

New Year Musings

Dear Friends

As we approach Epiphany Sunday (The feast of Epiphany is on the 6th i.e. 12th night) I have been pondering that this might be a good year to introduce or re-introduce to those who have done it before, the tradition of blessing house and church with chalk. I believe it will give us all a positive start to the year. Chalking up the initials of the Three Kings and the year on your front door and on the churches, door is one of those great bits of Christian ritual that can be found all over Europe.

Using the blessed chalk traditionally a child marks 20 + C + M + B + 21 as the priest or somebody else says: The three Wisemen, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed a star to find the Christ Child, who was born 2 thousand and twenty-one years ago followed by a prayer like this.

Prayer of blessing at Epiphany

Visit, O blessed Lord, this home
with the gladness of your presence.
Bless it and all who live or visit herewith
the gift of your love; and grant that
we may show your love to each other
and all whose lives we touch.
Lord Jesus Christ, be with us now and for ever. Amen.

Traditionally priests would visit each home in their parish after the Feast of the Epiphany. Over time it became more difficult to accomplish such a feat as parishes became larger and larger. For this reason, it became an accepted tradition that any member of the household could lead this blessing ceremony in place of the priest.

Tomorrow I will bless some chalk as part of our Sunday service and leave at the back of both churches. For those who do not have a chalk friendly door or wall you could use the chalk on dark paper and attach it to the front door

I am also happy to make a covid safe outside visits to bless any home on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday next week. If you do mark your doors, please take a picture so we can share on our web pages- Facebook and the Uplander!

There are many traditions around Epiphany including the 3 kings cake, having seen a FB recipe plea for Galette des Rois- I shared French version that I have, far easier (and nicer) than some of the bread ring versions from other European countries. I also did a bit of google research and found an interesting article on the English Heritage site, I recommend you take a look.

[A History of the Twelfth Night Cake - English Heritage Blog \(english-heritage.org.uk\).](https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/blog/a-history-of-the-twelfth-night-cake/)

I have reminisced this week of the fun Epiphany parties that have been held at St Swithun another event we that will be missed this year. I look forward to 2022 when we will again maybe a 3 kings cake bake of could be included!

I oft mentioned that I feel as a church we have lost too many traditions that link our faith with our everyday lives our homes and our churches. Finding out about the different traditions surrounding Epiphany and 12th Night has once again given me that reminder.

The pandemic has made us shift our focus from the practice our faith being about what we do in a building to how we can practice and worship outside and at home. Both are vital to a healthy faith journey. How we do this going forward I will be exploring through some more musings.

It is often said the church and congregations are slow to adapt, and I would agree to a certain extent, however over the past months I am thankful and feel blessed that in the benefice we have adapted, changed, and begun to be more creative. Thought has been put into who we are as a community of faith and as individual Christians. I Have valued the messages of support when some difficult decisions have needed to be made, I am sure there will be more to come in the next few months. January and February are known as difficult months at any time even more so this year. I remain hopeful and positive about the future, as I said in a recent Facebook post.

Some things on last years to do lists were achieved, some are postponed, some will never happen Cest la vie, but new exciting plans will be added for 2021.

– The light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it.

Have a blessed 2021-

Rev'd Fiona