

Opening scripture

'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'. Jeremiah 29:11

Reflection

It is good to remind ourselves that no matter what our age might be, God has a plan and a purpose for our lives.

Hymn

(first two verses)

New every morning is the love
our waking and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought,
restored to life and power and thought.

New mercies, each returning day,
hover around us while we pray;
new perils past, new sins forgiven,
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven

John Keble 1792-1866

Prayer

Father, thank you for the new beginnings You provide in every moment. My body is filled with praise and thanksgiving for the love, mercy, grace and forgiveness You give. Even when I fail, You are there waiting to pick me up and guide me back on the path You have ready for me. You have placed wonderful people in my life to help me follow you. Thank you for those special people. I will praise You in the storms and I will praise You in the joys. Thank you God for new beginnings. Amen

Reflection

Each day with God is a new beginning. He still has so much for each of us to do, if we are on the lookout for his prompting. It can be a small thing such as sharing his joy and love as we smile at the person sitting next to us or it can be something larger.

There is a wonderful example of how God worked through older people in Luke 2, the story of Simeon and Anna. These were the two people who, drawn by the Holy Spirit, were just in the right place in the Temple when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus. Because they were so open to what God was saying to them, they recognised at once who this baby was, they knew he was the long-awaited Messiah. Simeon spoke out how this was the fulfilment of God's word to him that he would not die before he saw the Messiah and prophesied about the baby, saying to Mary, "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too".

Anna, the prophetess was also there, a woman of some 84 years, she recognised Jesus as the Christ. She spoke about Jesus to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. Two faithful older people, who that day saw a fresh revelation, the arrival of the Messiah and they acknowledged the faithfulness of God in their lives.
(Luke 2:22-38)

Simeon's Song the Nunc Dimittis

These are the words Simeon spoke over the baby Jesus. These words are still sung in many Anglican churches as part of the evening service.

Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.
(Book of Common Prayer, based on Luke 2:29-32)

Prayer

Dear Lord, no matter what may happen, may we never forget the blessings you have shown us. Help us to cling to you as our anchor and steadfast friend. Help us to remember your unconditional and never ending love for us throughout our lives. In Jesus name. Amen

Quote from C.S. Lewis

"You are never too old to set a new goal or dream a new dream".

Bible verses

O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. (Psalm 71:17)

They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright, he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. (Psalm 92:14-15).

Hymn

(verses 1 & 5)

Lord for the years your love has kept and guided,
Urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
Sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord for ourselves, in living power remake us,
Self on the cross and Christ upon the throne.
Past put behind us, for the future take us;
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Timothy Dudley-Smith

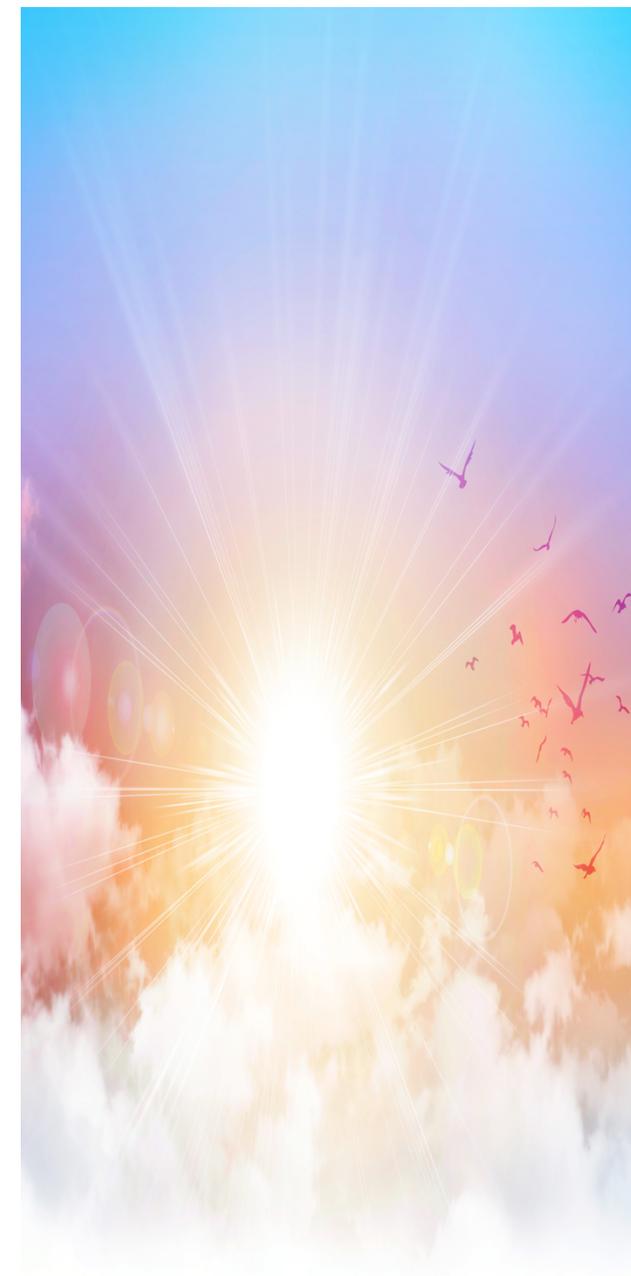
Closing prayer of blessing

Eternal God and Father, by whose love we are
redeemed; guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
that we may give ourselves to your service and live
this day in love to one another and to you, through
Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace as
we trust in him, so that we may overflow with hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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**GOD OF NEW
BEGINNINGS**