

Advent festival marks the beginning of a new ecclesiastical or church year which is framed around the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian festivals throughout the church year follow our Lord's life from His immaculate conception through to His sending of the Holy Ghost which breathed life into the Church, another wondrous conception. The festivals focus our faith and thankfulness on Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 9:15 "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." The 1st January marks the beginning of a new secular or natural year. This is our opportunity to expand our thankfulness to God the creator for ALL good gifts. Every turn of time we experience is by the Grace of God. We are privileged to be able to unite in thanksgiving on this day. Ephesians 5:19-20 "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" The past year surely has taught us to grasp any and every opportunity we have to assemble in worship and fellowship. We have experienced the reality and power in spiritual unity when physical gatherings were not possible. All should consider the need to extend these blessings to others. Hebrews 13:16 "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." This is especially important where isolation has sadly created increased loneliness for many. With every year we acknowledge the passing of loved ones. The Apostolic ministry and members offer continued prayer and support for the bereaved, and above all consolation in Jesus Christ. John 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." A tradition at the beginning of a new year is to make resolutions to improve something in our lives. Many resolve to improve their health, wealth, social status, vocational position etc. Natural wisdom instinctively will look to success in these areas through a winning, mastering and dominating attitude. The Spiritual wisdom prayed for and granted to Apostles has penned the following morning salute which expresses a more sure and meaningful resolution. **"LORD GOD BY YOUR GRACE, GUIDE ME ON THIS DAY TO SUBMIT MY SELF TO YOUR HOLY WILL, SO YOUR PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE CAN BE FULFILLED"**. This salute we offer on the dawn of every day is a prayer to start that day in submissiveness, to overcome self-will, and yield to God's Holy will. Apostle James prescribes this virtue of being "easy to be intreated" as part of a perfect wisdom from above. (See James 3:17). This wisdom presents the same paradox that our Lord challenged His disciples with when they disputed over who should be greatest in the Kingdom of God. Mark 9:35 "And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." We are reminded that every life has a God entreating purpose, to do good. Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." In the coming year of Grace we must remember the blessings of the Kingdom of God were promised by Jesus Christ to the humble, meek, and peacemakers. (See Matthew 5). Apostle Paul warns of losing this inherited blessing if we are working strife, variance, wrath or sedition. Workers of such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (See Galatians 5:20-21). All need to be watchful to ensure the divisive behaviour and rhetoric that is becoming commonplace in the secular world does not encroach on the Church. Let us resolve to fulfil God's purpose, and to do this in unity. Philippians 2:2-3 "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

With soul love and greetings for the New Year of Grace from your humble servants, Apostle Cliff, Apostle Wayne, Bishop Ben and Bishop Alan.