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## A Prayer for the New Year

Our most gracious heavenly Father,

You spoke your Creation into being when you said "Let there be light." And now, through your Son Jesus Christ, you bring your creation to another new year of light and life. Even as we are a fallen humanity, children who stray from your goodness, we confess our shortcomings and ask your forgiveness and grace.

At the onset of this new year, give us the will to minister to those whom you have placed within our midst. Strengthen us in love that we may feed the hungry, provide shelter for the homeless, care for the sick and reach out to the lost and forgotten sharing the good news of Christ and the power of your love.

Bless your people with the presence of your Holy Spirit. In our uncertainties, give us assurance of your grace. In our doubts and fears, help us turn to you for guidance. In our disputes, bring us to peaceful resolution. In our pain and sickness, bring us healing and wholeness. In our selfishness, give us generous hearts. In all of our temptations, give us the strength to seek your kingdom first.

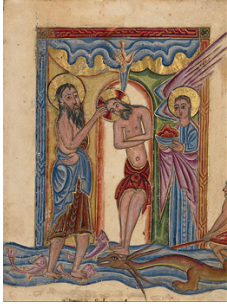
Everlasting Father, you are the author of all life. We give you thanks for the powerful witness of your saints and for all who have gone before us. Lead us by their faithful example, that we too might live according to your will. And finally, even as we begin a new year in our earthly pilgrimage, we patiently await the day when you come again, reuniting all your people, making all things new.

Bless us all according to your loving kindness, and bring us into the glory of your kingdom. This we pray in the powerful name above all names, Jesus Christ our savior and Lord.

Amen.

## Thin Place, Deep Water

"Thin Place, Deep Water" is an article written by Debie Thomas, which explores the idea of revelation, faith, and "practicing Epiphany." Thomas is



Epiphany. The word comes from the Greek, "epiphaneia," meaning "appearing" or "revealing." During this brief season between Advent and Lent, we leave mangers and swaddling clothes behind, and turn to stories of shimmering revelation. Kings and stars. Doves and voices. Water. Wine. Transfiguration.

In Celtic Christianity, Epiphany stories are stories of "thin places," places where the boundary between the mundane and the eternal becomes permeable. God parts the curtain, and we catch glimpses of his love, majesty, and power. Epiphany calls us to look beneath and beyond the ordinary surfaces of our lives, and discover the extraordinary. To look deeply at Jesus, and see God.

[Continue the Article Here](#)



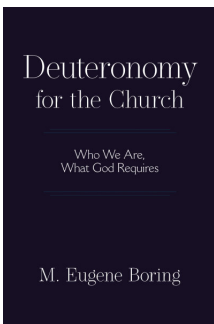
## Giving the Gifts of the Magi

If you search around online, you can find small boxes or gift bags of gold, frankincense, and myrrh available for purchase. This is such a great idea, but why not take it one step further?

This project is very hands-on and is great for any age. Each "gift" is a great Christmas party food: the gold is Hershey's Nuggets (chocolate), the frankincense is caramel corn, and the myrrh is dried mixed fruit.

All ages can help with this craft and it certainly has the cute factor at parties or family gatherings.

[Find Instructions Here](#)



## Good Reads

**Title:** Deuteronomy for the Church: Who We Are, What God Requires

**Author:** M. Eugene Boring

*Deuteronomy for the Church* reminds us that Christian believers are included in "all Israel," that in reading Deuteronomy we are not merely spectators overhearing what was once said to other people, but that we are addressed as on-stage participants in the story, with the responsibility to discern and improvise what God requires of us in our time and place.

[Available from Augsburg Fortress](#)



**Blessed New Year  
from  
Growing in Faith, The Diakonia Program**

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