

THE EPIPHANY

The Church has a custom of blessing homes on the Feast of the Epiphany. Family and friends gather to ask God's blessing on their homes and those who live in or visit the home. It is an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in our home, our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows.

A traditional way of doing this is to use chalk blessed during the Epiphany liturgy and write above the home's entryway, 20 + C + M + B + 24. The letters C, M, B have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three magi: Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless the house." The "+" signs represent the cross and 2024 is the year.

Blessing the Chalk

V. Our help is the name of the Lord:

R. The maker of heaven and earth.

V. The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in:

R. From this time forth for evermore.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

Let us pray.

Loving God, bless this chalk which you have created, that it may be helpful to your people; and grant that through the invocation of your most Holy Name all who use it in faith to write upon the doors of their homes the names of your saints, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, may receive health of body and protection of soul for all who dwell in or visit their home; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Instructions for Blessing your home

Using the blessed chalk mark the lintel of your front door (or front porch step) as follows:

20 + C + M + B + 24 while saying:

The three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed the star of God's Son who became human two thousand and twenty-four years ago. May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the new year.

Amen.

Then offer the following prayer:

Visit, O blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence. Bless all who live or visit here with the gift of your love; and grant that we may manifest your love to each other and to all whose lives we touch. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and for ever. **Amen.**

At times God has commanded his people to mark their doors. The Israelites marked their doors with the lamb's blood on the night of the passover.

A similar command was given with the Shema Yisrael:
Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart ... and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deut. 6:4-6, 9)

"Chalking the door" is a way to celebrate and literally mark the occasion of the Epiphany and God's blessing of our lives and home. With time the chalk will fade. As it does, we let the meaning of the symbols written, sink into the depths of our hearts and be manifest in our words and actions.

Welcome to the United Benefice of Holy Innocents and St. Mark, South Norwood

Sharing God's grace and love in our community



7th January 2024

Priest: Revd. Mother Susan Wheeler-Kiley
TSSF, SCP

Reader: Mrs. Cicelyn Hinds, PTO

EPIPHANY

8.00am BCP Mass (St. Mark)

10am Parish Mass (Both Parishes)

Isaiah 60.1-6 * Psalm 72 * Ephesians 3.1-12 * Matthew 2.1-12

Access online worship via

www.youtube.com/c/StMarksSouthNorwood

Today at St Mark 8.00 am we welcome Father Charlie from St Johne the Divine, Kennington and at 10.00 am Father Tom former Priest in Charge of St Mark. Mother Susan is at Holy Innocents this morning.

CHURCH NOTICES

Pastoral Care: Funerals, baptisms, weddings, please contact Mother Susan 07890 780572, fs.kiley@btinternet.com or Cicelyn Hinds 0208 656 2494. Please note that Mother Susan's day off is Friday.

We pray: for Archbishops Justin and Stephen; for the Bishops in this diocese, Christopher, Rosemarie and Martin.

For the Bishops, priests, deacons and people in our link Dioceses of Zimbabwe and The Scottish Episcopal Church.

Season of Lay Ministries (6 - 28 Jan) St Saviour (Copleston Church & Community Centre), Peckham - an LEP with Hanover Chapel (URC)
Edward Collier (Vicar) Jo Patterson (URC CRCW).
Wellspring New Monastic Community

For the sick – Linda, Alec, Malik, Caroline, Susan and baby Mabel.

The bereaved – the Appiah, Gaisey, Robinson, Brown Powell and the Dempster families.

The recently departed – George Kojo Appiah; Ruth Robinson; Donna Brown, Lee Powell and Ron Dempster. **Years Mind.**

FOND FAREWELL

After the 10.00 Mass at St Mark, there will be a farewell celebration and opportunity to say thanks to Josh Dumbrell who is joining the Royal Navy in the middle of January.