

## “Counting the Days”

Pastor Michael Eichstadt

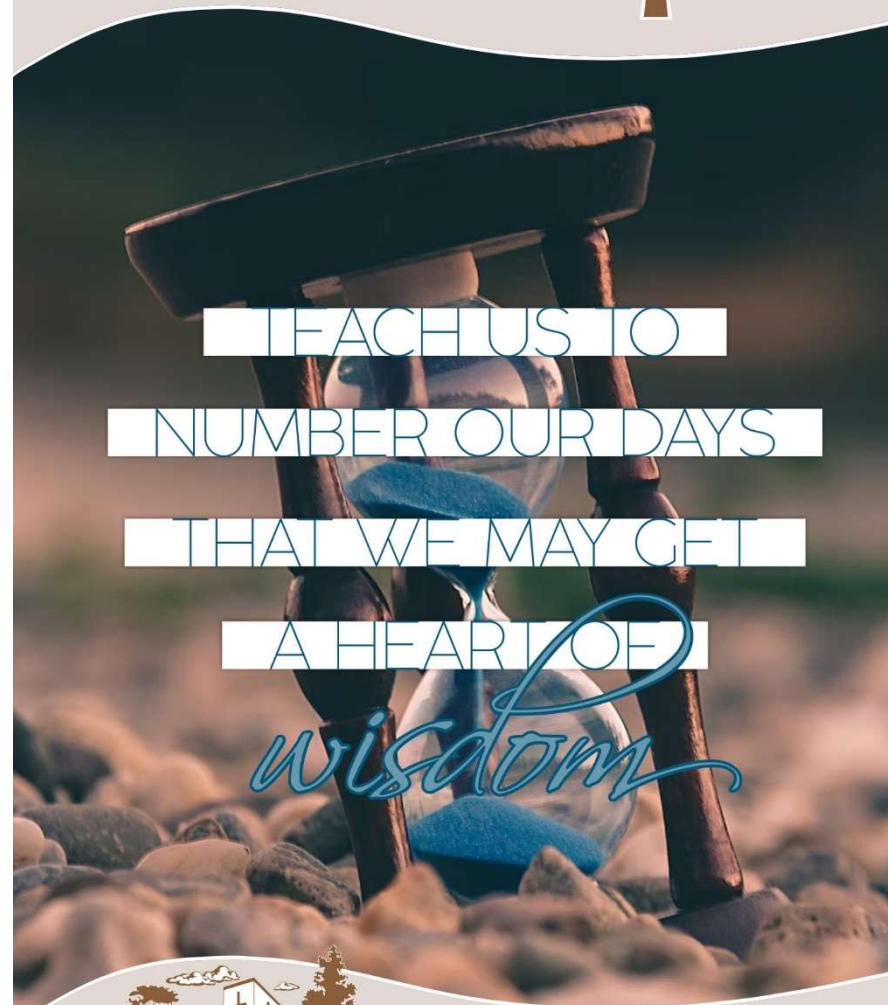
Are you counting the days? Maybe you’re “recounting” the days of the past year and reflecting on the ups and downs, the blessings and trials of 2022. Most of us, no doubt, are also looking ahead and counting the days, counting the days till school starts again, counting the days till a vacation trip, or crossing off the days on the calendar till a major life event such as a graduation or wedding. Here on earth we live in time. Everything we do is connected to it. We speak of wasted time, investing time, time flying, and the right time.

In Psalm 90:12 Moses too writes of time and counting days: “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” From our perspective time is an uncertain, arbitrary thing. We can count hours and days, but we don’t know how much we or anyone else has. We can’t foretell or see the future.

That is why Moses’ prayer is such a good one for us to offer this new year. We don’t know much about time or how to make the most of it, but God does. “All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Ps. 139:16). Each day of this new year is an undeserved gift of God’s grace. What’s more, it’s not by chance that we are living in this place and time. God has put each of us here at this moment according to His good will and plan for us. He loves us too much to leave anything to coincidence or uncertainty. From God’s perspective, the biography of our lives is already completed and written. He knit us together in our mothers’ wombs. He sent His Son to rescue us from sin and death. He adopted us into His family by faith. Resurrection and eternal life are on the way.

What’s the best way to spend our earthly time? Ask the Lord daily for wisdom and look for the answer in His Word. He teaches us to seek first His kingdom and righteousness. Forgiveness, peace with Him, and eternal life are far more important than earthly things which don’t last. Knowing all is well between us and God through Jesus gives us a positive view of each new day and year. Paul urges us to make the most of our time: “Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20). Let’s count all our days as precious gifts to use for His glory!

December 31, 2022  
New Year’s Eve



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✠ Opening Prayer ✠

Hymn: **WS #716:1-4** "Now Greet the Swiftly Changing Year"

**P** We close the year tonight, worshipping our Lord God, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

Hymn: **TLH #110** "Across the Sky the Shades of Night"

***Across the sky the shades of night  
This New Year's Eve are fleeting.  
We deck Thine altar, Lord, with light,  
In solemn worship meeting;  
And as the year's last hours go by,  
We raise to Thee our earnest cry,  
Once more Thy love entreating.***

**Confession of Our Sins & Absolution**

**P** God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

**C** If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**C** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

***Before the cross subdued we bow,  
To Thee our prayers addressing,  
Recounting all Thy mercies now,  
And all our sins confessing;  
Beseeching Thee this coming year  
To keep us in Thy faith and fear  
And crown us with Thy blessing.***

**C** Almighty God, merciful Father, we are sinful by nature, and have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. But we are sorry for our transgressions and pray You, of Your bountiful mercy, to be gracious and merciful unto us. Forgive us for Jesus' sake, renew us by Your Spirit, and lead us in the way everlasting. Amen.

Another Year of Grace, My Friends

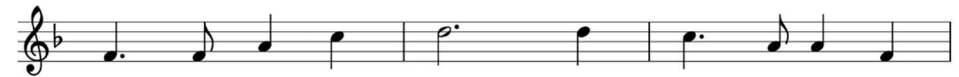
(Should All God's Blessings Be Forgot)

Chad M. Seybt, 2016

Traditional Scottish



1. Should all God's bless - ings be for - got And  
The LORD, I AM, my Shep - herd is My  
2. He leads me to life - giv - ing streams To  
Though there be some dark days a - head They



nev - er brought to mind? Should we for - get what  
needs He sat - is - fies. He gives to me my  
drink with - out a price; He leads me in His  
can - not hide my God, For He is with me



grace He's shown Each day to all man - kind?  
dai - ly bread And all I need for life.  
right - eous-ness, The right - eous-ness of Christ.  
as He said With Shep - herd's staff and rod.



An - oth - er year of grace, my friends, has come and now is gone. An -



oth - er year of grace be - gins; For - give - ness in God's Son.

3. The Lamb of God my Shepherd is, His life He lived for mine.  
His blood was spilled; His body killed To be our sacrifice.  
The living LORD my Shepherd is. Though He was crucified,  
His body rose in three days time And now stands glorified. *Refrain*

4. Surely His mercy and His grace Shall follow all life long.  
And I will dwell within His house to praise Him with this song:  
All glory be to You, O Christ, Who cam e to set me free,  
With Father, Spirit, ever One, Through all eternity. *Refrain*

of old. <sup>10</sup> But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. <sup>11</sup> Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit, <sup>12</sup> who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name, <sup>13</sup> who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. <sup>14</sup> Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name.

### Let us Recount God's Steadfast Love

- I. The Steadfast Love shown to Israel (Matthew 2:13-23)
- II. The Steadfast Love shown to Us Today (Galatians 4:4-7)

### The Offertory

*In this prayer we offer our hearts, asking God for the best gift, the Holy Spirit.*

- G** *♩* **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence. Take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation. Uphold with Your Spirit free.**

✠ The Offering of Thankful Hearts ✠

**Hymn: Bulletin v. 1-2**     *"Another Year of Grace, My Friends"*

✠ The General Prayer & The Lord's Prayer ✠

### The Benediction

*Numbers 6:24-26*

*The blessing given by God for His people.*

- P** The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you His peace.

**G** **Amen!**

**Hymn: Bulletin v. 3-4**     *"Another Year of Grace, My Friends"*

✠ 6 ✠

**We gather up in this brief hour  
The memory of Thy mercies:  
Thy wondrous goodness, love, and pow'r  
Our grateful song rehearses;  
For Thou hast been our Strength and Stay  
In many a dark and dreary day  
Of sorrow and reverses.**

- P** Jesus Christ is the satisfactory payment for our sins, and not for our only, but also for the sins of the whole world. We are forgiven. With boldness and confidence we may approach the throne to find grace to help in time of need. In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord:

**In many an hour when fear and dread,  
Like evil spells, have bound us  
And clouds were gathering overhead,  
Thy providence hath found us.  
In many a night when seas ran high,  
Thy gracious presence, drawing nigh,  
Hath made all calm around us.**

**Then, O great God, in years to come,  
Whatever may betide us,  
Right onward through our journey home  
Be Thou at hand to guide us;  
Nor leave us till at close of life  
Safe from all perils, toil, and strife,  
Heaven shall enfold and hide us.**

### Collect Prayer of the Day

*A prayer to God that collects together the thoughts and theme of the day.*

- P** Eternal God, we commit to Your mercy and forgiveness the year now ending and commend to Your blessing and love the times yet to come. In the new year, abide among us with Your Holy Spirit that we may always trust in the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**G** **Amen.**

✠ 3 ✠



## Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

## Matthew 2:13-23

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." <sup>14</sup> And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." <sup>16</sup> Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: <sup>18</sup> "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more." <sup>19</sup> But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup> saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." <sup>21</sup> And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

☐ Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.

🎵 **Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**These words are written that we may believe  
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

## Confession of Faith

*The Apostles' Creed*

*We boldly confess what God has taught us to believe.*

### I BELIEVE...

**in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;  
And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was  
conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and  
buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again  
from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the  
right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall  
come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Christian Church, the  
Communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the  
resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Hymn: TLH #121 (Tune TLH #51) "For Thy Mercy & Thy Grace"**

## Isaiah 63:7-14

I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. <sup>8</sup> For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely." And he became their Savior. <sup>9</sup> In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days

