

Chalking the House

There's an old custom observed on Epiphany called "chalking the house". It's a blessing offered for a house of worship and/ or a personal dwelling. During a brief liturgy with prayer, spoken parts and singing, the letters "CMB" and the year are inscribed in chalk over the doorway of the house in the following manner:

20+C+M+B+16

The letters represent the first initial of the names of the wise men, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. (Both the number and the names of the wise men are a matter of tradition, not scripture.) C M B may also stand for "Christus Mansionem Benedicat," meaning "May Christ bless this dwelling". Reflecting on the custom of chalking the house and the new year, UM Pastor Jan Richardson (Orlando, FL), wrote the following:

The Year as a House: A Blessing

Think of the year as a house: door flung wide in welcome, threshold swept and waiting, a graced spaciousness opening and offering itself to you.	Here let the weary come let the aching come let the lost come let the sorrowing come.
Let it be blessed in every room. Let it be hallowed in every corner. Let every nook be a refuge and every object set to holy use.	Here let them find their rest and let them find their soothing and let them find their place and let them find their de- light.
Let it be here that safety will rest. Let it be here that health will make its home. Let it be here that peace will show its face. Let it be here that love will find its way.	And may it be in this house of a year that the seasons will spin in beauty, and may it be in these turning days that time will spiral with joy. And may it be that its rooms will fill with ordinary grace and light spill from every window to welcome the stranger home.

Let it be so for us and our church this year!

Happy New Year,
Vicki