

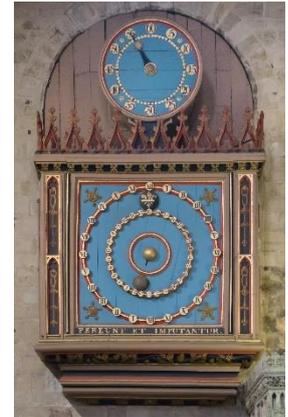
# Parish of Central Exeter

## New Year's Eve

31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

## Watchnight Service

Welcome everyone.



What can be said in New Year rhymes,  
That's not been said a thousand times?  
The new years come, the old years go,  
We know we dream, we dream we know.  
We rise up laughing with the light,  
We lie down weeping with the night.  
We hug the world until it stings,  
We curse it then and sigh for wings.  
We live, we love, we woo, we wed,  
We wreath our brides, we sheet our dead.  
We laugh, we weep, we hope, we fear,  
And that's the burden of the year.

*(Ella Wilcox: 'The Year') (1910)*

### Introduction

The New Year is a human invention. A year is simply the time it takes the earth to go round the sun once, no matter when that starting point is. But the earth's motion around the sun creates the seasons, and the nearer you live to the poles of our planet, the more pronounced they are. So it is not surprising that long ago people saw the seasonal cycle restarting sometime between winter and spring. And if you want to celebrate that process of ending and beginning, you need to agree on a point in time when that will happen.

So at the time of the year when the nights are at their longest, and daylight at its shortest, we celebrate the New Year as an occasion when we look back to all that has happened in the past twelve months and forward to the next twelve. This is often accompanied by a temptation to want to write off the old, and to start afresh with new resolve. 2020 in particular will be a year that most people will want to forget. Yet as the events of the last two weeks have demonstrated, the problems of 2020 don't close down at midnight on December 31<sup>st</sup>. We might have a new calendar on our wall and a different coloured diary, but we ourselves do not undergo any mystical transformation as we enter 2021. We bring our past with us.

Consult not your fears,  
but your hopes and your dreams.

Think not about your frustrations,  
but about your unfulfilled potential.

Concern not yourself with what you tried and failed in,  
but what it is still possible to do.

Now is the time to put aside past and present setbacks and failures  
and look with confidence to the new day called tomorrow.

*(Pope John XXIII)*

So as we enter the New Year, rather than spending the time beating ourselves with sticks and regretting what might have been, let us instead say farewell to 2020, and spend a few moments reflecting on what we have gained from the year. *(You now have an opportunity to give examples if you wish.)*

### **Good-bye to 2020**

*Let us say together*

The old year is worn and tired.  
We take with us its wisdom  
– the authority and power of all that we have learned.  
but let go of its despair.

So we take the moment to kiss it goodbye.

Now we stand at a new doorway,  
awaiting that which comes...  
daring to be human creatures,  
vulnerable to the beauty of existence.  
Learning to love.



### **Worship song**

We now hear the hymn 'New every Morning is the Love'. We have seen the video before.  
Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKuzS20T4PU>

The New Year breaks out  
when the eye sees anew,  
when the heart breathes open  
locked rooms, when your  
dead branches burst into  
blossom, when the Call comes  
with no doubt that it's  
calling to you.

*(Source: Richard Wehrman)*



### **Old Testament Reading**    Jeremiah 29: 11-14

<sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you," declares the LORD.

### **We say together**

God of all time, help us 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 honour rather than destroy.

Lover of all souls, 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 lavish love.

*(Vinita Hampton Wright on womansday.com)*

## New Year's Resolution

Beginning, God created,  
so beginning again  
this New Year's Day I  
create, I play, I dream,  
and dance with Wisdom,  
hover with Spirit-Breath,  
embrace with delight  
this life I've been given,  
this story to write, canvas  
to paint, drama to play,  
and I will play and I will see  
all things as good that God  
has made.

*(Sarah Agnew: Praying the story.)*

## Affirmation for 2021

Knowing the sort of person you are, your strengths and your weaknesses, and taking with you any good things from 2020, is there something you want to achieve during 2021. It may help to write it down. (We are not going to ask you to share what it is.)



*Breaking Light 2011*

*Judith Tutin (living Irish artist),*

*Diptych, St. Aidan's Cathedral,  
Enniscorthy, County Wexford,  
Ireland.*

**We acknowledge your intentions for the new year in this prayer.**

May you find yourself,  
trust the person that you meet,  
give that person to a world that needs you.  
Not a perfect you. Not a you with all the answers. Not a superhero. Just you.  
You are becoming who they said you would never be.  
Give this person the credence they deserve.  
Sit with them. Listen to them. Be present.

**Hymn**

'Lord of the Years'. Played and sung by the West Bolton Team Lockdown Band. Words are on the screen.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M\\_uIHs5RoxA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_uIHs5RoxA)

**Ring Out Wild Bells Alfred Lord Tennyson**

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 him die.

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

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more,  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

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 out old shapes of foul disease,  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

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

### **Benediction and Blessing**

Let us look for Christ wherever we go

Let us never stop seeking  
Believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness  
Which the darkness shall not overcome

And may the love of the Creator  
The joy of the Spirit  
And the peace of the Christ-child  
Be with you this New Year, and evermore.

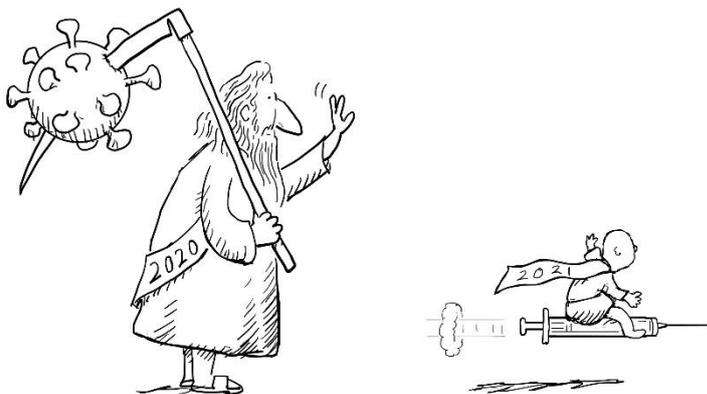
*(by Cara Heafey, UK. Posted on Worship Words)*

### **Closing Music**

We listen to 'Morning has Broken' sung here by Cat Stevens.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0TInLOJuUM>

Happy New Year, everyone!



*Cartoon by Chris Madden. Used with permission.*