

THE COMPASS



Family Devotional for January 2043

Epiphany This!

Our January 2024 Compass Family Devotional is inspired by the Christian celebration of the Epiphany. An epiphany is a special moment when something sacred and holy is revealed, particularly the presence of God in our lives. Epiphany is also a celebration in the church that always falls on January 6th which remembers the visit of the magi, or the three wise men, to the Holy Family, (Mary, Joseph, and Jesus), as recorded in the gospel according to Matthew, chapter 2, verses 1-12. What they found was the very presence of God in their lives in new and surprising ways. May we this Epiphany find God anew in our lives in new and surprising ways. Much like the travels and trials the wisemen suffered to find the baby Jesus, epiphanies take work. We hope this devotional will help you and your family to find God in your lives in new and surprising ways.

Activity - Chalking Your Doorway

You know that song, “The 12 Days of Christmas”? This holiday classic reveals that the Christian church traditionally celebrated the birth of Christ, Christmas, for 12 days. Twelfth Night (January 5th) marks the official end of Christmas and the start of Epiphany, when we think about the visit of the wise men, or magi. Twelfth Night was traditionally a day of feasting and celebration. These days we usually celebrate by putting away Christmas decorations. Not quite so much fun, and without the glitz of tinsel and lights our homes can seem quite bare and depressing. So, here’s a lovely traditional practice to mark our homes as places of God’s blessing and presence – chalking your doorway with symbols that remind us of God’s guidance and provision. I like the idea of being reminded of God’s care every time I walk through my front door.

It is simple, quick, and great for all ages and traditions. It is also a profound ritual that helps us to look to the New Year with God’s presence, resting in

their care. The practice of writing on doorways has a long history. Back in Deuteronomy 6:9, (just after the Ten Commandments), Moses used it to help the Israelites remember. It also brought to mind the Passover, when the blood of the lamb was splashed on the doorposts as a sign that all inside were under God’s protection. Today, chalking the doorway for Christians is a visible symbol of God’s presence, peace and blessing. I don’t know about you, but I could use the reminder.

You will need:

- Chalk
- A doorway

Pretty simple, huh? Here’s how to do it. Gather your household outside the main door of your home and take turns reading the short passage from Matthew (below) and writing these letters in chalk either above the door, down the sides, or on the doorstep.

20 + C + M + B + 24

We finish with some optional short prayers or responses, (choose what suits your group), and a final blessing, written out below. What does it mean?

- The 20 and 24 are the current year (so this changes every year).
- The crosses remind us of Jesus and of the star that guided the Wise Men to him.
- The letters C, M and B are for their traditional names (Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar), but can also stand for ‘Christus Mansionem Benedicat’, which is Latin for ‘May Christ bless this house.’ Or if Latin is not your bag, how about thinking ‘Christ, My Blessing’ each time you pass underneath?
- * Write the letters first, spaced out, then the numbers, and finally add the crosses.
- * Read this short gospel passage about the visit of the Wise Men, and imagine them coming to your home, just as they visited Mary, Joseph and the young Jesus. Doing so may we find Christ living in our homes too.

Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11 (Wise Men Visit the Messiah)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. ... The star that they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced greatly. Going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh."

Next, one person reads out these words slowly, with pauses for different people to write these symbols either above the door, down the sides or on the doorstep:

20 + C + M + B + 24

The Three Wise Men: Caspar [pause while someone writes C], Melchior [write M], and Balthasar [B], followed the star to find the Christ child two thousand [20] and twenty-three [24] years ago. May Christ [+] bless [+] our [+] home [+]. All: **Amen.**

Finally, finish with a simple prayer and a blessing. The prayer is yours to make, a private affair between you and God.

Then a blessing for your house. This blessing comes from album, Wintersongs: Advent to Epiphany, by Evelyn Avoglia, in her song titled Christus Mansionem Benedicat. Find the song here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0IezSYFhxo&t=0s>

Our blessing: May Christ bless this house. We pray you, O' Christ, bless our dwelling. Amen. Receive O' King the gold of hospitality, and incense, living praise, from living prophecy. May Christ bless this house. We pray you, O' Christ, bless our dwelling. Amen. Receive o' Priest the myrrh of holy memory, for sacrifice you were, and we shall come to be. May Christ bless this house. Amen.

*Chalking the Doorway: A House Blessing for Epiphany (This description taken from a post by Mother Clanger on January 1, 2021 at <https://reflectionary.org/author/fabfabfay/> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0IezSYFhxo&t=0s>



An Epiphany Prayer by Brett Meyers

O God of Light and Life:

We are thankful that you illuminate our dark places and bring joy to our bright places.

Beauty and grace abound as we are made aware of your presence in our waking, eating, working, playing, and resting.

Your Spirit encourages us to hope, entices us to trust, and emboldens us to love so that we might keep and create the peace that you desire will live within us and between us.

Inspire us to be light and life to all we meet, both near and far, family and foe, friend and stranger – for we are all your children, and siblings of one another. Amen.

Another Epiphany Prayer – author unknown

Dear Jesus, as You led the Three Kings to You by the light of a star, please draw us ever closer to You by the light of Faith. Help us to desire You as ardently as they did. Give us the grace to overcome all the obstacles that keep us far from You. May we, like them, have something to give You when we appear before You. Amen.

What if 2024 is a house?

I've been thinking about house blessings as Epiphany approaches since being inspired by Jan Richardson, an incredible devotional author, imagining the coming year as a house – a space in time that is opening itself to all of us. How will we inhabit the coming year? How will we enter it with mindfulness and with intention? How will we move through the rooms of the coming months in a way that brings blessing to this world? With these questions in mind, spend some time meditating on this blessing. Consider sharing this blessing with your family over dinner and talking about where these words direct your thoughts.

The Year as a House: A Blessing by Jan Richardson

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.

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.

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.

Here let the weary come

let the aching come

let the lost come

let the sorrowing come.

Here let them find their rest
and let them find their soothing
and let them find their place
and let them find their delight.

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.

Wherever you make your home, may it be blessed, and may you
enter this Epiphany and the coming year in peace.

Sunday Scriptures

Look for our January Scripture Puzzler. We used the New Revised Standard Version (updated edition) to create the crossword. Read the texts for the month of January and find the answers to the puzzler.

Jan. 7 - Mark 1:4-11 – Jesus' Baptism

Jan. 14 - 1 Samuel 3:1-20 – God Calls Samuel

Jan. 21 - Jonah 1-4 – Jonah and the Big Fish

Jan. 28 - Mark 1:21-28 – Jesus Teaching & Healing

Did You Know?

There is a custom, rooted in Ireland, of celebrating Epiphany (January 6, which brings the Christmas season to a close) as Women's Christmas. Called *Nollaig na mBan* in Irish, Women's Christmas originated as a day when the women, who often carried the domestic responsibilities all year, took Epiphany as an occasion to celebrate together at the end of the holidays, leaving hearth and home to the men for a few hours. Celebrated particularly in County Cork and County Kerry, the tradition is enjoying a revival. Women's Christmas offers a timely opportunity to pause and step back from whatever has kept you busy and hurried in the past weeks or months. As the Christmas season ends, this is an occasion both to celebrate with friends and also to spend time in reflection before diving into the responsibilities of this New Year - to rest, to reflect, and to contemplate where you are in your unfolding path. Mindful of those who traveled to welcome the Christ child and who returned home by another way, a Women's Christmas tradition allows us to turn our attention toward questions about our own journey.

THE BIG QUESTION: Considering the fact that we are all a work in progress, always drawing ourselves closer to God, each other, and ourselves; who is God calling you to become in this New Year?

CONTACT:

For questions about the youth group activities or the 2024 mission trip to Knoxville TN, please contact **Rachel Wicichowski** for more information at ra.burns@hotmail.com or 1-920-238-5919.

For questions about our Sunday school or Family Fun Nights, please contact **Karen Goodacre** for more information at karen.goodacre@pilgrimuccfdl.org or leave a message at PUCG at 1-920-921-0415.

For questions about confirmation, The Compass Family Devotional, or any other reason, please contact **Rev. Rob Van Ess** at rvaness.pilgrim@gmail.com or 1-920-273-9794.

YOUTH GROUP EVENTS

Saturday February 3- We will attend a basketball game between the Wisconsin Herd and the Westchester Knicks at the Oshkosh Arena. \$5 per youth to attend. Contact Rachel Wicichowski (ra.burns@hotmail.com) to attend. Ride share available.

MISSION TRIP TO KNOXVILLE, TN - JULY 7-13, 2024

Steven and Rachel Wicichowski, and Deb Wamser are chaperones. All youth 6th grade and older eligible to attend this life-changing spiritual journey. We are signing up youth now.

FAMILY FUN NIGHT ACTIVITIES - Select Fridays from 5:30PM-7:00PM

January 19 – All Ages Bingo

February 16 – Bowling for All

March 15 – Movie Night – Movie TBA

April 19 – All Ages Game Night

May 17 – Outdoor Yard/Camp Games

SUNDAY SCHOOL DATES

*Sunday School runs Sept. 17, 2022 – May 12, 2023 after worship (10:15 AM – 11:15 AM)

January 7, 14, 21 & 28: Our one room Sunday school resumes after Christmas break.



2024 YOUTH MINISTRIES AT PILGRIM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY SCHOOL – We have a wonderful program for children offered after worship on Sunday mornings! Each class focuses on a Bible story, a lesson, or a way of living faith. We use art, music, prayer, and group activities to share stories that connect us with our God and our understanding of community.

CONFIRMATION – A small group that meets for approximately nine months of confirmation preparation during which young people participate in church activities and reflect on questions of faith and life, both alone and together with their peers.

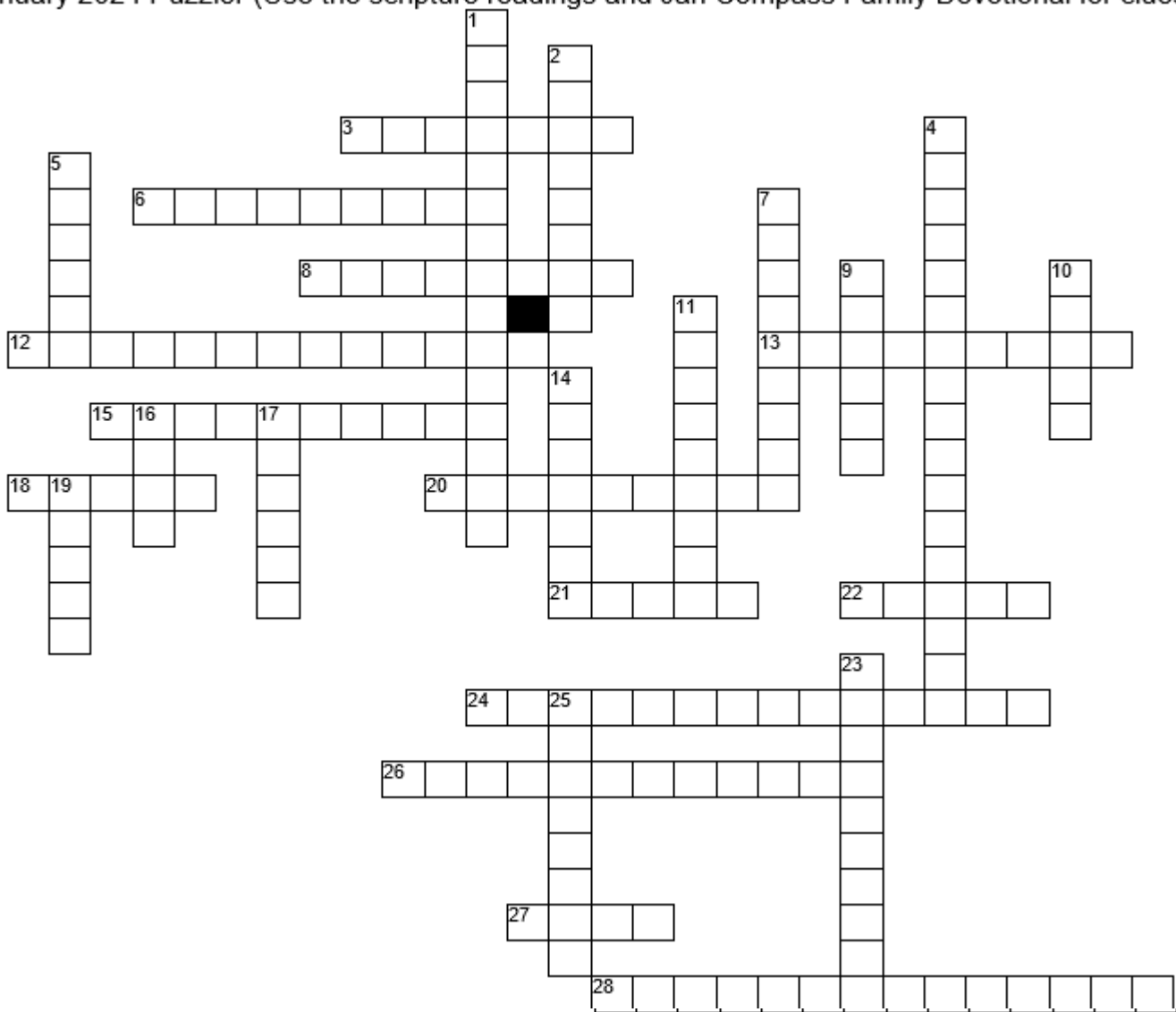
MISSION TRIPS – Our mission trips provide opportunities for students to explore their faith, experience God, and extend service to others. This is a transformational experience by which our youth get to know themselves by getting out of their comfort zones while being the hands and feet of Jesus. Last year we went to Cleveland, OH and next year the youth will go to Knoxville, TN.

FAMILY FUN NIGHTS – Intergenerational activities for the entire family. The entire church family is invited to come together for card or board games, a chili cook off, movie night, Christmas caroling, etc. Time to relax as a family and get to know each other better.

YOUTH GROUP – Our youth gatherings are designed as a "respite" from a socially pressured world for teens, and an opportunity to participate in the justice and fellowship ministries of the church. We strive to help our youth experience Pilgrim United Church of Christ as a supportive, trust-worthy, and loving community – a place that is safe and enjoyable to explore and respond to the spiritual side of being human, by building relationships and creating community.

THE COMPASS – A monthly family devotional to grow your faith and draw you closer to God. Each devotional has a theme and activity for the family to come together while learning more about our faith.

January 2024 Puzzler (Use the scripture readings and Jan Compass Family Devotional for clues.)



Across

- 3. What city does God tell Jonah to go to?
- 6. the unclean spirit said to Jesus: "Have you come to _____?"
- 8. What is the Christian feast celebrated on Jan. 6 every year?
- 12. Mark 1:21-28 reports the man with an _____.
- 13. Eli told Samuel the next time he heard a voice to say: "Speak, Lord, for your servant in _____."
- 15. Jesus will baptize people with the _____.
- 18. John baptized people with _____.
- 20. In what city is the synagogue where the man cries out to Jesus?
- 21. The 3 magi offered Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and _____.
- 22. Jesus commanded the unclean spirit: "Be _____ and come out of him!"
- 24. When Jesus was baptized a voice came from heaven and said: "You are my Son; with you _____."
- 26. A song you sing on New Year's Eve.
- 27. How many Sundays are in the month of January, 2023?
- 28. Who baptized Jesus in the wilderness?

Down

- 1. Traditionally Epiphany in Ireland is referred to as _____.
- 2. Today, chalking a doorway is a visible symbol of God's presence, peace and _____.
- 4. The youth group will to go a game to watch the Wisconsin Herd play the _____ on Feb 3rd.
- 5. Jesus was baptized in the _____ river.
- 7. Where was Jesus born?
- 9. The name of a magi that begins with a C.
- 10. Who tries to run away from God and gets swallowed up by a large fish?
- 11. The name of a magi that begins with a B.
- 14. 3 times when Samuel woke up hearing a voice calling out to him he replied _____.
- 16. People marveled at Jesus authority and power over the unclean spirit and said: "He commands even the unclean spirits, and they _____ him."
- 17. Who was ministering to the Lord under Eli?
- 19. What did the 3 magi/ wise men follow to find the baby Jesus?
- 23. John was preaching a baptism of _____ and the forgiveness of sins.
- 25. The name of a magi that begins with an M.