**Watch Night/New Year’s Eve/Eve of Holy Name 2020**

From the people: Intercessor, Reader for Isaiah 65, Reader for Psalm 90, Reader for Revelation 21, Leader, Reader for PoP, Voice of the People

**Begin with a period of silence**

Intercessor: O God, as was customary of our parents and ancestors, we come to this Watch Night to be with you, together, in our own homes, as we usher out the old year and welcome the dawning of a new year.

***People:*****We come, thanking you for your mercy, grace and presence in 2020. Go before us, O God, and guide us into your future.**

***Period of silence***

Intercessor: That night long ago, our enslaved African ancestors watched for news of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Lord, keep us awake, alert and engaged as we follow the light of your Word, still awaiting the good news of the gospel, and the comforting signs of your love in this world.

***People:* We thank you for watching over us and caring for us through the old year, as we walked in the light of your love. We thank you for promises of peace, justice, equity and healing in the new year.**

***Period of silence***

Intercessor: We come, O God, with great expectations and great hopes. Keep these fires kindled within us that we may watch, wait, and feel your presence in our lives. Make us aware of your will for us as we embark upon this journey.

***People:* You led us in the past. Guide us now and always that we might choose to do your will and follow your way. We are pilgrims in a barren land.**

***Period of silence***

Intecessor: We give you praise, O God, for your goodness and mercy; for life, health, family and friends, and for the many blessings you send. Above all, we thank you for the Holy Spirit, who lifts our hopes, and supports us in the Way, this new year, and in years to come.

***People:* All praise, honor, glory, and thanks to you, our God.**

***Period of silence***

**Readings for the Eve of Holy Name**

**First Reading: Isaiah 65:15-25**

15 You shall leave your name to my chosen to use as a curse,  
   and the Lord God will put you to death;  
   but to his servants he will give a different name.   
16 Then whoever invokes a blessing in the land  
   shall bless by the God of faithfulness,  
and whoever takes an oath in the land  
   shall swear by the God of faithfulness;  
because the former troubles are forgotten  
   and are hidden from my sight.

17 For I am about to create new heavens  
   and a new earth;  
the former things shall not be remembered  
   or come to mind.   
18 But be glad and rejoice for ever  
   in what I am creating;  
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,  
   and its people as a delight.   
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem,  
   and delight in my people;  
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,  
   or the cry of distress.   
20 No more shall there be in it  
   an infant that lives but a few days,  
   or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;  
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,  
   and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.   
21 They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
   they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.   
22 They shall not build and another inhabit;  
   they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
   and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.   
23 They shall not labour in vain,  
   or bear children for calamity;[\*](javascript:void(0);)  
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—  
   and their descendants as well.   
24 Before they call I will answer,  
   while they are yet speaking I will hear.   
25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,  
   the lion shall eat straw like the ox;  
   but the serpent—its food shall be dust!  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
   on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

***People:* All that the Lord has said we will do.**

**Psalm 90** Domine, refugium  
1 Lord, you have been our refuge \*  
from one generation to another.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or the land and the earth were born, \*  
from age to age you are God.  
  
3 You turn us back to the dust and say, \*  
"Go back, O child of earth."  
  
4 For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past \*  
and like a watch in the night.  
  
5 You sweep us away like a dream; \*  
we fade away suddenly like the grass.  
  
6 In the morning it is green and flourishes; \*  
in the evening it is dried up and withered.  
  
7 For we consume away in your displeasure; \*  
we are afraid because of your wrathful indignation.  
  
8 Our iniquities you have set before you, \*  
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.  
  
9 When you are angry, all our days are gone; \*  
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.  
  
10 The span of our life is seventy years,  
perhaps in strength even eighty; \*  
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow,  
for they pass away quickly and we are gone.  
  
11 Who regards the power of your wrath? \*  
who rightly fears your indignation?  
  
12 So teach us to number our days \*  
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.  
  
13 Return, O Lord; how long will you tarry? \*  
be gracious to your servants.  
  
14 Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning; \*  
so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.  
  
15 Make us glad by the measure of the days that you afflicted us \*  
and the years in which we suffered adversity.  
  
16 Show your servants your works \*  
and your splendor to their children.  
  
17 May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us; \*  
prosper the work of our hands; prosper our handiwork.

**Second Reading: Revelation 21:1-6**

1Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
‘See, the home[\*](javascript:void(0);) of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell[\*](javascript:void(0);) with them;  
they will be his peoples,[\*](javascript:void(0);)  
and God himself will be with them;[\*](javascript:void(0);)   
4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away.’

5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ 6Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

***People:* All that the Lord has said we will do.**

*Leader*  The Lord be with you.

***People* And also with you.**

*Leader* Let us pray.

**All Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver;**

**Source of all that is and that shall be,**

**Father and Mother of us all,**

**Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!**

**The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!**

**Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!**

**Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.**

**In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.**

**In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.**

**From trials too great to endure, spare us.**

**From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever: Amen.**

**Reflections.** People are invited to share reflections on blessings they are grateful for and work that they have done in the vineyard to further the ministry of God in the year past. Reflections might also include shortcomings in the old year and what their focus will be in the new year.

**Prayers of the People on the Eve of a New Year**

Leader: God, the Holy Spirit, thank you for gathering us together in one place on this special night; in this sacred space, in our hearts, and in our community. Awaken us to the wonders in the heavens and on the earth.

Reader: Breath of Joy, in gratitude for all of the blessings we received last year and in hope for what will be in the New Year, we thank you for the empowering gift of your Holy Spirit. In scripture, you give us your vision for the world. In love, you give us your grace. In wisdom, you give us each other. Pour out your Spirit on all people.

***People:*  Open our eyes, Holy God, that we may be grateful for your wondrous work.**

Reader: Spirit of Love, we thank you for creating this community of believers.   
Strengthen every community of faith throughout the world and let love and hospitality be proclaimed as the core of our lives and our living. Rekindle our passion for ministry, personal and corporate. We especially pray for all baptized people who minister daily in their community, for those who minister in the church, for the ministers in this congregation, for our bishops and for the presiding bishop. Pour out your Spirit on all people.

***People:* Open our hearts, Holy God, that we may fully worship you.**

Reader: Spirit of Peace, counsel the leaders of all nations, those with authority and power and spiritual leaders regardless of their faith in your ways of peace and justice. Deliver them and us from arrogance, hatred, cruelty and revenge. In your time, enable us all to stand reconciled before you. Pour out your Spirit on all people.

***People:*  Open our lips, Holy God, that we may proclaim your call and witness to justice.**

Reader: Spirit of Compassion, remind us that we have only to open ourselves and allow your loving presence in our lives. Through your presence in us, we become your presence in the world. Give us the courage to learn the names of those around us, to respect the uniqueness of their culture, to honor and use the beauty of their gifts as well as respond to the urgency of their needs. Pour out your Spirit on all people.

***People:*  Open our hands, Holy God, that we may serve your purpose.**

Reader: Spirit of Healing, help us care for the sick, the weak, the old, and all those in trouble.

We pray for those on our prayer list and for those we name: . (*The people gathered may add prayers of intercession, either silently or aloud.*)

Help us nourish the young. Help us to cherish the environment which you provide for us. If we can live in harmony with each other and the earth, your will can be done on earth as it is in heaven. We are grateful for . (*The people gathered may add prayers of thanksgiving, either silently or aloud.*)

Pour out your Spirit on all people.

***People:*  Open our ears, Holy God, that we may hear the cries of those in need.**

Reader: Spirit of Mercy, we know that you cross the boundaries of time and eternity. Bless those who mourn and sanctify those who have departed this life and are now a part of that great cloud of witnesses. We pray especially for . (*The people gathered may remember those who have died either silently or aloud.*)

Pour out your Spirit on all people.

***People:* Open our memories, Holy God, as we remember those who have died.**

**Oh Lord, hear my prayers, Oh Lord, hear my prayers, when I call, answer me.**

**The Song of Simeon**

**All: Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised;**

**For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior; whom you have prepared for all the world to see: A light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel.**

**All Glory to the Loving One, Source of our Being, Eternal Word and Life-Giving Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen! Amen!**

**Blessing**

May God our Father who has exalted our Savior Jesus high above every name in heaven and on earth bless us and keep us.

May the Holy Name of Jesus shine upon us, and be gracious to us.

May the Spirit of God make us children of God, nurturing that same Spirit in our hearts.

And the blessing of our glorious God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us forever. Amen.

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

***People:* Thanks be to God.**

The Watch Night service can be traced back to gatherings also known as “Freedom’s Eve.” On that night, enslaved Africans and free descendants of Africans came together in churches and private homes all across the nation awaiting news that the Emancipation Proclamation actually had become law.  At the stroke of midnight, it was**January 1, 1863**; all slaves in the Confederate States were declared legally free. When the news was received, there were prayers, shouts and songs of joy as many people fell to their knees and thanked God.

In Texas the news arrived in Galveston on **June 19, 1865**.

Article XIII of the Constitution, Passed by the Congress **February 1, 1865** and Ratified **December 18, 1866** eliminated slavery within the United States.