

A LETTER FROM REV RONA

Welcome to 2026! As we step into a new year, I pray that God's grace, peace, and joy will surround you and those you love.

This year has been set aside across our diocese as a *Year of Prayer*—a wonderful opportunity to deepen our life with God. Each month I hope to reflect on a different way of praying, and for January our theme is *Blessings*. From the familiar “Bless you” after a sneeze to the tender moment of being anointed at life's end, blessing shapes our language and our lives, often without us noticing its depth or meaning.



In Scripture, blessing expresses God's generosity, human gratitude, and the desire to wish others well. Today we still use it to offer kindness or encouragement. Although it can sometimes be used lightly or even patronisingly, I want this month to be a deliberate invitation: to bless at least one other person—in word, action, or prayer.

Around Epiphany (6th January), Christians in the Orthodox tradition take part in the ancient ritual of *Chalking the Door*, a simple and beautiful house blessing. This year the letters are **20 C M B 26**:

20 – the century

C M B – *Christus Mansionem Benedicat* (“Christ bless this house”), and also the initials of Casper, Melchior, and Balthazar, the traditional names of the Wise Men

26 – the year

If you have some chalk, I encourage you to mark your door lintel with these letters and perhaps offer to do the same for a neighbour as a sign of blessing. You may also wish to pray this prayer:

God of Light, bless this home.

*Make it a haven of rest
for all in need of your warmth and care.*

*And when we go out from this place,
may we never lose sight of the Epiphany star.*

*May all who enter, throughout the year, find love and light;
for Christ has come to dwell in this home and in these hearts. Amen.*

May God bless you richly throughout the year ahead. Rev Rona