

Epiphany Chalking and Blessing

At Young Youth and Youth, we learned about Epiphany, the day we celebrate the Wise Men's arrival at Jesus' home. We talked about traditions surrounding this day, and we took part in two: Chalking the Door and House Blessing.

For centuries, Christians have marked the outside of their main doorway with an inscription that serves as a blessing and a reminder. This year, we wrote "20 + CMB + 18". The numbers change each year, reminding us of how many years ago (this year, 2018), the Wise Men came to find Christ. The center letters stay the same. They represent the traditional names of the Wise Men: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. They also stand for the Latin phrase "Christus Mansionem Benedicat" which means "Christ bless this home." As we wrote, we used a liturgy, which you can also use to chalk and bless your home (see the e-news for a link).

Chalking the door is both a blessing, as we ask Christ to bless us, and a reminder to us of how we are to live. We remember that Christ and his family would have welcomed the Wise Men – we want to offer hospitality to others. We invite Christ into our homes and our hearts—we want to live surrounded and filled by Christ. We remember that we are called to live as God's people, in our homes and outside them. We recall all these things when we catch sight of the blessing marked on our door.

After we chalking, we walked around the church, stopping in front of different rooms, praying for God's blessing on our many ministries and the work that is done in this place. While Pastor Rachel offered the first prayer, every other prayer was prayed by one of our Young Youth or Youth, inspired by their friends sharing what they would ask God for in relation to where we stood. A few examples of the prayers they prayed:

-that people would feel safe and welcome as they came into the Narthex

- that our children would have fun, build friendships, and learn in the Nursery
- that those who serve in the kitchen would be safe and provide us with nourishment
- that the fellowship hall would be a place where we grow in relationships and feel welcome
- that our music groups would share God's word, and that others would feel invited to join in
- that our staff and volunteers would enjoy one another's company, that they would be guided to lead our church, and that our volunteers especially would feel our gratitude for the work they do behind the scenes.
- that our sanctuary would be a place to learn and grow in faith and in fellowship

Each family went home with a copy of our chalking and blessing liturgy, so that they could repeat this in their own homes. We invite each of you to do so as well! And we wish you a blessed year, filled with Christ's presence.

-Pr. Rachel