



# THE PROCLAMATION PROJECT

## *A Sermon Outline* for New Year's Eve or New Year's Day

Focus Texts: Isaiah 63:7-9; Isaiah 43:19

This is a simple outline for a sermon to preach on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. It's designed to be interactive with the congregation, so think ahead about how you will invite them to share their responses, and don't forget to include people who may be joining you online. Adapt this to fit your context; use as much or as little as is helpful.

### ***Opening: Moments of pondering***

*For the preacher:* When we left Mary on Christmas Eve, she was pondering all the things that had happened and was treasuring them in her heart. Have you had a recent experience that you are still pondering or treasuring? Share that story with your congregation. Suggest that this turning of the year can be a good time to ponder how God is at work in our lives, even if we don't understand it.

### ***Looking Back: Recounting the deeds of the Lord***

*For the preacher:* Isaiah 63:7 invites us to "recount the gracious deeds of the Lord." Take some time to remember how God has been at work in the past year. Share with your congregation where you've seen God's activity or presence:

- In your church: for example, was there a time when God's presence comforted your congregation in a time of grief?
- In your community: in what ways did God lead you to serve your community this year?
- In the world: how do you see the love of Christ bringing hope to places of suffering in the world? This might be a good place to highlight some of the work of the wider Disciples church.
- In your own life: do you have a personal story you can share about a time you felt strengthened by God?

*Ask the congregation:* Invite members of the congregation to share their memories from the past year: ask them to celebrate "all that the Lord has done for us." (Isaiah 63:7) Let this be joyful and celebratory. Laugh and rejoice!



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## ***Looking Ahead: What is the new thing God is doing?***

*For the preacher:* Isaiah 43:19 declares that God is “about to do a new thing.” As a congregation, what’s coming up in the new year? Do you have any big milestones or events planned? Share your excitement with the congregation.

*Ask the congregation:* Ask people the same question: What are you looking forward to in the new year? Does anyone have a big anniversary or birthday this year? Any anticipated retirements or other life transitions? What new things are in the works?

*For the preacher:* Reflect on what new things God is calling the congregation to do. Are there needs in the community that the church can respond to in new ways? Are there difficult conversations that need to be had? Are there things that need to die so that new life can happen? Remind the congregation that Isaiah says there will be a “way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” God often makes a way when we cannot see a way ahead.

## ***Closing: the good news***

*For the preacher:* Close with a reminder of the good news we celebrated on Christmas: Emmanuel, God is with us. God is forever surprising us with new and unexpected ways of bringing love to life. We celebrate all that God has done for us and we trust that God will be with us whatever is to come in the new year.

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