31 December 2022 St. Athanasius Lutheran Church
New Year's Eve Vienna, VA

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New Year's Eve Meditation
Text: Psalm 90:1-12; Isaiah 30:8-17; Romans 8:31b-39; Luke 12:35-40

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Another year has passed. A New Year begins in just a few hours now. A year, 12 months, 365 days, seems like such a long time. Perhaps by some measures it is. But not to the Creator of time. For Him, as the psalmist said, ***a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past***.

That is comforting. We need a God big enough for eternity. To a young child, Dad is big enough to protect her from all danger, and Mom is caring enough to provide for every need. But then we become the Dad and Mom, and we know there *are* dangers too big for us, cares we cannot provide for. At such times, we need to be children again. Children of our heavenly Father. And know that we have a refuge in Him. That He is ***our dwelling place***. That there is no danger too big, no care beyond His providing.

He knows what this coming year holds for us. The joys and the sorrows, the challenges and the successes. We like to think we're in control. We make plans and resolutions and try to achieve our own versions of happiness. Perhaps you'd like to know what will come this next year, get a glimpse into the future, prepare for it. But that's not for us to know. It is for us to trust our heavenly Father as He leads us from age to age, from one year to the next. To rely on His Word and not despise it. To grow in His Word and treasure it. To rest secure not in our knowledge, but in His; not that we're in control, but that He is.

But big can also be frightening. So while it is comforting to have a God big enough for eternity, we also need a God small enough for us to know, and who knows us. That is our God, too. Who became small, the smallest of human beings in the womb of His mother. Who was then born and received the protection of His father and the care of His mother. Who grew as we do, and then died as we do. In every stage of life from beginning to end, Jesus knows. So whatever happened this past year, and whatever will happen next year, you have a Saviour who can and will provide exactly what you need.

Which is what the apostle Paul also said to us tonight, that if God ***did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not with Him graciously give us all things?*** Nothing ***in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord***.

So we have a God who is both little and big. Little enough to spend time with widows and lepers, but big enough to cleanse them and help them. Little enough to eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners, but big enough to feed over five thousand with five small loaves of bread and two fish. Small enough to pray, but big enough to hear our prayers. That's the God we need, and the God we have.

So we end one year and remember all that our Lord has done for us, and we begin a New Year with the confidence that what He has done He will do. We will be well cared for, even, or especially, if it turns out to be a particularly difficult year. We end the year hearing Him speak to us in His Word, and we speak back to Him in prayer. This is exactly the right place and the right way to end one year and begin another.

But not just on this night, because as Luke reminded us tonight, our Lord is coming back for us. There may not be another New Year, a 2024. Or there may be, but not for you or me. I received word just this morning of a pastor who died suddenly and unexpectedly. You undoubtedly saw on the news the death of the former Roman Pope. Man knows not His time. So we need to be ready for whenever that time comes for us. To not be lured into thinking we have many more years - we may not. Not here, anyway. But we have an eternity to spend with our Saviour.

So, the psalmist prayed, and we prayed, ***teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom***. That is a heart filled *with Jesus*. A heart filled with His forgiveness for my sin, His Word for my path, His love to overcome my fears, and His life to overcome my death. And when He comes again - when it is not a crystal ball dropping in New York City, but a Saviour descending in glory - we will be among the throngs of faithful waiting for Him and rejoicing at His coming.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.