

The "New Year"
Which wasn't new

Isaiah 60, Matt. 5:14-16
Matt. 6: 9-12, 14

This morning we continue to blur the seasons of the church year, with our use of Scriptures for Epiphany. We begin our worship with the inspiring verses from Isaiah: Arise! Shine! For your light has come.

Our other lessons put us on record for the scope of the work ahead of us – Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth – as it is in heaven. With the added warning “and forgive us our trespasses – in direct proportion – to our willingness to forgive others”

The point of our “new year’s reflection” is that while we set out to live in the new life through Christ, the world which we meet is the same ol’ same ol’. Our world is the old world. (for an example of how the old world complicates the new life read John 9. The man born blind receives his sight – and then his troubles begin. Because everything around him is the old world. Only he is new.) It is in light of this “old world” problem that we reaffirm our baptismal promises, and access God’s power through this affirmation/remembrance.

Our baptism engrafted us into Christ – God with us. Our baptism sealed us into the grace and healing which Christ offer. Our baptism joins us with all other followers of Christ in the fellowship of love and service.

So we not only answer these questions. We celebrate them.

Do you renounce evil, and intend to leave brokenness behind?

I do

Do you accept Christ as the saving power of God, and claim the new life through him?

I do.

Will you be a faithful disciple of Christ, obeying his Word and showing his justice and love.

I will.

Go forth in the power and strength of God,
By your baptism you were sealed into Christ.
In Christ, be strong in the new life, this day, this year, and always.