

New Year's Day

Pastoral Prayer

There is something completely magical about gateways, O God. It is hardly any wonder that the ancients often regarded them as pathways to blessing. We too have a sense of their mystery and intrigue as we begin another year. We are leaving behind one chapter of our lives and opening another. We are now sensitive to the burdens we have borne in the previous year—all the illnesses, losses, failures, mistakes, broken promises, disrupted friendships, and unfulfilled dreams. But we are also keenly aware of the possibilities that lie before us—possibilities of new relationships, new growth, new work to do, new experiences of ourselves. We pray for the strength not to fail you in the coming year, or to fail

ourselves; for when we fail you, we fail ourselves. Enable us to live passionately and courageously, deeply energized by the spirit of love and harmony that flow from you. Make it easier for us to say the right words, do the right things, and construct the right future. Save us from any temptation to direct our own paths. Let our faith and our companionship with Christ give us stability when the seas around us are rough, and a sense of gratitude when they are not. Teach us to serve you in ways that will make our world more loving and more spiritual. And let us regard this particular gateway—the beginning of a new year—as the passageways to a closer and finer relationship with your spirit. Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Responsive Prayer

Leader: We stand at the beginning of a new year, dear God.

People: **We are conscious of our mistakes and failures in the year that is gone.**

Leader: We repent of our sins and ask for your forgiveness in the name of Christ.

People: **Now we turn to the year that lies before us and ask for your divine leadership in everything we do.**

Leader: Grant that this may be a year of spiritual advancement for all of us.

People: **And not for us only, but for the world in which we live.**

Leader: Help us to walk in humility of spirit and to seek your guidance at every step of the way.

People: **Teach us to pray and to listen and to wait upon your Spirit.**

Leader: Let every day become a time for enjoying our relationship with you.

People: **Let every moment be a moment of communion, even though we may be unaware of it at the time.**

Leader: Bless the days that lie before us, that we may experience a deeper sense of your presence.

People: **And bless the lives that we offer you now, that they may be a blessing to others.**

All: **In the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Adapted from *God's People at Prayer* by John Killinger (Abingdon Press, 2006) Reprinted with permission.
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