

JANUARY 1, 2024  
NEW YEAR'S EVE,  
NEW YEAR'S DAY



*Pursuing a life of mercy in the new year.*

## NEW YEAR'S BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your New Year's Day observances.

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Ecclesiastes 3:1-13</b>	<b>A time for everything</b>
	<b>Psalms 8</b>	<b>Divine majesty and human dignity</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Revelation 21:1-6a</b>	<b>A new heaven and earth</b>
	<b>Matthew 25:31-46</b>	<b>Parable of final judgment</b>

## SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY

*"Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'"*

**Matthew 25:34-36 (NRSV)**

## PRAYERS AND BLESSING

### **A Prayer for New Year's Day:**

Gracious and merciful God, we thank you for how you care for us through others; give us a living faith to be merciful to all for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man who comes in glory. Amen.

### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, we thank you for your mercy that strengthens us and the food that feeds us; we pray that all people may have food, shelter, clothing, and the care they need. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the mercy of God dwell with you now and always. (Revelation 21:3)



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## HYMN FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY

*O God, Our Help in Ages Past*

## NEW YEAR'S DAY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

## CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What are some of your mountain highs and valley lows for 2023?
- What are some of your hopes and dreams for 2024?

## DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Matthew 25:31-46.

Jesus has a way of getting our attention. In this reading, he is speaking as the Son of Man coming in triumph at the end of time. In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus emphasizes discipleship. What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus, to be obedient to his word? If we listen to Jesus' parable (perhaps less a parable and more a final teaching emphasis before his death and resurrection), we can certainly worry about our eternal judgment. But that would miss the point of Jesus' teaching. His words are all about a life of mercy. We see this in his opening message in the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-16). In Jesus' final teaching moment before his crucifixion, those on the king's right hand don't even know they have served the king (and others) with mercy. Actions count. Jesus wants our life of faith as disciples and our actions to be based on God's mercy given to us and extended through us to others.

*Discuss:* As we look to the year ahead, how do we start fresh and pursue a life of mercy, the same mercy we have received from God in Christ?

*Pray:* **Merciful God, help us to see and to trust your undeserved kindness that we may gladly care for others as you have cared for us through Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. Amen.**

## SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the New Year's Bible Readings and theme for this day, how can you show compassion and mercy to someone in need?

## RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Gather on New Year's Eve or Day to give thanks for the past year and to ask for God's blessing on the year to come. Provide glasses for all gathered to share in a toast. Light a candle to represent the presence of Christ.

*Pray:* **God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, thank you for a new year of blessings, opportunities, and challenges. Help us to live this year with faith in our hearts and praises on our lips. Amen.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)