



December 31, 2008/January 1, 2009 New Year's Celebration

Liturgy for a New Year

A Service of Holy Communion

SETTING THE SPACE

Create a display that portrays the passing of time at the front of the worship space. Place blocks or books on a table to make different levels and cover with fabric. Use items such as old calendars, clocks, electronic planners, and watches in the display. Include fourteen candles of differing heights to be lit during the reading of Ecclesiastes 3:1–13. Have a basket of tealights available, enough for each participant.

Print the words below from Ecclesiastes 3:1–13 on card stock and cut into 1½" × 4 1/4" cards. Print enough so everyone has a choice of words. Make a sign that says, "There is a time for every matter under heaven... What time is it for you?" and place near the cards. Have the cards available near the entrance to the worship space and invite each person to choose one word that best reflects a resolution they have for the New Year.

Birthing	Dying	Planting
Harvesting	Ending	Healing
Breaking down	Building up	Weeping
Laughing	Mourning	Dancing
Throwing away	Gathering	Embracing
Refraining	Seeking	Losing
Keeping	Throwing away	Keeping silence
Speaking out	Loving	Peace making

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 8)

*Have a small group sing a simple, chant like response such as Phil Porter's **Gathered Here** between stanzas of this spoken call to worship. Have the group hum or an instrumentalist continue playing softly as the words are spoken.*

One Beyond Us, One Around Us,
One Within Us, Sovereign:
your name is majestic in all the earth
and your glory is beyond our imagination.
We come, at this time, to worship you.

Musical Response: Gathered Here

TNCH 742

We look to the sky
and see the wonders of your creation:
the moon, the stars, the works of your hands.
What are we that you are mindful of us?
Mortal beings limited by time and space,
yet you care for us?
We come, at this time, to worship you.

***Musical Response:* Gathered Here**

TNCH 742

You have made us a little less than gods;
you form us in your sacred dreams
and give us the honor of being your children.
Truly your name is majestic in all the earth.
We come, at this time, to worship you.

***Musical Response:* Gathered Here**

TNCH 742

NEW YEAR'S RITUAL

SCRIPTURE – Ecclesiastes 3:1–13

Light the candles in the display at the front of the worship space as Ecclesiastes 3:1–13 is read. Light one candle for each line that begins “a time to...” and pause as a candle is lit.

REFLECTION

Invite people to hold the resolution card they chose at the beginning of the service. Ask one or two questions for reflection such as, “What needs to happen in order for the time you hoped for to be fulfilled? What changes do you need to make? What new things need to be embraced? Of what do you need to be let go?”

Helper in our Past and Hope for our Future:
hold our good intentions,
free us from that which keeps us from the good,
and enable us to move into the coming year
with your love behind, beside, and before us. Amen.

RESPONSE

Invite people to come forward, light a tealight, and place the tealight, along with their resolution card, in the display at the front of the worship space. Have reflective music sung or played during this time.

Alternatively, if your congregation is willing to process forward to receive Communion, people can be invited to place a tealight, along with their resolution card, in the display prior to receiving Communion.

HOLY COMMUNION

PRAYER

Keeper of our days,
we are grateful for the ways you have been revealed to us in the past:
through the love of community – gathered here and beyond;
through nature and the beauty each season brings;
and through a shared hope ignited within us that does not flicker or fade.

Confident of your love,
we bring our whole selves into your presence:
our achievements and our failures,
our proud moments and our hidden shame,
our undying dreams and our detached resolve.

At this gracious table we meet you
in bread made of common wheat,
broken and shared and made whole again
through a sacred communing with all of creation.

**Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty,
the whole universe speaks of your glory,
O God Most High.**

**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God!
Hosanna in the highest!**

Offer WORDS OF INSTITUTION in the tradition of your congregation

PRAYER FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

Spirit of All Life,
move among this bread and this cup
and make us mindful of our oneness with all creation
so this meal of simple substance
may become a true communion
with the one who makes every tomorrow possible.
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Invite people to receive the bread and cup.

BENEDICTION

There is a time and a season for everything:
A time to gather together (*sweep arms from side to center of body in a gathering motion*)
and a time to depart. (*sweep arms from center of body out to side*)
A time to make promises (*motion toward the display of tealights*)
and a time to bring those promises to life. (*clasp hands together over heart*)
A time to receive (*motion toward the communion table*)
and a time to share what we have received. (*hold hands out toward the congregation*)

Go enfolded in the love of God,
emboldened by the call of Christ,
and empowered by the Spirit
to embrace the year ahead.

Amen.

Liturgy for the New Year was written by the Rev. Christine Battjes, member of the **Seasons of the Spirit** Editorial Team.



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