

The ONE
YEAR®
GREAT SONGS
OF FAITH

Compiled and edited by

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Devotions written by

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The One Year Great Songs of Faith

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Preface



Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness.

Come before him, singing with joy.

PSALM 100:1-2

From the earliest days of the church, the singing of hymns has been an integral part of Christian worship. In the book of Acts we find Paul and Silas “praying and singing hymns to God” (Acts 16:25) while chained in the Philippian jail. It was also the apostle Paul who admonished believers with these words: “Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:18-20).

But the tradition of singing in worship is far older than even Paul and the early Christians. Many centuries earlier, Moses and his sister, Miriam, led the nation of Israel in song after their miraculous escape through the Red Sea. And who can forget King David, Israel’s beloved singer, who composed numerous psalms expressing both personal and corporate praise. Centuries later, translations of the psalms would provide the nurturing cradle for English hymnody.

In centuries past, singing hymns was an important means for teaching Christian truth in a church that was largely illiterate. Even so, hymn singing was and is far more than just a way of disseminating knowledge. It is a means for all believers, educated or uneducated, great or lowly, to express praise to their Creator and Savior. It is a way for all of us to communicate with God using more than just words. It allows us to pour out the grateful feelings of the heart—feelings awakened by the experience of forgiveness and the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.

As you come each day to this devotional, lift your heart and voice in praise to the Lord of all peoples and centuries—Jesus Christ. Join the chorus of believers throughout history and throughout the earth as you express praise and commitment to God through their words. Meet the hymnwriters and discover how God’s work in their lives has left this legacy of hymns for us to share. And as you worship through this treasury of hymns, look forward to the day when all believers—past, present, and future—will join in one great chorus around God’s throne. For as the great hymnwriter Isaac Watts once recognized, “The singing of God’s praise is the part of worship most closely related to heaven.”



JANUARY

Another Year Is Dawning

Another year is dawning:
Dear Father, let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee;
Another year of progress,
Another year of praise,
Another year of proving
Thy presence all the days.

Another year of mercies,
Of faithfulness and grace;
Another year of gladness
In the shining of Thy face;
Another year of leaning
Upon Thy loving breast;
Another year of trusting,
Of quiet, happy rest.

Another year of service,
Of witness for Thy love;
Another year of training
For holier work above.
Another year is dawning:
Dear Father, let it be,
On earth or else in heaven,
Another year for Thee.

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL (1836-1879)

JANUARY 1

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL enjoyed New Year's Day. It was a day of promise, looking forward in faith to God's blessing in the coming twelve months. She had such a positive spirit that when she entered a room, it was said she brought a "burst of sunshine." New Year's Day was the source for today's hymn, "Another Year Is Dawning," which she wrote on a card she was sending to a friend.

Frances Havergal died when she was only forty-three. Even at the end of her life she remained steadfast in reminding Christians that "fresh glory" is just as important as fresh air and fresh water. We need to celebrate God's glorious mercies each new day as well as each new year.



May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace. NUMBERS 6:24-26

2 JANUARY

MANY CHRISTIANS have made the New Year's resolution to be more like Jesus—but where do you start? The apostle Paul told the Philippian believers, "You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had" (Philippians 2:5). But how do we develop the attitude of Christ? Kate Wilkinson directs us to Colossians 3:16 for the answer: "Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives." In the third stanza Wilkinson returns to Philippians for this promise: "God's peace . . . will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). And so the song builds.

Christian growth is not instantaneous but gradual. It flows naturally from obeying God's Word. Thomas à Kempis, who wrote the Christian classic *The Imitation of Christ*, said, "One thing that draws back many from spiritual progress is the fear of the difficulty of the labor of the combat." Don't give up what you have started.



Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus. COLOSSIANS 3:16-17

May the mind of Christ, my Savior,
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and pow'r controlling
All I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His pow'r.

May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in ev'rything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self abasing—
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

May His beauty rest upon me
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only Him.

KATE B. WILKINSON (1859–1928)

Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand

Great God, we sing that mighty hand
By which supported still we stand;
The opening year Thy mercy shows;
That mercy crowns it till it close.

By day, by night, at home, abroad,
Still are we guarded by our God;
By His incessant bounty fed,
By His unerring counsel led.

With grateful hearts the past we own;
The future, all to us unknown,
We to Thy guardian care commit,
And peaceful leave before Thy feet.

In scenes exalted or depressed,
Thou art our Joy, and Thou our Rest;
Thy goodness all our hopes shall raise,
Adored through all our changing days.

PHILIP DODDRIDGE (1702–1751)

JANUARY 3

IN SCRIPTURE the “hand of God” often refers to judgment. But for the Christian it is also an image of providential care. We can see this throughout the book of Ezra, where Ezra attributed his success to the fact that the gracious hand of God was upon him.

Philip Doddridge felt the same way. The youngest of twenty children, Doddridge was considered too sickly to live, but the gracious hand of God was upon him. His parents died when he was only a teenager, but he was taken in by a minister who nurtured him in spiritual matters. Doddridge became a pastor, an educator, a hymnwriter, and an author. One theme remained uppermost in his mind—the providence of God. He wrote his hymns to illustrate his sermons and taught them to his congregation after he finished preaching. “Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand” apparently illustrated a New Year’s sermon.



The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O Lord, do not abandon those who search for you.

PSALM 9:9-10

4 JANUARY

IN 1833 John Henry Newman, a leader in the Church of England, went to visit Catholic leaders in Italy. There he contracted Sicilian fever and boarded a ship back to England. But a lack of wind kept the ship motionless in the Mediterranean, and a dense fog left them unable to navigate. Restless and sick, Newman penned the words of this hymn. Along with his desire for physical health, he wanted to see spiritual recovery in the Church of England. And he wanted the ship to get moving!

Finally, the ship's captain pointed heavenward and said, "The star is shining tonight. If a wind rises, we can chart our course. At night one little star is sufficient." Newman took that as a divine assurance. He later wrote that he had been looking for dazzling sunlight to guide him through his life, "but He sent me the kindly light of a star to show me the way one step at a time."



Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, "This is the way you should go," whether to the right or to the left. ISAIAH 30:21

Lead, kindly Light! amid th'encircling
gloom,

Lead Thou me on;

The night is dark, and I am far from
home,

Lead Thou me on;

Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for
me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Shouldst lead me on;

I loved to choose and see my path; but
now

Lead Thou me on;

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past
years.

So long Thy pow'r has blessed me, sure it
still

Will lead me on

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent,
till

The night is gone;

And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost
awhile!

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801-1890)