church Council</p>	<p>14</p> <p>10:00am Cluster Text Study 5:30pm WSC LuMin Ministry at Front Porch</p>	<p>15</p> <p>10:00am OWL's Bible Study 1:00pm Visitation Ministry Group 3:30pm Devotions @ Kinship 6:00pm Confirmation 6:00pm Joyful Noise 7:00pm Charity Circle 7:00pm HS Youth Group</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>5:30pm Worship</p>
<p>19</p> <p>9:00am Fellowship Hour 10:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship</p>  <p>11:15am Annual Meeting 1:30pm Worship @ Countryview</p>	<p>20</p> <p>NewsLetter DEADLine</p> <p>9:00am Sleeping Mat Ministry 10:30am Staff Meeting 5:00pm Worship & Music Ministry Team</p>	<p>21</p> <p>10:00am Cluster Text Study 3:30pm Worship @ Kinship Pointe 5:30pm WSC LuMin Ministry at Front Porch</p>	<p>22</p> <p>6:00pm Confirmation 6:00pm Joyful Noise 7:00pm HS Youth Group</p>	<p>23</p> <p>3:30pm Bible Study @ Kinship</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>5:30pm Worship</p>
<p>26</p> <p>9:00am Fellowship Hour 10:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship</p>	<p>27</p> <p>10:30am Staff Meeting</p>	<p>28</p> <p>10:00am Cluster Text Study 5:30pm WSC LuMin Ministry at Front Porch</p>	<p>29</p> <p>6:00pm Confirmation 6:00pm Joyful Noise 7:00pm HS Youth Group</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> 	

PRAYER *Time*

Prayers for the New Year

The Work of Christmas Begins

When the carols have been stilled, when the star-topped tree is taken down, when family and friends are gone home, when we are back to our schedules, the work of Christmas begins: To *welcome* the refugee, To *heal* a broken planet, To *feed* the hungry, To *build bridges* of trust, not walls of fear, To *share* our gifts, To *seek justice and peace* for all people, To *bring Christ's light* to the world.

Michael Dougherty

Entering the New Year

God of all time, help us to enter the New Year quietly, thoughtful of who we are to ourselves and to others, mindful that our steps make an impact and our words carry power. May we walk gently. May we speak only after we have listened well.

Creator of all life, help us enter the New Year reverently, aware that you have endowed every creature and plant, every person and habitat with beauty and purpose. May we regard the world with tenderness. May we honor rather than destroy.

Lover of all, help us enter the New Year joyfully, willing to laugh and dance and dream, remembering our many gifts with thanks and looking forward to blessings yet to come. May we welcome your love. May we cast off the small, vindictive god our fears have made. May the grace and peace of Christ bless us now and in the days ahead.

Vinita Hampton Wright

New Year's Prayer

As the dawn breaks on a new year, let us give thanks for all we hold dear; our health, our family, and our friends. Let us release our grudges, our anger and our pains, for these are nothing but binding chains. Let us live each day in the most loving ways, the God-conscious way. Let us serve all who are in need, regardless of race, color, or creed. Let us keep God of our own understanding in our hearts and to chant God's name each day. Let us lead the world from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth and from wrong to right. Let us remember that we are all one, embracing all, discriminating against none. May our year be filled with peace, prosperity and love. May God's blessings shower upon us and bestow upon us a bright, healthy and peaceful new year.

Rev. Marcy Sheremetta

A Wish for the New Year

Dear Lord, please give me...A few *friends* who understand me and remain my friends, a *work* to do which has real value, without which the world would be the poorer, a *mind* unafraid to travel, even though the trail be not blazed, an understanding *heart*, a sense of *humor*, *time* for quiet, silent meditation, a feeling of *the presence of God*, the *patience* to wait for the coming of these things, with the *wisdom* to recognize them when they come.

Author Unknown

PRAYER *Time*

Prayers for the New Year (continued)

The Year Ahead

May God make your year a happy one; not by shielding us from all sorrows and pain, but by strengthening us to bear it, as it comes; not by making our path easy, but by making us sturdy to travel any path; not by taking hardships from us, but by taking fear from our heart; not by granting us unbroken sunshine, but by keeping our face bright, even in the shadows; not by making our life always pleasant, but by showing us when people and their causes need us most, and by making us anxious to be there to help. May God's love, peace, hope and joy be with us for the year ahead.

Adapted by Debra Mooney, author unknown

A New Year's Prayer

Lord, You make all things new; You bring hope alive in our hearts and cause our spirits to be born again.

Thank You for this New Year; for all the potential it holds. Come and kindle in us a mighty flame so that in our time, many will see the wonders of god and live forever to praise your glorious name.

Author unknown

Be Our Light for the New Year

Come, Holy Spirit, Spirit of the Risen Christ, be with us today and always. Be our light, our guide, and our comforter. Be our strength, our courage, and our sanctifier. May this New Year be a time of deep spiritual growth for us, a time of welcoming your graces and gifts, a time for forgiving freely and unconditionally, a time for growing in virtue and goodness.

Come Holy Spirit; be with us today and always.

Amen

Author unknown

Drenched in Holiness Prayer: Prayer for a New Year

Dear God,

On this day I ask You to grant this request. May I know who I am and what I am every moment of every day. May I be a catalyst for light and love and bring inspiration to those whose eyes I meet. May I have the strength to stand tall in the face of conflict and the courage to speak my voice, even when I am scared. May I have the humility to follow my heart and the passion to live my soul's desires. May I seek to know the highest truth and dismiss the gravitational pull of my lower self. May I embrace and love the totality of myself, my darkness as well as my light. May I be brave enough to hear my heart to let it soften so that I may gracefully choose faith over fear. Today is my day to surrender anything that stands between the sacredness of my humanity and my divinity. May I be drenched in my Holiness and engulfed by Your love. May all else melt away.

And so it is.

Debbie Ford