

## Welcome New Year....

**John 1:1-5 (LB)** - Before anything else existed, there was Christ with God. He has always been alive and is himself God. He created everything there is--nothing else exists that he didn't make. Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all mankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness--and the darkness can never extinguish it.

Message from Britain's King George to his embattled people at the beginning of WWII: I said to the man at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may go forth into the unknown." And the man replied, "Put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light, safer than a known way."

For many years Dick Clark helped me bring in the New Year with the large and beautiful crystal ball in Times Square in New York. It was as if the best was yet to come when the ball had dropped and the New Year had arrived. No matter what the last year had held, the New Year was to be WONDERFUL! As much as I wanted to believe that, in truth, the crystal ball and Dick Clark held no great powers on the New Year. And it seemed like it wasn't long into each New Year that disappointment and challenges appeared in my WONDERFUL year!

But John makes it clear that long before Dick Clark and the crystal ball....God spoke salvation... Jesus...into existence. In the beginning was Jesus with God...Jesus speaks the word and it happens: forgiveness, healing, mercy, grace, joy and love, freedom and eternal life. Somewhere along the line of lives (Genesis shares of a broken story too) people are in desperate need of help, of fixing. And the fixing and helping comes in the person of Jesus. Jesus not only speaks the Word of God, he is the Word of God in human form.

And then, like now, Jesus brings salvation, mercy, comfort, hope, strength, peace and joy into each day of each New Year. He invites us into a personal relationship, passionate prayer and compassionate response to our lives with others. He promises we will never be alone and that eternal life is ours through him beginning now.

So, join me this year as we stand at the threshold of a New Year and place our hands into the hand of God, knowing that God will direct our journey!

**Prayer:** Gracious and loving God, give us hearts for our journey. Fill us with your love, your courage and your light so that we may go forward trusting you and walking in your plan for us with hope and joy! Help us to be generous and caring of all who need our help and always aware of how we can pass your love on to others. Give us quiet hearts that seek you daily and rejoice in your presence as we meet you in our everydayness. Amen.