



A New Year Prayer
(adapted from crosswalk.com)

Dear God,

Thank you that you make all things new. Thank you for all that you've allowed into our lives this past year, the good along with the hard things, which have reminded us how much we need you and rely on your presence filling us every single day.

We pray for your Spirit to lead us each step of this New Year. We ask that you will guide our decisions and turn our hearts to deeply desire you above all else. We ask that you will open doors needing to be opened and close the ones needing to be shut tight. We ask that you would help us release our grip on the things to which you've said "no," "not yet," or "wait." We ask for help to pursue you first, above every dream and desire you've put within our hearts.

We pray that you'd keep us far from the snares and traps of temptations. That you would whisper in our ear when we need to run, and whisper in our heart when we need to stand our ground.

We pray for your protection over our families and friends. We ask for your hand to cover us and keep us distanced from the evil intent of the enemy; that you would be a barrier to surround us, that we'd be safe in your hands. We pray that you would give us discernment and insight beyond our years, to understand your will, hear your voice, and know your ways.

We ask that you would provide for our needs, we ask for your grace and favor. We pray for your blessings to cover us, we pray that you would help us to prosper and make every plan that you have birthed in our heart to succeed. We pray that others would take notice of your goodness and could not help but to say, "These are the ones that the Lord has blessed."

Help us to be known as great givers, help us to be generous and kind, help us to look to the needs of others and not be consumed by only our own. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory. May all your plans succeed.

To you be glory and honor, in this New Year, and forever.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Food for thought from Rev. Kristin

“ Sour Godliness Is The Devil’s Religion” - John Wesley

No morons so play the fool as those who are obsessed with the ardor of Christian piety to the point that they distribute their goods, overlook injuries, suffer themselves to be deceived, make no distinction between friends and enemies, eschew pleasure, glut themselves with hunger, vigils, tears, toils and reproaches, who disdain life, who crave only death, who seem utterly to condemn all common sense, as if the soul lived elsewhere and not in the body. What is this if not insanity? No wonder that the apostles appeared to be drunk with new wine and Paul seemed to Festus to be mad. Christ himself became a fool when he was found in fashion as a man that he might bring healing by the foolishness of the cross. “ For God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty.”

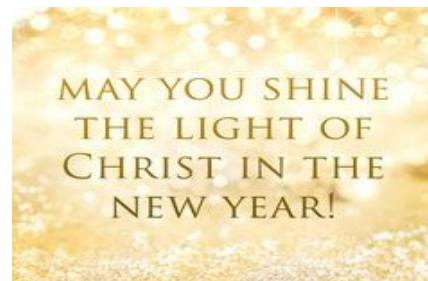
-Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, 1509

NEW YEAR QUOTES!

Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.
- Hellen Keller



Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come,
whispering, 'It will be happier.'
- Alfred Lord Tennyson



Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson



THREE KINGS DAY

by Samantha Sherwood

Every year on January 6th many families across the world celebrate Three Kings Day, also known as The Feast of the Epiphany and called in Spanish - Dia de los Tres Reyes Mago. The tradition of the Three Kings supersedes Santa Claus as a "celebrity" of Christmas and bearer of gifts. Children brought up in (most) Spanish cultures still receive gifts on Christmas from Santa, but the BIG day is January 6th! Children prepare for this day by putting two bowls underneath their beds at bedtime. One is full of water and the other is full of grass from the yard. The idea is similar to leaving cookies and milk for the big guy in red. The exception is that the grass and water is not meant for Santa, but for the Three Kings' camels. One imagines that on their journey to find the baby Jesus, the camels needed rest, food and drink. That is why many Spanish children leave these bowls for the camels, and as a token of their appreciation, The Three Kings leave presents!

My cultural background is Puerto Rican. I lived on "La Isla del Encanto" (the island of enchantment) from age 1 until 5 years old. In Puerto Rico, Three Kings Day is a very celebrated occasion. There are festivals, family gatherings, special lights on the buildings and homes - even parades in the street. In these parades the local townspeople dress as Magi and wear elaborate royal-style clothing typical to what we see represented during the time our Lord's birth. These Magi often make their way through the towns on camelback. During their voyage through the streets, they often stop and give small gifts to lucky children. These gifts are often chocolates or candy, and sometimes simply in the form of words or blessings (bendiciones).

When I was four years old I was chosen to receive such a blessing/bendicion from the Magi (prior to that age I would run away from them in fear). The blessing they gave me was that I would always continue to sing. At that time, I was known throughout my small town as the little girl who stood in the church aisles during service singing (more like yelling) along to the hymns and songs. Thankfully, the Heavenly Father has given me the opportunity to do just that at many times during my life.

Keeping the spirit of the Three Kings' arrival has always been a fun part of the holiday season. When my child was small, we would prepare for the "visit" by having a special meal. Often I would make empanadillas filled with meat and eggs, also a drink called Malta was served. Malta is a traditional Puerto Rican non-alcoholic malt beverage - yum! Of course, we would also leave water and grass for the camels and looked forward to seeing what the Three Kings would leave!

Christmas season and cultural traditions are so special. If you would like to share one of your traditions in an upcoming newsletter, please let the church office know! Thank you for reading!



People celebrating Three Kings Day in the beautiful town of El Viejo San Juan (Old San Juan) circa 2016



The town of El Viejo San Juan after Hurricane Maria hit the island. Please continue to pray for Puerto Rico's rebuilding.

Upcoming Events

Monday, January 8th and 22nd

Ladies Bible Study 6 PM

Wednesday, January 10th and 24th

Hospitality Team Meeting 5:30 PM

Saturday, January 27th

District Training Day 8 AM

Location: Kent UMC

Ongoing

Fijian Bible Study Saturdays 7 PM

English Service Sundays 10:30

Fijian Service Sundays 2 PM

English Bible Study Wednesdays 7 PM

Saturday, January 13th

Ladies 2nd Saturday 10 AM

Thursday, January 18th

Church Council Meeting 7 PM



Puzzle Place

New Year's Word Search Puzzle

C	R	A	C	K	E	R	S	B	A	N	D	H	D	D
Z	T	A	B	L	E	G	M	E	O	A	Y	J	H	U
T	R	U	V	J	K	N	C	G	N	O	R	G	Q	O
H	O	N	G	Z	M	I	E	C	F	S	R	T	N	L
J	O	M	C	W	A	T	E	F	R	I	E	N	D	S
R	L	Y	P	P	A	H	I	D	I	T	M	Y	W	A
H	F	W	M	D	N	G	C	S	E	N	V	H	Q	M
T	O	T	W	A	Q	I	E	L	N	E	C	K	S	O
F	R	O	L	J	E	L	P	I	D	M	I	Z	E	R
G	R	E	L	F	P	I	I	C	L	E	S	X	H	A
C	Q	Z	A	U	Z	T	S	J	Y	T	U	X	S	Y
A	O	M	O	T	O	J	W	H	M	I	M	U	I	B
F	V	C	X	K	S	B	U	S	Y	C	F	S	W	G
U	W	D	E	E	J	A	Y	P	B	X	W	S	V	Q
W	A	W	V	X	W	O	P	F	X	E	I	G	I	K

AROMAS

BAND

BUSY

COUPLES

CRACKERS

CROWD

DANCE

DEEJAY

EXCITEMENT

FLOOR

FRIENDLY

FRIENDS

HAPPY

LIGHTING

LOUD

MERRY

MUSIC

TABLE

TREATS

WISHES