

## EVENING PRAYER WELCOMING A NEW YEAR

### OPENING PRAYER

We gather on this winter evening to turn our attention to all that this season celebrates in nature and in our lives. We know the silence of a snowfall. We know the stillness of life around us. And we know the waiting for new life to spring forth. Let us listen to the Breath of Silence ..... Become aware of all that is quiet .....all that seems empty -----all that appears lifeless ..... Let us trust that winter too has gifts to give.

Let us be still .....

HYMN: Gather us O God      or      Holy Ground      or      A hymn you know

### WELCOMING A NEW YEAR

A new year stands on my doorstep  
ready to enter my life's journey.

Something in me welcomes this visitor:  
the hope of bountiful blessings  
the joy of a new beginning  
the freshness of unclaimed surprises

Something in me rebuffs this visitor:  
the swiftness of the coming  
the boldness of the entrance  
the challenge of a year's good-bye.

Something in me fears this visitor:  
the unnamed events of future days  
the wisdom needed to walk love well  
the demands of giving away and growing.

A new year stands on my doorstep.  
with fragile caution I move  
to open the door for its entrance,  
my heart leaps with surprise,  
joy jumps in my eyes,  
for there beside this brand new year  
stands my God with outstretched hand!  
God smiles and gently asks of me:  
can we walk this year together?  
And I, so overwhelmed with goodness,  
can barely whisper my reply welcome in!



READING

LUKE 1: 39-45

REFLECTION ON THE WORD

A Prayer for Hospitality to the Mother of Jesus

Mary, the quality of your visit to Elizabeth draws me to prayer. You teach me so much about welcoming others and of being other – centered. You hurried quickly to where the need was. You thought of Elizabeth. You gave her joy, hope, and promise, or rather, you allowed the Lord to do all of that through you. You believed in the Promise made to you by your God. Is that why you could give and share, and visit the way you did? You touched Elizabeth's spirit and she felt the goodness of God in her life. Mary, you understood so well God's great love for you. You trusted him so totally. Your welcoming presence met Elizabeth and she cried out in recognition of the fulness of God within you.

Mary, dear woman of God pray for us, that we can be spiritual people of quality, of promise, of welcoming presence. Help us to be full of hospitality, welcoming the Christ in all and allowing the Christ within us to be met and visited. AMEN.

(Fresh Bread, by Joyce Rupp)

In our mission statement ----we believe----we proclaim....

We Sisters of St. Martha and Martha Associates inspired by God's graciousness, hear, embrace, and respond to the cry for Gospel hospitality.

LEADER: What word may be in your heart that you wish to express.

CLOSING PRAYER: May the God of hospitality be with us all as we try to live God's mission. This we ask in the name of Jesus our Savior. Amen.