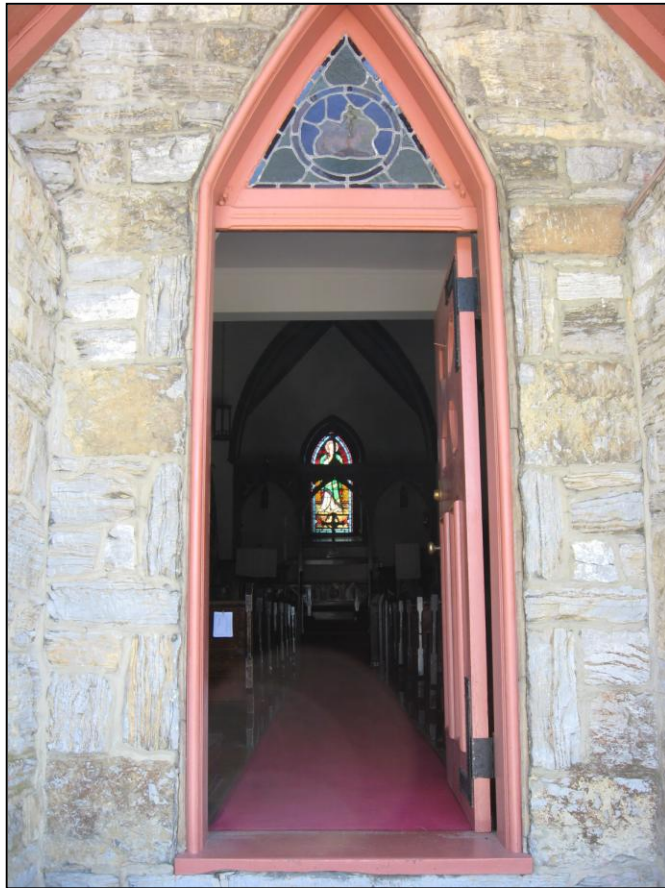


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A Blessing for your Home For the New Year or Epiphany



Background

A custom of our Church is the blessing of homes on New Year's Day--the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus; or on January 6--the Feast of the Epiphany. A family may hold a short service to ask God's blessing for their home, for those who live and work in it, and for all visitors. In this way, we invite Jesus to be a "guest" in our home, a listener to each conversation, a guide for troubled times, a blessing in times of thanksgiving.

“Chalking the door” or the door step is used to celebrate and literally “mark” the occasion. In the Old Testament the Hebrew people were told to mark their doors with the blood of the lamb on the night of the Passover to ensure that the angel of death would pass them by. Deuteronomy 6: 9 says: “*write [the words of God] on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house...and you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*” Chalk is made of the substance of the earth and is used by teachers to instruct and by children to play. As the image of the chalk fades over time, we will remember the sign we have made and transfer it to our hearts and our habits.

The following form may be used by your family to mark the door of your own home at this holy season. You may assign parts to read and respond as you wish.

This service is also suitable for single persons, omitting the words in the brackets and changing the personal pronouns in the italics.

A Service of Blessing for your Home

All stand at the front door

One person says:

Let the mighty power of the Holy God be present in this place to banish from it every unclean spirit, to cleanse it from every residue of evil, and to make it a secure habitation for *those* who *dwell* in it; in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Others respond: Amen!

One person says: Behold, I stand at the door and knock, says the Lord. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come into the house, and eat with you, and you with me.

Others respond: The Lord shall watch over *our* going out and *our* coming in from this time forth for evermore.

One person says: Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Sovereign Lord, you are Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: Send your *servants* out from this place on many errands, be *their* constant companion in the way, and welcome *them* upon their return, so that coming and going *they* may be sustained by your presence, O Christ our Lord.

Others respond: Amen!

One person may read: Psalm 112 (From *The Message*)

Hallelujah! Blessed man, blessed woman, who fear GOD,
Who cherish and relish his commandments,
Their children robust on the earth,
And the homes of the upright—how blessed!
Their houses brim with wealth
And a generosity that never runs dry.
Sunrise breaks through the darkness for good people—
God's grace and mercy and justice!
The good person is generous and lends lavishly;
No shuffling or stumbling around for this one,
But a sterling and solid and lasting reputation.
Unfazed by rumor and gossip,
Heart ready, trusting in GOD,
Spirit firm, unperturbed,
Ever blessed, relaxed among enemies,
They lavish gifts on the poor—
A generosity that goes on, and on, and on.
An honored life! A beautiful life!

One person may read: Galatians 5:13-25 (Selections from *The Message*)

It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom. If you bite and ravage each other, watch out—in no time at all you will be annihilating each other, and where will your precious freedom be then?

My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness. For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness. These two ways of life are antithetical, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day. Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence? ...what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a

willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely. Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.

**Chalking the door, door step or area in front of your home or apartment
(You may also use crayon and a piece of paper attached to your door.)
Draw the following symbols and date:**



Cross

2012

Year



Chi Rho (Symbol of
Jesus' Name)

One person says: Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, grant to this home the grace of your presence, that you may be known to be the inhabitant of this dwelling, and the defender of this household; Visit, O blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence. Bless *all* who live here with the gift of your love; and grant that *they* may manifest your love [to each other and] to all whose lives *they* touch. May *they* grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen *them* in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and for ever. Amen.

One person says:

May God the Father, who by Baptism adopts us as his children, grant us grace.

Others respond:

May God the Son, who sanctified a home at Nazareth, fill us with love.

One person says:

May God the Holy Spirit, who has made the Church one family, keep us in peace.

All respond: Amen!

One person says: The peace of the Lord be among us always.

All respond: May the Spirit of God rest upon us and upon our home!

(The service concludes as all greet each other in the name of Christ.)