

## Christ, Bless This Home



As we arrive at the outset of another new year, we arrive as people who have spent *much* more time than usual in our homes lately. Once a place of rest and respite, our homes have now become our schools, our refuge, our office, and might feel like, for some, our prison. With stay-at-home orders, virus alive in our world, and so much changed, we are also much more aware of the state of our homes at the beginning of 2021.

Home improvement businesses have been booming as people have been cleaning and making updates to their living spaces in recent months. In our home over the past year we have become much more aware of which rooms we spend the majority of our time in, which spot on the couch gets more wear, and which blankets we choose first. We have also noticed which parts of our home could be better used to help us find flourishing, rest, and family time.

Our homes are sacred spaces that, at their best, help foster a sense of Sabbath—holy rest—that enables us to serve God in the world. More than just shelter, they are hopefully a place that can provide room for us to foster our non-work vocations in life (whether they relate to family, creativity, caring for animals, hobbies...the list goes on).

On January 6 we celebrate the feast of Epiphany. Epiphany heralds the arrival of King Herod's wise men at Jesus' manger after being led by the light of a star. They weren't really on their way to honor this infant king, however—they were on their way to find Jesus' whereabouts so that King Herod could have this threat to his power killed. The epiphany that we celebrate on January 6th is the one that the wise men have—this child is the Son of God! This life-changing revelation changes their minds, and the three wise men (people we have come to refer to as Casper, Melchior, and Balthasar) return home a different way without reporting back to Herod. They save Jesus' life, because they know that his life has saved them.

At Epiphany we celebrate that Christ's saving grace has burst into our world, and that nothing will be the same. Beyond that, we celebrate that this grace is not only for the family of Israel, but for all—even Herod's wise men.

In joyful celebration of the arrival of this grace, we annually celebrate Epiphany by being invited to have our homes blessed. The blessing of a home is, according to our Lutheran worship resources, "a celebration in the deepest and broadest sense. We thank God for the gift of a home while honoring the ways people practice their faith in their life at home: chores and hobbies, cooking and eating, ways of relaxing, relationships within the household and beyond it, caring for our bodies, connecting with the creation."

Inviting God into our homes through Epiphany blessing is perhaps more important this year than before, as we continue to spend more time in these sacred spaces. Though pandemic means that I will not be visiting homes to bless them in person this year, below you will find the order of blessing that you and your family can do together—I invite you to take pictures as you bless your home and email them to me, so that we can rejoice together as a community in the blessing of Christ's arrival in our homes this Epiphany.

God is with us. Amen

*Pastor Marissa*

# BLESSING FOR A HOME

## Gathering

*When all have gathered in a convenient place, the leader begins.*

In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Peace to this *home* and to all who enter here.

Today we give thanks to God and we seek God's blessing as we gather in this dwelling and pray for *those* who make it *their* home.

*A reading from Isaiah:* Be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating, says the Lord; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (*Isaiah 65:19, 21*)

*A candle may be lighted, and these words may be spoken.* Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life. *You may move to different rooms throughout the home to bless each space.*

## Blessing

Welcome and Community

***A place of entering and leaving, such as the outside doors.*** *A reading from the Psalms:* The Lord will watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth forevermore. (*Psalms 121:8*)

Let us pray. O God, watch over *name/s* in all *their* going out and *their* coming in; keep all evil away from *their* door; and let *them* share the hospitality of this home with all who visit, that those who enter here may know your love and peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

## Epiphany Blessing

Using a piece of chalk, you can write above your door (or near it): 20 † C M B † 21, 2021 is for the year the blessing is for, the initials stand for the Latin blessing "Christe mansionem benedicat" ("Christ, bless this house") and also for the legendary names of the wise men (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar). In between are crosses of blessing.

***A place of welcoming guests, such as a chair for a visitor.*** *A reading from Romans:* Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. (*Romans 15:7*)

Let us pray. O God, bless all who visit this home; may they find here warmth and peace. Bless also *name/s*, who *welcome* others into *their* home, as you blessed Sarah and Abraham when they entertained angels unawares. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

***A place where common activities are shared, such as a living room.*** *A reading from Acts:* Then Paul went upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them until dawn; then he left. (*Acts 20:11*)

Let us pray. O God, you set apart time for rest and enjoyment of the world you made. Bless those who gather here for fellowship and recreation, that they may be renewed and refreshed. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

## Household Work

***A place for studying and communicating with others.*** *A reading from Proverbs:* To get wisdom is to love one-self; to keep understanding is to prosper. (*Proverbs 19:8*)

Let us pray. O God, you are the teacher who leads us to all truth. Grant that those who learn in this place may use knowledge to heal and help your world. Draw us together through our technology for every good purpose. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

***A place for preparing meals, such as the kitchen.*** *A reading from Joel:* I am sending you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied. Be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God. (*Joel 2:19, 23*)

Let us pray. O God, you fill the hungry with good things. Send your blessing on *those* who *prepare* food here, and make us all ever thankful for daily bread. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

## Caring For Ourselves

***A place for sharing the gift of food, such as a dining table.*** *A reading from the Psalms:* The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, and you give them their food in due season. You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. (*Psalms 145:15-16*)

Let us pray. Blessed are you, Creator of heaven and earth, for you give us food and drink to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad. Make us grateful for all your mercies, and mindful of the needs of others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

***A place of caring for the body, such as a bathroom or an exercise area.*** *A reading from the Psalms:* You yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I will thank you because I am marvelously made; your works are wonderful, and I know it well. (*Psalms 139:13-14*)

Let us pray. O God, you revealed yourself in human flesh, making holy what is ordinary and earthly. Bless us as we care for our ordinary, marvelous bodies. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

***A place of rest for the body, such as a person's bedroom.*** *A reading from the Psalms:* In peace, I will lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me rest secure. (*Psalm 4:8*)

Let us pray. Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace. Amen

***A garden or an outdoor space.*** *A reading from Jeremiah:* They shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. (*Jeremiah 31:12*)

Let us pray. O God, we praise you for the green plants that make the oxygen we breathe and for the animals that breathe it with us. Sustain us all together in this place by your Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

#### **Conclusion**

Lord's Prayer. *Those gathered say the Lord's Prayer together.*

#### **Blessing**

Dwell here in peace. Christ is here. **Thanks be to God.**