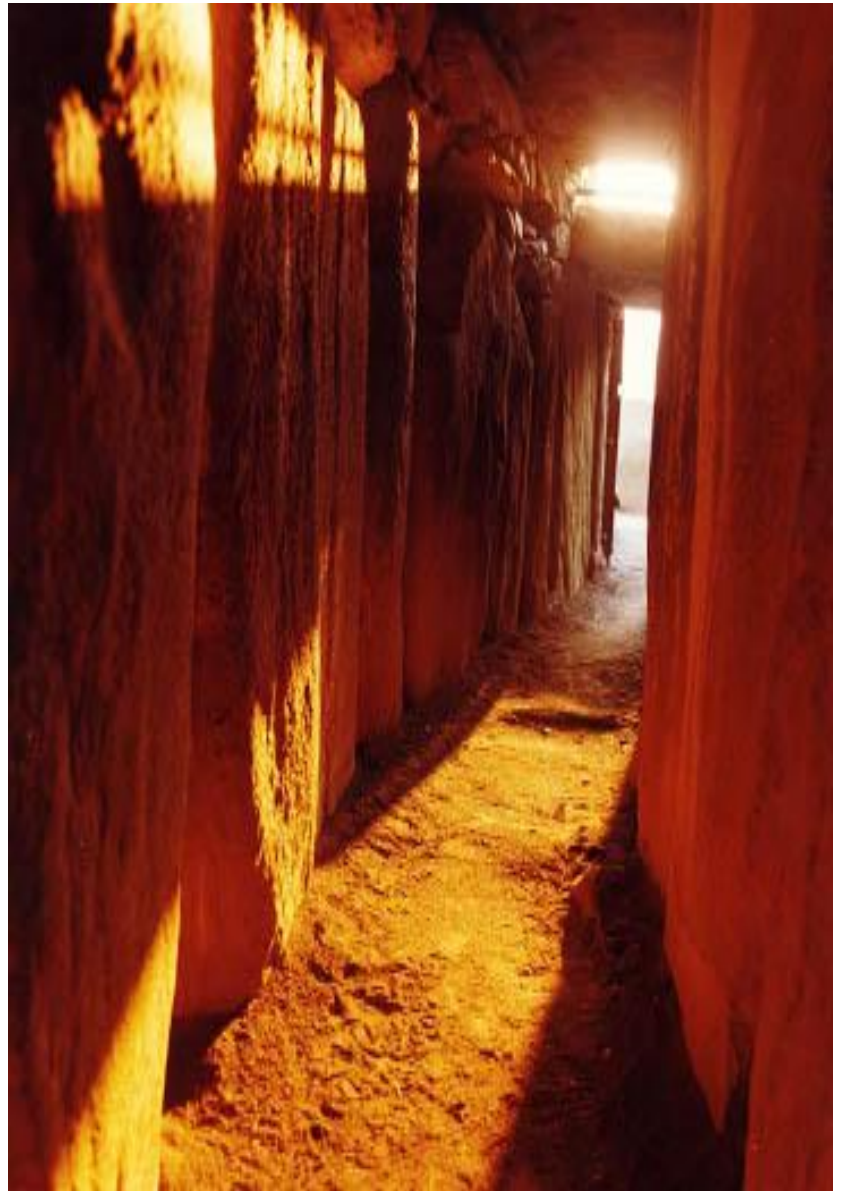


As we begin a new year there are many images we use to symbolise new beginnings. One of these is that of the light entering through the roof-box and penetrating the deep passage tomb at Newgrange in the Boyne valley.

Newgrange is best known for the illumination of its passage and chamber by the winter solstice sun. Above the entrance to the passage at Newgrange there is a opening called a roof-box. Its purpose is to allow sunlight to penetrate the chamber on the shortest days of the year, around December 21, the winter solstice.

At dawn, from December 19th to 23rd, a narrow beam of light penetrates the roof-box and reaches the floor of the chamber, gradually extending to the rear of the chamber. As the sun rises higher, the beam widens within the chamber so that the whole room becomes dramatically illuminated. This event lasts for 17 minutes, beginning around 9am.



*Lord teach us to be ready to allow your light into our lives. May it illuminate our own lives and the lives of those with whom we come in contact. Help us to keep hope alive in times when it is difficult to hope and to believe that no matter what happens in this coming year that you have promised to be with us always*