

January 2018 Notes from the Presbytery Pastor – Presbytery of Nevada

Celebrate Epiphany: A centuries-old ‘chalking’ and house blessing bring the memory of the Magi into our homes

By Rachel M. Srubas | Presbyterians Today

(Note: The following is an excerpt from the Rachel Srubas’ article. Read the entire article in Presbyterians Today or go to the Presbyterian Mission Agency website at: www.presbyterianmission.org)

...A centuries-old Epiphany tradition more common in Europe than in the United States is known as “chalking the door.” On Epiphany, the day following the Twelfth Day of Christmas, guests gather at a home to invoke the Magi’s and Christ’s own blessing upon it. Drawing on the second chapter of Matthew — the only Gospel depicting the Magi — those gathered may read a brief, responsive liturgy or say a prayer.

Although Matthew never mentions the Magi’s names, tradition has it that they were called Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. The initials CMB also abbreviate a Latin house blessing, *Christus mansionem benedicat*, meaning “May Christ bless this dwelling.” Chalking the door on the Feast of Epiphany involves writing — with chalk — these three letters, interspersed with crosses and flanked by the numbers of the present year, on the lintel of a house’s front door.



While Christmas marks the coming of God to us, Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity. Epiphany extols the revelation of God to the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Epiphany not only discloses the Savior to the world, but also calls the world to show forth Christ, to be witnesses to God’s true light. The timeless mystery of the incarnation — God in flesh — leads us forth to show and tell of Christ as God’s gift of grace and salvation for all people. Some call this ongoing epiphany the work of Christmas.

Epiphany is observed on Jan. 6. Mark that day by chalking your own door. If you do, here’s how your inscription will look:

20 + C + M + B + 18

After chalking the door, light a candle and invite those gathered at your home to say a responsive liturgy such as this:

Peace be to this house and to all who pass through its doors.

**With the wise men from the East, we ask,
Where is the child who has been born a king?
We have come to pay him homage.**

When the star stopped over the place where the child was,
the Magi were overwhelmed with joy!

They entered the house and saw the holy Christ, with Mary, his mother.

**With those who first adored him, we have come to honor the Savior.
God, we thank you for revealing Jesus to the world.**

May the living Lord bless this home and all who live or visit here. Amen.

Or say any of the following Epiphany prayers offered by the *Office of Theology and Worship*:

God of endless light, you sent a star — rising from darkness, guiding seekers and sages, overwhelming us with joy. Let the splendor of your dawning light grow in us and in all the world until the whole creation shines with your glory; through Jesus Christ, our light. Amen.

God of light, shining in darkness, through a little child, born in Bethlehem, you open to us the treasure of your grace. Help us to search diligently for him, so that we may offer our lives to you with thanksgiving, joy and praise; through Jesus Christ, the rising star. Amen.

Shepherd of Israel, you sent a star to enlighten the wise and a child to topple the tyrant. Make us wise enough to seek you among the least of your children, wise enough to trade our treasure for the gift of overwhelming joy. Amen.

[Birthday Wishes](#)

Let us join in wishing our faithful and hardworking Director of Finance, **Elder Vern Manke** a very **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** on January 7! We hope you have a wonderful day and a blessed year ahead!

[Congratulations!](#)

It is with great joy that we congratulate **the Rev. Ed Hilton** on his new call as Pastor of **Christ the King Lutheran Church**, an ELCA congregation in Tahoe City! Ed follows the Rev. Chip Larson who served the congregation for 40 years! The congregation voted unanimously to call Ed as their new pastor. He begins his ministry on January 1, 2018! May God's abundant blessings be poured out on Ed and the congregation of Christ the King as they start the New Year together in ministry.

[Presbytery Trustees and Council Meetings](#)

In an effort to be good stewards of our finances and time, the Presbytery of Nevada Trustees and Council will have their winter meeting electronically for the first time using Zoom as the meeting platform. Trustees will meet on January 13 and Council will meet on January 20. Let us keep our Presbytery leadership in our prayers for God's wisdom and guidance!

In Memoriam – *My thanks to **Bill and Ann Nisbet**, long-time members of First Presbyterian Church in Elko for providing the obituaries from which these memorials are drawn.*

*The **Rev. Gail M. Snodgrass** (1952-2017) died peacefully on September 29, 2017. Gail was a pioneer for women in ministry. She was born in Champagne, IL and moved to Las Vegas in 1961. She graduated from Clark High School in Las Vegas, Western California University in San Diego and San Francisco Theological Seminary. Gail was ordained a Minister of Word and Sacrament in 1977 at Westminster Presbyterian Church – the first woman ordained in our presbytery! She served positions as pastor and chaplain in Oregon, Indiana, Ohio and Texas.

***Elder Ralph E. Scissons**, age 88 died on November 27, 2017 in Boise, ID. Ralph was born in South Dakota and was a member of the Rosebud Lakota Sioux tribe. He served two years in the United States Army then graduated from college with a degree in Accounting and Business Administration. Ralph moved to **Owyhee, NV** on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation (formerly part of the **Presbytery of Nevada**) in 1951 to work for the Shoshone Paiute Tribes. He went on to work for several Indian agencies. In 1983 Ralph was hired by the Program Agency of the newly formed Presbyterian Church (USA). In 1990 he retired from the PC(USA) and was hired by Dubuque Theological Seminary as Vice-President for Campus Affairs. Upon retirement, Ralph and his wife Mildred returned to Owyhee. Ralph was an active member and elder in the Presbyterian Church in Owyhee. He served twice as Moderator of the **Presbytery of Nevada**, as Synod Commissioner from Nevada to the Synod of the Pacific (which is where I met Ralph), as well as many national church committees.

Though most of us did not know Gail or Ralph we rejoice in their faithful service to our Lord Jesus Christ and to the Presbytery of Nevada. May the legacy of their ministries live on, to the glory of God.

Save the Date for a Wonderful Workshop. All are welcome!

“Everyone Needs Care”

Saturday, February 24, 2018 – Green Valley Presbyterian Church

Rev. Dr. Lydia Sarandan, former Pastor of Adult Education at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Newport Beach, will be leading a workshop on Saturday, February 24 from 9 am to 12 pm at Green Valley Presbyterian Church on the ministry of caring for others. This workshop is for everyone who wants to grow and develop skills in caring for people in times of need or times of joy. Lydia is a gifted speaker who leads workshops on caregiving, Elder and Deacon training, and the ministry of prayer. Green Valley Presbyterian Church invites the Presbytery to bring your Elders, Deacons, staff and anyone who wants to grow in their ability to provide Christ-centered caregiving. In this workshop, we will develop practical skills as we study the Scriptures and learn from Jesus’ example of compassion and mercy.

Presbytery of Nevada Website

Just a reminder as we start the New Year! We have a wonderful website filled with helpful information, updates and announcements. Please note that there is something new – initiated by our awesome webmaster **the Rev. Christy Ramsey** – that will help connect us as a community of faith! We now have a “Prayer Wall” on which you can post and read prayer concerns. “Presbyters are invited to gather at pray.nevadapresbytery.org to offer their own prayers and join in prayers of others.”



The Presbyterian Planning Calendar for 2018-19 will feature photos on the cover and throughout the monthly calendar pages showing the best of what our churches are doing in mission and ministry. Your photos are invited! Presbyterian News Service/Jeffrey Lawrence

LOUISVILLE – The [Presbyterian Planning Calendar](#), a beloved publication of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is seeking photo submissions from congregations, mid councils, camps, conference centers and education centers for use in its 2018-19 edition.

Focusing on vital congregations and mission activities, the request for images also asks, “Who are the unsung heroes of your congregation?”

Images should feature congregation members engaged in activities including worship, mission service, creativity and the arts, and direct outreach. Calendar planners ask that staged photos of groups of people and photos of people sitting at conference or dining tables be avoided.

The format of the calendar is “landscape,” meaning photos should be wider than tall, and high resolution photographs, with a minimum resolution of 2000 x 1500 pixels (no smaller than 1 MB), are requested for best printing. Please include a caption and photo credit with each image. If children are pictured, please ensure the use and distribution of your photo complies with your safe church policy.

The deadline for submissions is **January 15, 2018**. Photos should be emailed to the planning calendar manager, Jackie Carter, at Jackie.Carter@pcusa.org. Feel free to call 502-569-5772 with any questions.

Jan. 14 – Race Relations Sunday \ Jan. 15 – Birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" MLK*

**"Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend." MLK*

**"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.*

Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." MLK