

A Litany for Watch Night Service

God who has created all that is good and perfect, and who has led us through our weary years, we gather this evening in your house of prayer for all people to usher in the dawning of a new year with new understandings and new anticipation.

We gather first to thank you, O Lord, for reminding us to put You first in our lives. As members of the Body of Christ, we thank you for guiding us through a year that revealed images likened to a great depression or a world-wide plague, but because of your divine grace and everlasting mercy, You protected us and allowed us to envision the coming year as one of great anticipation; so we also come to rededicate ourselves to do your Will.

Help us to remember that while many of us observed this annual watch to reflect on the past and to contemplate the future initially, and others held similar vigils more frequently, in 1862 our African American sisters and brothers watched all night long in anticipation of the freedom that would make them a vital part of humanity, that would move them from victimization of injustice, bondage, and brutality to the threshold of freedom, freedom not in some distant future but through the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Teach us, O Lord, to watch together for the things You instruct us to do in love for one another, regardless of denominational/communion designations and races.

Whatever the color of our skin, the character of our hearts longs for this vision together, and we join in unity across this country to pray and wait together.

Help us, O God, to walk into a new way of being, a way that requires justice, a way married to mercy, and a humble walk with You.

Lord, these are troubled times, but You are always with us. You have led us through some of the darkest hours. We ask that You guide and keep us as we struggle each day to walk in your Way in all we say and do.

We thank You, Lord, for your steadfastness, for your love, and for your mercy. Grant us during the coming year a renewed relationship with You and with each other, embodied with renewed hope for justice and equality for all of God's children so none are devalued and none are marginalized.