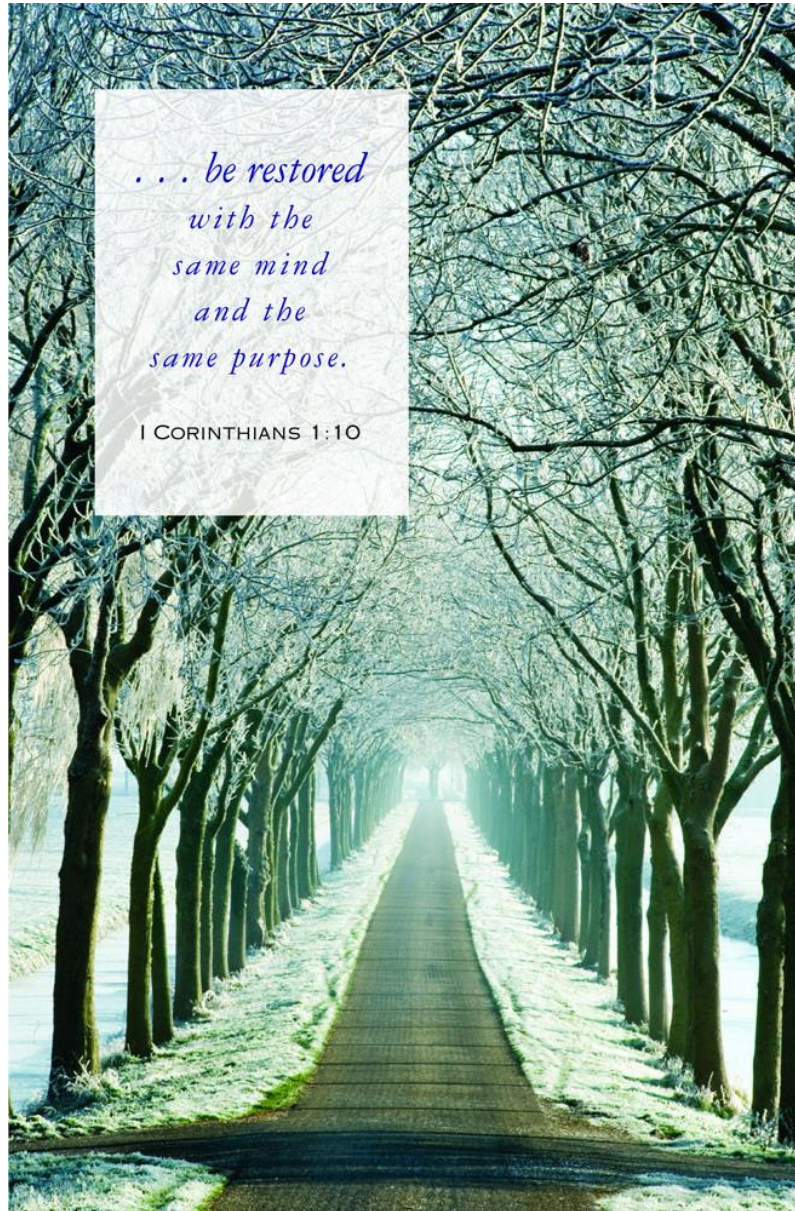


Here is a collection of prayers, poems, and hymns that Bill and Robin gathered. It can be used for reflection this New Year's weekend. You can select what you want to read or it can be read through as a 'little service.'



PRAYERS FOR THE NEW YEAR
CONGREGATIONAL UCC
IOWA CITY, IA

Preparing

Almighty God,
at the start of a New Year
we seek your grace for the time that lies ahead,
your wisdom for its puzzles,
your strength for all that will challenge us.
(Church of Scotland)

PSALM 67

A Prayer for the New Year

God of wisdom and truth,
at the beginning of this new year
we look back and we look forward.
In the year that has passed
we experienced joy and we experienced sorrow;
we felt protected and we felt challenged.
Some things went by much too fast,
and some things lingered for far too long.
We are reminded that you are present through it all.
We are reminded that we are never alone.
We are reminded that nothing can separate us from your love.
So give us grace and give us courage
to live faithfully in this imperfect world.
Remind us always of the promise of your realm,
emerging around us and through us.
(Excerpted from John W. Vest)

HYMN “Ring Out, Wild Bells”

(Here is a link to the music if you would like it: <https://hymnary.org/media/fetch/96289>.)

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let it die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let it go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring in the valiant and the free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the dimness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be

ECCLESIASTES 3:1-10

The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?
(Mary Oliver)

PSALM 85

Thanksgiving

Good and gracious God,
we have emerged from a difficult year,
and we give thanks for help found in times of illness, bereavement, perplexity and stress,
and for all those who have served the needs of others during the pandemic.

You are the Creator of all things,
snow and hail and frost, the ice of winter as well as the warmth of summer,
and we marvel at the mysteries of Your providence in the shaping of our world.
We thank You for the future which is Your gift to us in this year of 2022.
Help us to live in hope, not fear, in love not cynicism, in resolution not despair.
(Church of Scotland)

Intercession

Gracious God,
at the start of a new year we bring You our hopes for the world and for its peoples.
Grant us peace in place of strife, a desire for justice instead of a dash for growth,
the building up of forests not their pulling down,
the cleansing not the pollution of our seas, and in place of hatred goodwill.

Lord, this year will bring its share of illness and bereavement and family conflict.
We pray now for those who already face these trials.
May they know Your healing and hope, and the good news of Jesus Christ
who is Lord of this life and the life to come,
our brother who is human like us,
yet picked up our frail bodies and took us with Him into life eternal.
May His Spirit bear witness to these things,
to what You are doing in their lives and ours.

We take a minute to reflect quietly on what lies ahead for each one of us,
and to ask Your help and blessing . . .
Lord God, one day we will see all things gathered up in Jesus Christ:
may we live now and always in the light and love of that.
(Church of Scotland)

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us this our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen.

Now Greet the Swiftly Changing Year

(Here is a link to the music if you would like it: <https://hymnary.org/media/fetch/96151>.)

Now greet the swiftly changing year
With joy and penitence sincere.
Rejoice, rejoice, with thanks embrace
Another year of grace.

Christ's love abundant far exceeds
The volume of a whole year's needs.
Rejoice, rejoice, with thanks embrace
Another year of grace.

With such a Lord to lead our way
In want and in prosperity,
What need we fear in earth or space
In this new year of grace?

"All glory be to God on high,
And peace on earth!" the angels cry.
Rejoice, rejoice, with thanks embrace
Another year of grace.

A Prayer for The New Year

God,
Grant that I may pass through the coming year with a faithful heart.
There will be much to test me and make weak my strength before the year ends.
In my confusion I shall often say the word that is not true and do the thing of which I am
ashamed.
There will be errors in the mind and great inaccuracies of judgment.
In seeking the light, I shall again and again find myself walking in the darkness.
I shall mistake my light for Your light and I shall drink from the responsibility of the choice I
make...
Though my days be marked with failures, stumblings, fallings, let my spirit be free so that You
may take it and redeem my moments in all the ways my needs reveal.
Give me the quiet assurance of Your Love and Presence.
Grant that I may pass through the coming year with a faithful heart. Amen
(Howard Thurman—*Meditations of The Heart*)

Sending

Eternal God: in your purpose our lives are lived, and by your grace our hopes are bright. Be with
us in the coming year, forgiving, leading, and saving; so that we may walk without fear, in the
way of Jesus Christ.
(Presbyterian Book of Worship)

Benediction

Go in peace.
Strengthen the weak.
Support the faint hearted.
Return no one evil for evil, but in all things seek the good.
May the love of God,
the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you now and forever. Amen.

