

Living Faith



Dear Faith Shapers,

In the month of January we have three important holidays that we celebrate, as a church and as a country; Epiphany—January 6th, Baptism of our Lord—January 13th and Martin Luther King Jr. day—January 21st. With each of these three there is much to highlight and celebrate within a congregation and in the home. And while all three holidays have their distinct differences, they all have this in common—the celebration of freedom and God’s love. We celebrate God’s love thru the visiting of the Magi when Christ was born. We celebrate freedom and God’s love in the remembrance of our own baptisms when we remember that of Christ Jesus’. And we celebrate God’s love and freedom when we remember Martin Luther King Jr. and all that he went thru and stood for when advocating for the freedom to vote, worship and live ones life, no matter your ethnicity or color.

In this months HomeLife insert you will find ways that you can celebrate each of these important dates with your family. I hope you enjoy celebrating these holidays as much as my family does.

Kristin Johnson
Deacon



“We shall overcome” was a phrase commonly used during the marches of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s day. Discuss what Jesus overcame for us: sin, the grave, the world. Then talk about what we can overcome with the help of God: prejudices, bad habits, temptations, etc. Read these “overcome” scriptures together.

- * John 16:33
- * Romans 12:21
- * 1 John 2:13
- * 1 John 5:3-5
- * Revelation 2:7
- * Revelation 3:5
- * Revelation 3:21
- * Revelation 21:7

Ask God to help us see our prejudices and to overcome them by seeing all people as beloved children of God. Thank God for the life and ministry of Martin Luther King, Jr.



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Epiphany

January 6th



It's customary on the day of Epiphany in many homes (especially in Western Europe) to mark the frame above the front door with symbols of blessing: 20+C+M+B+19

The letters have two meanings. First, they represent the initials of the Magi — Caspar, Malchior, and Balthazar — who came to visit Jesus in His first home. They also abbreviate the Latin phrase, *Christus mansionem benedicat*: “May Christ bless the house.” The “+” signs represent the cross, and the “20” at the beginning and the “19” at the end mark the year. Taken together, this inscription is performed as a request for Christ to bless those homes so marked and that He stay with those who dwell therein throughout the entire year.

The chalking of the doors is a centuries-old practice throughout the world, though it appears to be somewhat less well-known in the United States. It is, however, an easy tradition to adopt, and a great practice whereby we dedicate our year to God from its very outset, asking His blessing on our homes and on all who live, work, or visit them there.

Gather by the front door as a family and have a prayer of blessing! Whomever you chose to lead, they can speak words similar to these: Blessing of the Door. Leader: Peace be to this house and to all who enter here. Let us pray: O God, who by the guidance of a star did on this day manifest your Son to the Gentiles, mercifully grant that we who know you by faith may also attain the vision of your glorious majesty. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Read Matthew 2:11. With colored chalk, place the marks on the door frame. Leader: May Christ remain with us throughout the new year. Lord, remember your children and teach us to pray: Our Father, who..... Leader: May the Lord watch over our going out and our coming in, from this time forth and forevermore. Amen.

Baptism of our Lord January 13th

I am, as you are, a part of the priesthood of believers, claimed in the waters of Baptism and sealed by the Holy Spirit and Marked with the Cross of Christ forever and sent into the world as witnesses for the sake of the Gospel. Here is one way to celebrate the remembrance of baptism. At home, sitting around a bowl of water, dip your fingers into the bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your forehead, saying the words “you are a beloved child of God, Sealed by the Holy Spirit and Marked with the Cross of Christ Forever”. Talk about the day of Baptism, what are your memories, share how Baptism informs faith. Encourage each other to tell your faith stories or share a favorite story of faith from the Bible.

