

Welcome to

A Space to Be



Into the New Year January 2021

Find a quiet place to meditate, to pray & be.
Maybe looking out to the garden or sitting in your favourite chair.

As you come to prayer now, pause and be still; breathe slowly
and centre your mind on the presence of God.
You might like to light a candle.

***Loving Father, I still my soul now and remember
that You are here with me, You are here in me,
You are here for me.***

Lord Jesus, I worship You.

Holy Spirit, I welcome You.

Maybe the year has not started with the fresh start that we all hoped for but we can aspire to a fresh awareness of our friendship with God. God's mercies are new every morning. He brings newness of life and He desires that we should embrace the transience of our ever-changing life on earth. God remains outside of time; faithful, never-changing and the same yesterday, today and forever. Not an easy thing to get our heads around. God goes ahead of us into this New Year. God loves us, is kind and sees us as His Masterpiece, His promise remains to be present with us. What foundational and reassuring truth to stand upon as we look forward as well as back.

What does 2020 conjure up for you? A year of disappointments? A year of uncertainty? The heartache of loss, and the grieving of not seeing family and friends? It was a year unlike any other, ever!

Maybe it was a year of opportunity? What did the year give you time to do? What new things have you learnt?

Major corporations were brought to their knees as the money ran dry in their business models, and scientists worked ferociously on a single goal to create a vaccine and succeeded.

In March 2020, it was thought that the pandemic would last few weeks. It is most likely going to last over a year. We find ourselves hoping for the country to regain some normality in time for Easter. The Easter story is a good focus for hope.



King Solomon when seeking God, was given a moment of opportunity when God said: “What can I give you? Ask”.

How would you respond if God asked you that? Would ask for the same as Solomon did:

“Give me a God-listening heart so I can lead your people well, discerning the difference between good and evil. For who on their own is capable of leading your glorious people?”

(1 Kings 3:9 Message)

Amazingly, when we pause and pray, we can meet with God, and ask Him for this amazing gift. A God-listening heart and discernment.

As He gives us this gift, we can hold onto what is true, righteous and good. We know that as we celebrate the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we are assured that God is doing a new thing.

How many rainbows did you see over Sawston in the last year?



God promises Solomon a future that is more than he could have asked for, if he holds true to his focus on God.

As 2021 begins, what are you hoping in? What are you hoping for? Where are you putting your attention? What is God saying to you?

We need to be attuned to God's spirit, His leading, and His comfort. It is not about putting our future hopes into **our** strategies, **our** plans, and **our** ambitions, but being focused on the hope of Eternity.

In this hope of Eternity, we remain focused on God and see His leading, being present in His Spirit.

Let us step forward into 2021 with our attention focused on God, and our hope set on Eternity.

Prayer:

Lord God, I have lots of hopes and aspirations for the coming year, but I am choosing to make just one 'New Year's Resolution' above all the others, and it's simply this...

I resolve to love You with all my heart, and all my soul, and all my mind this year.

I surrender all that I have and all that I am to You at the start of this new year.

Sources:

Inspiring Women Publication January 2021

Lectio 365

At the beginning of a new year, let us reflect on the birth of the Early Church in the book of Acts and also a key moment in the life of the church in the 1700s.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:1-4



At 3am on New Year's Day, 1739, the Holy Spirit also came to an all-night prayer meeting in Fetter Lane, London.

'The power of God came mightily upon us,' recorded John Wesley in his journal, 'insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground.'*

Echoing the experience of those who were propelled out of the upper room in Jerusalem to preach the gospel, John Wesley, too, was propelled out of that prayer room in London to ride 125,000 miles preaching the gospel, while his brother Charles Wesley began writing 6,000 hymns. And their 25-year-old friend, George Whitfield, crossed the Atlantic to stir the fires of America's First Great Awakening. The world would never be the same again.

Jesus said that the Father loves to give the Spirit to those who ask (Matthew 7:11) - just as John and Charles Wesley asked that day in London. You might like to pray the following prayer:

As I open my hands in front of me, I ask You, Father, to fill me with Your Spirit. Fill me with new power for this new year, just as You filled those disciples 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem, and 282 years ago in Fetter Lane, London.

And now, I lift up my hands and I pray for my community, for my nation, and for the nations of the world. I ask You, Father, to stir the fires of another Great Awakening of Your Spirit.

The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak in other tongues. The Spirit also enabled them to speak about Jesus with boldness, to endure hardship and persecution, to perform miracles, to serve the poor, to discern and make difficult decisions, and much more. Spirit-enabled people do these kinds of things.

What might the Spirit be enabling you to do this year?

At the start of the year the Methodist Covenant prayer, written by John Wesley himself in 1755, is prayed by millions of Methodists. It is a liturgy of profound and beautiful surrender, let us join with sisters and brothers in Christ around the world and pray it now:

***I am no longer my own, but Yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
Put me to doing, put me to suffering;
Let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
Exalted for you, or brought low for you;
Let me be full,
Let me be empty,
Let me have all things,
Let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
To your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
You are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in
heaven.
Amen.****

*'The Journal of John Wesley', John Wesley

**Methodist Covenant Prayer, <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/what-is-distinctive-about-methodism/a-covenant-with-god/>

A Blessing

²⁴ ““The LORD bless you

and keep you;

²⁵ the LORD make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the LORD turn his face toward you

and give you peace.””

Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)