

A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW001)

A New Year's Resolution

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“A NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION”

Service Aim:

Encouragement to make “trusting the Lord” the church’s New Year’s Resolution

Biblical Reference(s):

Proverbs 3:5-6, Haggai 1:5, Psalm 34:8, 119:68a, 2 Corinthians 1:20a,

Outline of Service:

Welcome	Introduce the theme
Opening Prayer	
Opening songs:	<u>A couple of songs to draw people into worship</u> (See Appendix 1)
Warm up:	YouTube clip “New Year’s Resolutions” – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing New Year’s Resolutions & Haggai 1:5
Link:	Encouragement to make “trusting the Lord” the New Year’s resolution
Reading:	Proverbs 3:5-6
Memory Verse:	Proverbs 3:5-6. Repeating it using pictures.
Song:	<u>A song/s about trusting the Lord</u> (See Appendix 1)
Talk 1:	Why can we trust the Lord? 1) He is Good
Testimonies:	Sharing something of God’s goodness
Talk 1 cont:	Experiencing God’s goodness with chocolates and a prayer
Songs:	<u>A song/s about the goodness of God</u> (See Appendix 1)
Memory Verse:	Proverbs 3:5-6
Link:	Why can we trust the Lord? 2) He keeps His promises
Film or Puppets:	“Evan Almighty” film clip or Puppet script: “Promises, promises”
Talk 2:	People can break their promises, but God is a promise keeper
Reading:	2Corinthians 1:20a
Talk 2 cont:	Look at the promise from 1John 1:9
Confession:	People write their sins down on paper & place in bins at the cross
Song:	<u>A song about the faithfulness of God</u> (See Appendix 1)
Link:	Memory verse and Summary
Prayers:	Praying God’s Promises with 2 readers followed by the Lord’s Prayer
Notices	Include “Takeaway” and the Memory Verse
Final song:	<u>Final song</u> (See Appendix 1)
Blessing	

Notes for the service:

General notes and instructions for the service are in black font.

Prayers or responses said by the congregation together are in bold purple font.

The full script of a talk or other activity is in purple font.

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Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the service and to the theme of “New Year’s Resolutions”

Opening Prayer:

You may choose to open the service with:

- an informal prayer
- a Bible verse eg. Jeremiah 29:11
- a prayer from a book like “New Patterns for Worship”¹ that the congregation can say together,
- or the following prayer that the congregation can say together:

**Heavenly Father,
Thank you for this New Year.
Help us trust you with everything that lies before us.
Keep us loving and obeying you,
so that your name is honoured and glorified in our lives,
For Jesus Christ’s sake, Amen”**

Opening Songs:

A couple of songs to draw people into worship as per Appendix 1

Warm up:

The warm up is an opportunity to open up the subject that many people make New Year’s resolutions. You might like to show the YouTube clip, “New Year’s Resolutions as told by cats”²

Make the point that the New Year can be a good opportunity for us to take stock of our lives, and think about what we are doing, how we are behaving and who or what we are trusting in. (See Haggai 1:5)

Introduce the fact that the service will be focussed around a couple of verses from the book of Proverbs that help us think about in whom we are putting our trust.

Reading:

The reading is Proverbs 3:5-6 and can be read by a child, young person or adult in a modern version of the Bible.

Link:

The reading can be followed by suggesting that a good New Year’s resolution for not only individuals, but also for the church, might be to grow in trusting the Lord rather than relying on ourselves.

¹ Church House Publishing – ISBN 0715120603

² This can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2rh4NiCtcM>

Memory Verse:

The Memory verse is Proverbs 3:5-6

Learn the memory verse together by repeating it a couple of times.

You may like to use a few pictures, either on cards that are held up, or projected on a screen to help people remember the verse. For example:

- Show a picture of RUST with a T in front of it for the word, "Trust"
- Show a picture of a HEART for the word, "Heart"
- Show a picture of the LEANING TOWER OF PISA with a X next to it for the words, "Lean not"
- Show a picture of a MEERKAT with a picture of an ARROW underneath it for the word, "Under-standing." (Ask the question, "What is the meerkat doing?" The answer should be "standing." Then ask the question "Where is the arrow?" The answer should be "under the meerkat" – which is where Understanding comes from)
- Show a picture of a SIGN-POST with a number of arms on it pointing in different ways for the word, "Ways"
- Show a picture of a STRAIGHT PATH for the words, "Paths straight"

Song:

A song/s about trusting the Lord as per Appendix 1

Talk 1:

Our memory verse encourages us to "Trust in the Lord", rather than relying on our own understanding, or even on other peoples' understanding.

- So why can we trust the Lord?
- We are going to look at two reasons.

The first reason we can trust the Lord is because HE IS GOOD.

- Psalm 119:68 says this about God.... "You are good and what you do is good"

We use the word "good" to describe all sorts of things don't we?

- We might say that "I had a good night's sleep"
- Or "She's a good friend",
- Or "This steak is good"

When we say that God is good, we are describing perfect goodness.....the very highest level of goodness that there is!

- God being good means that He is kind, loving, patient, faithful, wise, beautiful, generous, incredible....way beyond the best of what we ever experience here on earth.

And not only is God's character good, but the Psalmist says that everything God does is good.

- Look at God's Creation and you will see His goodness.
- Look at the wonderful things Jesus did when He walked this earth and you will see His goodness....
- People were healed, set free, forgiven, encouraged, fed.
- They were blessed by the Lord's goodness.

Not only were people in Jesus' day receivers of God's goodness, but we are too. God has shown us in an immense way his goodness by coming to earth in the person of Jesus to freely offer us His wonderful gifts of salvation, eternal life, forgiveness, freedom, hope, peace, love and joy.

Now saying that God is good is not saying that we will never experience hard times as Christians.

- Sometimes we will go through some very difficult situations.....
- We may not understand why we are going through these tough times,
- But what we can hold on to is the truth that God's goodness will stay the same....
- He will be at work in us and through us, working out His good purposes, so we can trust Him with whatever we go through.

Testimonies:

Invite someone to share a recent simple example of receiving God's goodness personally eg finding a new job, making a new friend, receiving a spiritual gift, having the strength to get through a difficult situation etc.

Talk 1 cont:

It is one thing knowing in your head that God is good;

- it is another thing altogether to actually dare to believe and trust that He is good, especially when your circumstances are difficult.
- I could tell you that chocolate is good, it is very good.
- But it is another thing to believe me enough to go out and buy a bar and try it for yourself.

Psalm 34:8 says, "*taste and see that the Lord is good*"

- I have some bowls of chocolates here and we are going to pass them round.
- As the chocolates are passed to you, please take one,
- pass the bowl to your neighbour then unwrap and eat the chocolate.

As you eat and hopefully enjoy your chocolate, ask the Lord to help you to take another step in trusting in His goodness this year.

- **PASS AROUND CHOCOLATES**

Lead people in a simple prayer as they finish eating their chocolate eg:

Father your word says to taste and see that you are good.

Help us to take another step in believing and trusting in your goodness this year. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Songs:

A song/s about the goodness of God as per Appendix 1

Memory Verse:

After the songs, lead the congregation in saying the Memory verse again. (ie Proverbs 3:5)

Link:

We said that the first reason that we can trust the Lord is because He is good.

- The second reason that we can trust the Lord is because He keeps His promises to us.

We all make promises to one another don't we?

- Some of them we keep, some of them we break.

Film or Puppet Script:

The film clip is taken from the film "Evan Almighty"³. On the DVD it begins at 12mins 37secs. Evan has just got back home from work on the Friday evening. His family are all packed up and ready to go with him on a family hiking trip. The clip begins with the children playing in the lounge on the sofas.

The clip ends at 13mins 24secs with the mother and the youngest son walking towards the stairs. The film clip could be introduced by saying something like:

In the film Evan Almighty, Evan promises to take his children away for a weekend hike. Look what happens when he gets home from work on the Friday evening when they are due to go away as a family.

Alternatively instead of a film clip, you could use the puppet script, "Promises, Promises" (see Appendix 2). This script works with a boy puppet "James"⁴ and an older man puppet "Grandad." The aim of the puppet script is to prepare people to receive the truth that God keeps all of his promises to us, even though other people don't always keep their promises to us, and we don't keep our promises to them.

Talk 2 cont:

It is really painful isn't it when people break the promises that they have made to us?

- Sometimes things happen that stop people from keeping their promises.....
- Other times people make promises that they simply cannot keep.....
- Whatever the reason, it hurts when we are let down.....and it leaves us wondering if we can trust anyone.

The wonderful thing about God is that He has not only made lots of promises to us,

- but He is also a promise keeper.

Reading:

The reading is 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 20a and can be read by a child, young person or adult in a modern version of the Bible.

Talk 2 cont:

As children of God, bought with the precious blood of Jesus, this verse from the book of Corinthians says that all of God's promises are "yes" to us.

You see God is able to answer the promises He has made to us with the word "yes" because,

- Firstly He is powerful enough to carry His promises out,
- But secondly He loves us so much and is utterly faithful that He wouldn't think to let us down.
- We really can trust Him.

Our response is to dare to take God at His word and believe what He says.

³ You can buy this film from Amazon at www.amazon.co.uk

⁴ You can purchase both a boy and a Grandad puppet from www.onewayuk.com

So let's have a brief look at one of God's big promises.

- It can be found in the book of 1 John and this is what it says:
- *"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9)

God has promised to give us a new start,

- To wipe our slates clean of all the wrong things we have done.....
- What a great offer at the beginning of a New Year.

Our part is simply this:

- To confess where we have not followed God's ways and to turn away from doing wrong.

Confession and Absolution:

Lead into a time of Confession. You may want to simply leave some silence and allow the Holy Spirit to convict people of their sins before saying a prayer of Confession together.

- You may choose to give people a piece of paper and pencil (on their way into church) and give them space to write down the things that they want to confess to God. The papers can then be put into a dustbin at the foot of the cross. You may or may not wish to set fire to them!
- This can be followed by saying a Confession prayer together from a book like "New Patterns for Worship" or the prayer below:

Father God,
We confess that we have sinned against you in many different ways.
We are sorry for the wrong things we have done
and the good things we have not done.
Please forgive us and give us the grace to live differently,
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Follow this with a prayer of Absolution. This could be:

- an informal prayer led by the service leader or
- an Absolution prayer from a book like "New Patterns for Worship." (See footnote 1 on page 3)

Song:

A song about the faithfulness of God as per Appendix 1

Link:

After the song, lead the congregation in saying the Memory verse again.

Remind people that during the service you have encouraged them to make "trusting the Lord" their New Year's Resolution. Summarize why they can trust the Lord ie

- i) He is good,
- ii) He keeps His promises.

Prayers:

Using two readers, pray some of the promises of God (see Appendix 3). Follow this with the Lord's Prayer.

Notices:

If your church gives out verbal notices my suggestion is that you do that just before the final song. That way the flow of worship is unbroken. After the notices, give people the “takeaway” of a printed copy of “Some Promises of God” (see Appendix 4) and encourage them to use them in their personal prayer times. Lead the congregation in saying the Memory verse one last time.

Final Song:

Final song as per Appendix 1

Blessing:

Pray a simple prayer to end the service something like:

As you go into this New Year to live for the Lord's glory,
Go knowing that you can trust Him,
For He is good and He keeps His promises,
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among
you and remain with you always. Amen.

Appendix 1 - Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

i) A couple of songs to draw people into worship. Ideas include:

- Bless the Lord O my soul (Matt Redman & Jonas Myrin © 2011 Thankyou Music)
- Crown Him with many crowns (Matthew Bridges and Godfrey Thring)
- Here on the threshold of a new beginning (Timothy Dudley Smith © Timothy Dudley Smith adm.by Oxford University Press)
- In Christ alone (Stuart Townend © 2001 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- Lord for the years (Timothy Dudley-Smith © Timothy Dudley-Smith)

ii) A song/s about trusting the Lord. Ideas include:

- As for me and my house (Jim Bailey © 1997 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- Dear Lord and Father of mankind (John Whittier)
- Defender of this heart (Ben Cantelon © 2007 Thankyou Music)
- Every move I make I make in you (Hillsong Kids)
- I'm gonna walk by faith (Jim Bailey © 1994 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- I want to walk with Jesus Christ (C.Simmonds © 1964 C.Simmonds)
- The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want (Stuart Townend © 1996 Thankyou Music)

iii) A song/s about the goodness of God. Ideas include:

- God is good (Graham Kendrick © 1985 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- Here's a song bursting out (Matt Redman & Alan Price © 1998 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- I know that my Redeemer lives (John Hartley & Chris Eaton © 2008 Thankyou Music)
- Oh the Lord is good (Graham Kendrick © 1996 Make Way Music)
- Praise God from whom all blessings flow (Andy Piercy and Dave Clifton © 1993 IQ Music)
- Your love is amazing (Brenton Brown & Brian Doerksen © 2000 Vineyard Songs)

iv) A song/s about the faithfulness of God. Ideas include:

- All glory to the King of ages (Paul Oakley & Chris Spring © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- Faithful One so unchanging (Brian Doerksen © 1989 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing)
- From the breaking of the dawn (Keith Getty & Stuart Townend © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- God so loved this whole world (Godfrey Birtill © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- Great is your faithfulness (Chris Tomlin © 2002 Sixsteps Music)
- My God is so big (Tradional))
- My Jesus, my Saviour (Darlene Zschech © 1993 Hillsongs)

v) Final song. Ideas include:

- By faith, we see the hand of God (Keith & Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend © 2009 Thankyou Music)
- God in my living (Tim Hughes © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- In Him I have believed (Kate Simmonds © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- O Jesus I have promised (J E Bode)
- Take my life and let it be (Francis Ridley Havergal)

Appendix 2 – Puppet Script - “Promises, Promises”

Characters:



The script is a dialogue between a young boy puppet called “James” who wants to follow Jesus but keeps getting things wrong, and his wise old “Grandad” puppet who helps to sort him out. Each puppet is operated by one person from behind a screen and so it is essential that the voices are heard; radio-microphones are ideal. Puppets and puppet screens can be purchased from many sources including <http://www.onewayuk.com/>

.....
Enter Grandad

Grandad: James, James, I’ve got the glue.....where are you?

Enter James

James: *(in a very gloomy voice)* Here Grandad.

Grandad: Oh you do seem down in the dumps. Let’s go and fix that ornament of mum’s you broke the other day, like I promised you we would.

James: Promises, promises.....I don’t s’pose it will be mendable.

Grandad: Of course it will James. I promised you I could fix it.

James: Promises, promises.....everyone seems to make me promises and no-one seems to keep them. How do I know that mum’s special ornament won’t **like** the glue you’ve bought Grandad, and then it will still be in 3 pieces, and I’ll still be in the dog-house?

Grandad: Please cheer up James. I wouldn’t have promised you I could mend it if it couldn’t be mended. You see....in a few moments that ornament will be back in one piece again, looking as good as new.

James: I do hope so.

Grandad: Why don’t you tell me about all these people who seem to have broken their promises to you?

James: First it was Evie. She promised to go to the cinema with me to see “Happy feet” last Saturday morning. The film was due to start at half past eleven, so I turned up at a quarter past eleven and waited for her for a whole hour, but she never turned up.

Grandad: I am sorry James. That must have been very disappointing for you as I know you wanted to see that film.

James: She promised me as well.

- Grandad: Perhaps there was some reason why she couldn't turn up James. I know Evie's mum is very ill. Sometimes things happen that we can do nothing about that stop us from keeping our promises.
- James: I suppose so. And then Michael went and told on me to the teacher that I had put the spider on Harriet's chair, when he had promised me that he wouldn't tell.
- Grandad: I expect you got into a fair amount of trouble for that one because if I remember rightly, Harriet is very frightened of spiders.
- James: She's a big baby that's what. You could have heard her screaming in France, let alone the next door classroom. I feel very angry with Michael for breaking his promise to me.
- Grandad: Perhaps Michael promised something that he was really unable to keep because knowing your teacher; she would have been determined to get to the bottom of it.
- James: She did threaten to keep everyone in for a 2hour detention if she didn't have the name of the "offender" quickly.
- Grandad: Oh dear....
- James: But that's not the worst thing Grandad. I haven't told you about Kylie.
- Grandad: Kylie?
- James: She promised to buy me a new game for my Xbox for my birthday.
- Grandad: How could she possibly afford to do that James? Each game is really expensive and I don't think she gets that much pocket money.
- James: She doesn't. She told me that her dad was really really rich and that I could have anything I liked for my birthday because she really likes me. So I told her that I wanted this new game for my Xbox.
- Grandad: Right.
- James: When I opened her present on my birthday I was so excited. And do you know what she had given me?
- Grandad: Do tell me.
- James: A book of jokes. As if I need a book of jokes. Promises, promises.
- Grandad: James I think Kylie promised you something that she was unable to keep....people do that sometimes. I seem to remember someone promising that they would never ever use the hairdryer to dry the cat's fur again – but then because they like playing practical jokes, they couldn't keep their promise.
- James: Alright Grandad....so I break my promises too. I've just found it rather hard when other people break theirs.

Grandad: It is James.....so it is just as well that I have managed to buy the right glue to fix your mum's ornament then isn't it?

James: Yes it is.....thanks Grandad.....I know I can always rely on you to keep your promises. You are so kind to me.

Grandad: Before we do the ornament I'd better ring your mother – I expected her train an hour ago and she hasn't rung.

James: Oh dear....

Grandad: What is it James?

James: I think I've broken a promise. Mum actually rang ages ago and asked me to tell you that her train had arrived so you could collect her from the station. Mum made me promise her that I would tell you as soon as I got off the phone. Sorry Grandad....I forgot to tell you.

Grandad: James!

Exit James and Grandad

Appendix 3 – Prayers: “Praying the Promises”

This works well with Person 1 reading the Biblical promise and Person 2 praying the promise.

- 1: In Matthew 18:20 Jesus promises: *“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”*
- 2: Thank you Lord that you are here with us now. Would you lead us in our prayers.
- 1: In Matthew 28:20 Jesus promises: *“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*
- 2: Thank you Lord for your promise that wherever we are and whatever we are doing this year, you are with us and we are not alone. Help us to become more aware of your presence.
We hold before you someone we know who needs to know that you are with them this year..... PAUSE
- 1: In Proverbs 3:6 God promises: *“in all your ways acknowledge me, and I will make your paths straight”.*
- 2: Thank you Lord that you promise to lead us and bless us if we give our plans to you. Help us this year to spend time with you each day, praying and listening to your still small voice speaking to us.
We hold before you someone we know who needs your guidance.....PAUSE
- 1: In Philippians 4:19 Paul promises: *“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus”*
- 2: Thank you Lord that you promise to provide for us all that we need. Help us to not waste time worrying this year, but to trust you instead with our needs.
We hold before you the needs of someone we know.....PAUSE
- 1: In Romans 8:28 Paul promises: *“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”*
- 2: Thank you Lord that we can rely on your promise that whatever we go through this year, you are at work in our lives. Help us to keep our eyes fixed upon you especially during the stormy and difficult times.
We hold before you someone we know who is going through a difficult time...PAUSE.
- 1: *“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ.”*
- Both: Amen.

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Appendix 4 – Some of God’s Promises to us

“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ.”

(2 Corinthians 1:20)

1. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” *(Proverbs 3:5-6)*
2. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” *(Matthew 11:28–30)*
3. “But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. To the Lord I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill.” *(Psalm 3:3-4)*
4. “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” *(Romans 8:38-39)*
5. “God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” *(Hebrews 13:5b–6)*
6. “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.” *(James 4:7-8a)*
7. “Then Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” *(John 8:12)*
8. “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.” *(Matthew 7:7-8)*
9. “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams.” *(Isaiah 44:3-4)*
10. “Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance” *(Ephesians 1:13)*
11. “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.” *(Psalm 32:8)*
12. “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.” *(Romans 8:16)*
13. “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” *(Philippians 4:19)*
14. “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” *(2 Corinthians 12:9)*
15. “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” *(1 Corinthians 10:13)*
16. “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” *(Philippians 1:6)*
17. “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one can snatch them out of my hand.” *(John 10:27-28)*

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