

# NEW YEAR'S DAY AT-HOME LITURGY

## Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

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### INTRODUCTION

On Sunday, Jan. 1, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church will not be livestreaming our 11 am worship service. Instead, we will meet in Bonnell Hall for what we are calling “Breakfast Church”—a time of fellowship, eating, prayer and song. For those of you at home, we offer the following at-home liturgy. Use it sometime during the day (or the week) of Jan. 1! Regardless of where or when you worship, God will be there.

#### I. SET THE SPACE

*Supplies: Advent wreath or candle, a lighter and music.*

As the New Year begins, take a moment to create a space for calm. Light the candles in your Advent wreath. If you don't have an Advent wreath, light a candle. Pour a cup of tea. Play some Christmas music (it is still the season of Christmas!) in the background. Turn off the TV and silence your phone. Breathe deeply. Allow this space to become holy ground.

#### **Tips for Children:**

- Invite your kids to take a hands-on role in this liturgy by having them collect the supplies from around the house, light the candles, turn off the distractions, etc.
- Children also can create a special place for everyone to sit and reflect. They can make a comfortable fort out of pillows for you to sit on the floor, for example!

#### II. PRAYER FOR A NEW YEAR

*Supplies: Paper, pen or pencil, music.*

Clear your mind and open your hearts. In this time of prayer, you will write down everything that's on your mind: to-do lists, worries and concerns, hopes, opportunities... whatever pops into your conscious mind. Queue up a Christmas song and commit to writing down words until the song ends. Focus

on individual words, not full sentences or paragraphs, that capture what is on your heart. If you run out of things to write, give yourself space to listen, and trust that more ideas will come.

**Tips for Children:**

- Encourage kids to draw what they're thinking and feeling, instead of writing, if that feels easier! There's no wrong way to pray here!

When the song is over, put down your pen or pencil and pray these words:

*Holy God,  
even here,  
even now,  
you are with me.  
And so I pray...  
hover over this swirl of words that make up a prayer.  
Read between the lines.  
See what weighs heavy on me.  
Know what distracts,  
and carry it all.  
I am giving it to you.  
I am clearing out space.  
I am opening myself up  
to draw closer to you and to your love  
for me and for the world in the coming year.  
Gratefully I pray,  
Amen.*

**III. SHARE A MEAL**

*Supplies: New Year's Day breakfast or a simple snack.*

Jesus was always gathering people around tables. Just as the congregation at Fifth Avenue is worshiping at table today, we invite you to find God at *your* table. Cook a meal. Grab a cup of coffee. Set the table. Allow the comfort and warmth of a meal to remind you of God's promised day, when all will be fed.

During your meal, reflect on the following prompts. You can either jot these down in a journal, mull them over in your mind, or discuss them with family members present.

- 1) Reflect on past meals and moments around the table. What meals have been memorable? What gatherings made you feel welcomed? Have you ever had a memorable communion experience? What made it memorable?
- 2) How do you feel knowing that Jesus fed and shared a meal with his disciples, with strangers, even with tax collectors? What does that teach us about God?
- 3) At the Last Supper, Jesus gave thanks for the bread before breaking it. What do you give thanks for in your life? Make a quick mental list of 5-10 things you often forget to thank God for. Jot them down or share them with those gathered at the table.
- 4) Food is a common love language. Think back to a time when someone offered or prepared food for you as a sign of love. Do you think that Jesus was trying to express his love for his disciples in his last meal? How does that layer add to the story?

**Tip for Young Families:**

- Invite the children at the table to reflect on their favorite dinner table blessing and sing or say it together! Point out that Jesus also offered a blessing to God for the bread before he and his disciples ate, so when we say grace, we are being like Jesus!

#### **IV. SHARE THE GOOD NEWS**

*Supplies: Cell phone or computer.*

Jesus said that wherever two or more are gathered, God will be there. The church is the people, and we cannot do faith without one another. Knowing that, take a moment to text or email someone in your faith community or along faith journey and let them know you're thinking of them. Think of this as a digital passing of the peace!

**Tip for Families:**

- Invite your kids to film a short video sharing messages of love and affirmation that you can text to friends or family. Empower your kids to select the people they want to say hello to and what message they want to share.

**V. GO IN PEACE**

Close this sacred time with an Amen. Blow out your candles. Close your journal. Allow yourself to re-enter the world and step into the New Year refreshed, nourished and grateful.