

*Dear partners in Christ,*

This year we have a very special opportunity to celebrate the **Feast of Epiphany on Sunday, January 6**. We'll revive the ancient tradition of **Epiphany house blessing**, and everyone who comes to worship will take home a gift kit to bless the place where they live.

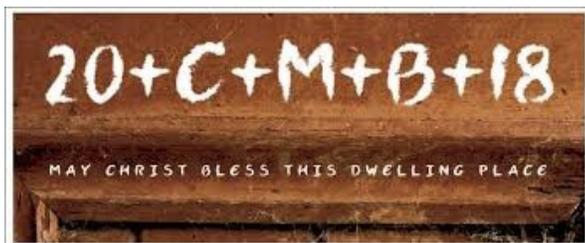
Matthew writes that when the magi, or wise ones, saw the shining star stop overhead, they were filled with joy. *"On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother."* (Matthew 2:10-11)



In our own homes, whether we live in a single room, apartment, or shared house, we meet Christ in relationships with family and friends, visitors and strangers. Even when we're alone, we are never without God's company. In the home, faith is shared and nurtured and put into action. Enjoying the gift of a home, we are empowered to reach out so that all can be sheltered.

The miracle of Christmas is that God's love reached right into where we live, as God came to live with us in Jesus. God still does live with us, infusing each day with God's Holy Spirit and gifts of hope, strength, wisdom, courage, and so much more. When we are most at home, and most ourselves, we most deeply realize the wonder that God loves us just as we are.

On Epiphany it is traditional to write an inscription with chalk above the main entrance to dwelling. This year it will read: **20 + C M B + 19**. The numbers change with each new year. The three letters stand for the ancient Latin blessing *Christe mansionem benedicat*, which means "Christ, bless this house." They also represent the legendary names of the three magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar.



Whenever we see the inscription, we will remember that God's love and help are always with us. God's compassion guides the complexities of living as family, and God blesses us through the many changes that accompany the passing years and seasons of life. As we begin 2019, there could be no better message to center us and bring hope.

*In Christ,*

*Pastor Melinda*

Pastor Melinda

**Annual Meeting of  
First Immanuel Congregation—  
*Sunday, January 27, 2019*  
after worship, in Fellowship Hall**