

A Reader writes

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

We are at the threshold of a New Year and with it comes mixed emotions. The prospect of a fresh, new beginning gives some people joy and a sense of hope. Perhaps, you are looking forward to a happy family event or to a holiday. While for others the future is uncertain and leaves them fearful with many questions and worries.

This is not just two separate groups of people but the same trying to balance different feelings and expectations. Personally, I can accept there must be change and the new can be fresh and, perhaps, releasing. However, that does not always make it comfortable. I have questions and need some assurance of the direction we are travelling. And I think there are many people who accept we must move on from some golden, and unreal, past and that resistance to change/the new will just leave us exhausted.

In the first verse of Timothy Dudley-Smith's famous hymn (quoted above) we are reminded that God, through Jesus Christ, is alongside each one of us. He finds us, rescues, and forgives our past mistakes and hesitations and no matter what may happen in the future God's love is constant.

For this we can give thanks and this strengthens us to embrace the future for our lives, our church and for our nation. So, we pray that God may guide and direct our hearts and minds as we celebrate and welcome the New Year. We ask that our faith and vision may be restored. Our energies and love renewed. And that as His people are revived to new life and power, we may live and speak for Christ before the world He came to save.

Through prayer and our pilgrimage together we are re-made. For Christ is in charge and we can celebrate the past as well as look forward into the future.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us -
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Michael