

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Thursday, January 1st, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

New Year's Day
2 Corinthians 5:17

Welcome

Call to Worship

The year has turned, but the Lord remains.
From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

What lies behind us is held in God's mercy.
What lies ahead rests in God's faithful hands.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
We come to worship the God who makes all things new.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Faithful and everlasting God,
We praise you, for you are the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end,
the One who was and is and is to come.
You spoke creation into being,
and by your word all things hold together.
You are not bound by time,
yet in love you enter our days and dwell with your people.
We adore you for your mercy that is new every morning,
for your faithfulness that has carried us through every season,
for your grace that has sustained us when we were weak.
As we stand at the threshold of a new year,
we confess that our hope is not in fresh starts or human resolve,
but in you alone.
So now, O Lord, we ask that you would draw near to us.
By your Holy Spirit, awaken our hearts,
open our ears to hear your Word,
and shape our lives according to your will.

May our worship be pleasing in your sight.
May Christ be exalted among us.
And may all that we do in this place give glory to your holy name.
We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Opening Hymns (2)

Scripture

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Sermon

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, grace and peace to you on this New Year's Day.

Today we stand on a threshold.

Behind us lies a year that has already begun to settle into our memory, some which we will carry with gratitude, others that we would rather leave behind.

Ahead of us stretches a new year, a year full of possibility, uncertainty, hope, fear, and promise.

The page of the calendar has turned and with that simple turn of the page, something in us longs to believe that change is possible, that what was heavy might be lifted, that what was broken might be healed, that what was unfinished might finally be completed.

New Year's Day has a way of inviting us to reflect upon our lives in a different way.

We look back and we look forward. We remember where we have been and we wonder where we are going. We ask questions like: 'Who have we become? What have we lost? What have we learned? What still needs to change?'

And the world around us tries to tell us what to do in this moment.

It tells us to make resolutions. To try harder. To be better. To fix ourselves. To start over by a sheer force of will. The message is subtle but clear: If you just want it enough, if you work hard enough, if you discipline yourself enough, you can make yourself new.

However, we know that every year people fail to keep resolutions, things may change for a short time, but eventually our human nature takes over.

The Gospel offers us something deeper. Something truer. Something more hopeful.

The Gospel does not begin with what *we* resolve to do. It begins with what *God* promises to do. Hear again the Word of the Lord:

Revelation 21:5

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Not I will make all new things.
Not I will make some things new.
But I am making all things new.

This is not a distant promise reserved for the end of time alone. It is a present-tense declaration. God is at work right now. God is active right now. God is renewing, restoring, redeeming his people today, here and now.

New Year's Day, for the church, is not primarily about new habits or fresh starts. It is about placing our full trust again in the God who specializes in new beginnings.

However, before we can talk about the new, we must remember the old.

Throughout Scripture, God reveals himself as the One who is faithful across time. The same God who spoke light into darkness in Genesis is the God who raised Jesus from the dead. The same God who delivered Israel from Egypt is the God who poured out the Spirit at Pentecost. God does not reinvent himself with each generation. God renews creation by being consistently faithful to his promises.

This matters, because when we hear the word new, we often imagine something disconnected from the past. We imagine replacement instead of redemption. But God's newness does not erase history; it heals it.

Isaiah declares in:

Isaiah 43:18–19

**¹⁸ "Remember not the former things,
nor consider the things of old.**

¹⁹ Behold, I am doing a new thing;

**now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.**

As we step into a new year, we do so not as people who must reinvent ourselves from scratch, but as people who are carried forward by grace. The God who sustained you last year—through joy and grief, through certainty and doubt—is the same God who walks with you into this new year.

There is something honest about New Year’s Day. It reminds us that time keeps moving. Whether we are ready or not, the days keep unfolding. We cannot go back. We cannot pause the clock. We are finite creatures moving through a finite life.

Psalm 90:12

**¹² So teach us to number our days
that we may get a heart of wisdom.**

This is not a morbid prayer. It is a truthful one. When we remember that our time is limited, we learn what truly matters.

A new year does not mean unlimited opportunity. It means given opportunity. Time itself is a gift—fragile, precious, and fleeting. And how we receive that gift matters.

The temptation on New Year’s Day is to believe that the future is entirely in our control. But the Christian confession is different. We say, “If the Lord wills.” We plan, but we trust. We act, but we pray. We move forward, but we lean on grace.

To enter a new year faithfully is not to pretend we know what lies ahead. It is to trust the One who goes ahead of us.

If God is making all things new, then the center of that newness is Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul writes in

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

Notice that Paul does not say, “If anyone improves themselves.”
He does not say, “If anyone achieves moral perfection.”
He says, “If anyone is in Christ.”

Newness is not a self-help project. It is a relationship.

In Christ, God enters our time. God steps into our brokenness. God bears our sin, our shame, our fear, our failure. And in the resurrection, God declares that death does not get the final word.

Every new year stands under the shadow of resurrection hope. Because Christ lives, the future is open. Because Christ lives, change is possible. Because Christ lives, nothing is beyond redemption.

This does not mean the year ahead will be easy. Resurrection does not bypass the cross. But it does mean that suffering is not meaningless and endings are not final.

On New Year's Day, many people make resolutions. Some are practical and helpful. Some are unrealistic and quickly forgotten. But beneath them all is a desire for change.

The church has a word for holy change. That word is repentance.

Repentance is not about self-loathing. It is about reorientation. To repent is to turn—away from our sin, and toward the God who gives life.

When Jesus begins his ministry, he proclaims

Mark 1:15

15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Repentance is not a one-time act reserved for dramatic moments. It is a daily way of life. It is the ongoing work of aligning our lives with the reign of God through the power of the Holy Spirit in us.

A resolution says, "I will try harder."
Repentance says, "Lord, change me."

A resolution relies on willpower.
Repentance relies on grace.

As we begin this new year, the most faithful question we can ask is not, "What do I want to accomplish?" but "Who is God calling me to become?"

We also need to recognize that New Year's Day is not only about personal renewal. It is about communal renewal.

God is not just making individuals new; God is renewing all His people. The church is called to live as a symbol of God's coming kingdom—a community that is shaped by love, justice, mercy, and hope.

In a world marked by division, the church is called to embody reconciliation.
In a world shaped by fear, the church is called to practice courage.
In a world driven by consumption, the church is called to model generosity.

A new year invites us to ask, 'How are we bearing witness to Christ? Where have we grown complacent? Where is God inviting us to take faithful risks?'

The church does not exist for itself. It exists to participate in God's mission of renewal. And that mission always pushes us beyond comfort and security into trusting in God more.

On New Year's Day, we do not pretend the world is as it should be. We confess that it is not. And then we dare to believe that God is not finished yet.

Revelation's vision of new creation comes in the midst of persecution and suffering

The promise of "all things new" is spoken to a people who know what it is to endure hardship. That promise is not escapism. It is resistance.
To hope is to refuse to believe that brokenness is inevitable or permanent.

So how do we live into this new year as people of resurrection hope?

We begin with prayer as a foundation of our faith. Prayer shapes our desires and tunes our hearts to God's purposes.

We practice attentiveness to God and His work. Newness often arrives quietly, like a seed pushing through the soil.

We commit to faithfulness in the smallest of things. Most transformation does not happen in dramatic moments. It happens through daily obedience, through ordinary acts of love, through choosing again and again to follow Christ.

And we remember that newness is not something we achieve alone. We need one another. We grow together. We bear each other's burdens. We celebrate one another's joys.

As we stand at the beginning of this year, we acknowledge what we do not know. We do not know what challenges await us. We do not know what joys will surprise us. We do not know how we will be tested or changed.

But we do know this: the year ahead belongs to God.

The God who was faithful yesterday is faithful today and will be faithful tomorrow. The God who has brought us this far will not abandon us now.

On this New Year's Day, we do not place our hope in the turning of the calendar. We place our hope in the turning of hearts toward God.

So we step forward—not fearfully, but faithfully. Not relying on our own strength, but trusting in God's grace. Not clinging to what has been, but opening ourselves to what God is doing now.

'See, I am making all things new.'

May we have eyes to see it.

May we have hearts to receive it.

And may we have courage to live as people of the new creation, for the sake of the world God loves as we walk as the Salt and Light of His Word in this dark and broken world.

Let us Pray,

Let Your Word be Freely Proclaimed

Almighty God,

grant to your Church the Holy Spirit
and the wisdom that comes from above.

Let nothing hinder your Word
from being freely proclaimed
to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people,
so that we may serve you in steadfast faith
and confess your name as long as we live;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Source: Attributed to Martin Luther, found in *Allgemeines evangelisches Gesang- und Gebetbuch zum Kirchen und Hausgebrauch*, Hamburg, 1846, p. 430. English translation from [Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal](#), 1993, Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Closing Hymn (1)

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious God,
we thank you for your faithfulness in the year behind us
and for your presence with us in the year ahead.
We bring before you our joys and our griefs,
our hopes and our fears,
trusting that you are near to the brokenhearted
and attentive to the prayers of your people.
Be with the sick, the weary, and the anxious.
Strengthen your church, guide our leaders,
and make us instruments of your peace.
We entrust this new year to you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Benediction

Go into this new year in the confidence of God's faithfulness.
What lies behind you is redeemed by grace.
What lies before you is held in God's hands.
And may the blessing of Almighty God—
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—
be with you and remain with you,
now and always.
Amen.