

# Bless This House

By Patrice Gaines-Carter  
Washington Post Staff Writer

A few months ago I proved the naysayers wrong and found a house on Capitol Hill that I, a single woman with a child in college, could afford to buy. Maybe it's not in the area I knew as Capitol Hill when I was growing up, but still... it's on a wonderful, tree-lined street off Pennsylvania Avenue, with friendly neighbors and a subway stop nearby.

Before me, the house was owned by Elizabeth McGriff, a black woman who came to Washington to live with an aunt after her parents died, worked as a domestic at age 12, and later, when she became a widow, raised her five children alone.



Syreeta Duncan, left, and Patrice Gaines-Carter

When I rub my hands across the cabinets of the kitchen she had remodeled nearly 20 years ago, I imagine her tugging open the doors, lifting out pots and pans and cooking breakfast for her four sons and daughter, Syreeta. I feel as though I have inherited the legacy of a woman whose spirit of determination and survival I share.

When Elizabeth McGriff died Oct. 12, 1985, her daughter was appointed executor of her estate. "I'm looking for someone special to buy this house. Someone who will love it," Syreeta Duncan said when she showed me the house.

"I'm looking for a house I can love," I told her.

It was such a perfect union that I considered it a blessing, and I immediately knew I had to have a ceremony to mark the new beginning for myself, the house and Syreeta. So on Saturday, June 25, at 6 p.m. Syreeta and her daughter and my family and friends gathered in my small living room for the blessing of my house.

My minister, the Rev. Willie Wilson, dug up a patch of dirt from the back yard so that he could bless it. He had at first taken dirt from the front yard, but I told him I had mixed that with top soil before we planted flowers. So he decided to get dirt from the back yard, dirt that had been there for years. (I guess he didn't want to bless top soil from Hechinger's.) He mixed the back yard dirt with some dirt he had collected in his

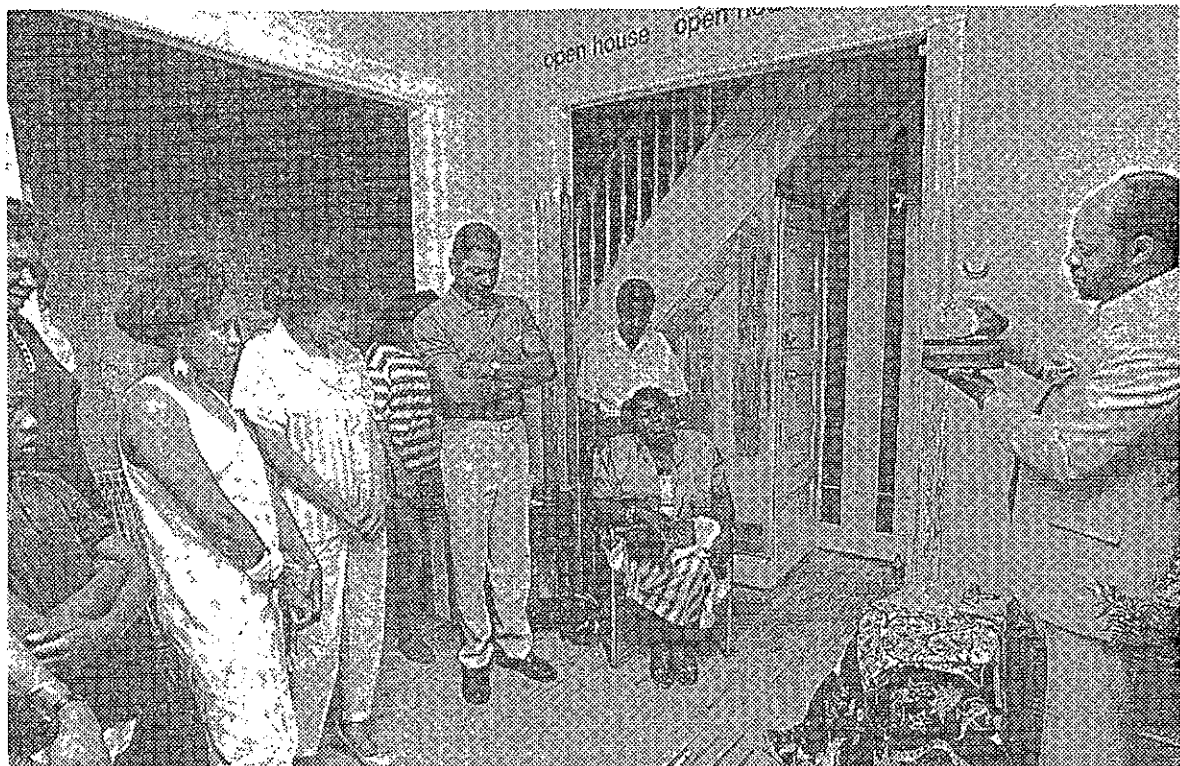
travels—dirt from Gambia, Senegal, the pyramids of Egypt and the Wall of Jericho. He put it all in a wooden bowl and added water from the Holy Land.

"In the African world view God is everything and God is in everything," he said. As he noted that God was in the wood and bricks of my house, I thought of how I had stripped and polished, scrubbed and cleaned the wood floors and the brick wall in the living room. Already, parts of me were engrained in this house, just as parts of Elizabeth McGriff must be there, too.

"The Scripture tells us that we came from the dust and to the earth we must return," Wilson explained. "The pouring of the water is a libation that represents the reawakening of the spirits of ancestors who have gone before us."

During the blessing, Wilson implored us to "call out the names of loved ones whose spirits we want to be with us today." Syreeta and I called out the names of her mother and father. I, along with most of the members of my family, called out the names of my two grandmothers and grandfathers. My mother added names of her aunts and a cousin, and there were other names, yelled out by the relatives and friends who stood in the living room.

After a prayer, in which Wilson asked that God bless the house and give peace to those who enter and reside there, we went outside to munch on chicken and potato salad.



PHOTOS BY PAUL SOUTHERS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

### The Rev. Willie Wilson performs a blessing ceremony at the home of Patrice Gaines-Carter,

In the back yard is a large brick barbecue, and Syreeta already had told me how her family would gather there for cookouts that lasted into the night.

"We moved into the house on Jan. 17, 1957, the day before my birthday," she said. "I thought the house was my birthday gift. I thought it was the biggest house in the world. We had rose bushes of every color. I had a swing set and a swimming pool. It was *my* back yard."

Blacks were just beginning to move into the neighborhood then, she said. The street still is integrated today, but few of the old families are left. There are my next-door neighbors, Eva and John Baysmore, and across the street are two sisters, Mary Braxton and Cecilia Brown, all of whom knew

Elizabeth McGriff. John Baysmore used to work with her at the Bureau of Engraving.

Mrs. McGriff came to Washington around 1934, after her mother had died. She attended school for a while but she went to work a few years later, Syreeta said.

"She never lost hope in herself, though. She had so much common sense. The last year she worked she made \$42,000," Syreeta said.

In 1945, when she was 23, Elizabeth Briggs married Isaac McGriff, a truck driver for the Teamsters union. When her husband died in 1965, Elizabeth McGriff, with her children's help, painted and paneled and kept her house until the day she died.

"She loved the house," said Syreeta. "We used to paint every year. It was a ritual. We washed

the windows every three months, as long as her health was good . . . She spent most of her time in the back yard. She didn't socialize much. She would just close her door and say, 'This is *my* house.' "

I have extended to Syreeta and her daughter, Peppi, an invitation to all future cookouts in the old back yard. The day of the blessing was the first time Syreeta had visited the house since I bought it. She had warned me that she might cry a little, and I was concerned about how she would handle the changes I had made.

But before she left, she said: "A good family bought this house. I know because I still feel at home here. So if early one morning I can't make it to my house, don't be surprised if you wake up and find me sitting on the porch."

## BLESSING PRAYER FOR THE HOME \*

*An unlit candle may be placed in each room to be blessed, with the additional option of holy water available for sprinkling each room. To begin, the family gathers, weather permitting, outside the front door of the home.*

FATHER: Lord our God,  
    You whose home is in heaven, on earth . . .  
    and in that undiscovered beyond,  
    come and bless this house  
    which is now to be our home.  
Surround this shelter with Your Holy Spirit.  
Encompass all its four sides  
    with the power of Your protection  
    so that no evil or harm will come near.  
May that divine blessing  
    shield this home from destruction, storm, sickness  
    and all that might bring evil  
    to us who shall live within these walls.

*After a moment of silence, the sign of the cross may be traced—or holy water sprinkled—on the outside of the house or upon the outside of the front door.*

Blessed be this doorway.  
May all who come to it  
    be treated with respect and kindness.  
May all our comings and goings  
    be under the seal of God's loving care.

Blessed be all the rooms of this home.  
May each of them be holy  
    and filled with the spirit of happiness.  
May no dark powers  
    ever be given shelter within any of these rooms  
    but banished as soon as recognized.

*Mother now leads all gathered to the living room. A candle may be lighted here and in each following room to be blessed so that at the end the entire house would be illuminated. Or, again, holy water may be used in each room.*

MOTHER: Blessed be this living room.  
May we truly live within it as people of peace.  
May prayer and playfulness  
    never be strangers within its walls.

*all proceed to the dining room*

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*\*This blessing may take place upon moving into a new home, sharpening the family's vision of it as the domestic church. It may also be used as a means of celebrating family tradition and history on the yearly anniversary of moving to the home, or once a year on a great feast such as Christmas or Easter.*

Blessed be this place where we shall eat.  
May all our meals  
    be sacraments of the presence of God  
    as we are nourished at this altar-table.

*all proceed to kitchen*

Blessed be this shrine of the kitchen.  
Blessed be the herbs and spices,  
    and the pots and pans used to prepare our meals.  
May the ill-seasonings of anger and bitterness  
    never poison the meals prepared here.

*all proceed to bathroom*

Blessed be this bathroom.  
May the spirits of health and healing abide here  
    and teach us to honor and love our bodies.

*all proceed to bedroom*

Blessed be these bedrooms.  
Here we shall find rest, refreshment and renewal.

May the spirits of love and affection,  
    together with the spirits of angelic care  
    touch all who shall use these rooms.

*all return to the living room where the following concluding prayer is said:*

Let us pause now and pray in silence  
    as each of us calls down the holy blessing of God  
    upon this house, now become our home.

*pause for silent prayer*

FATHER: Let us pray as our Lord taught us to pray:  
    “Our Father, . . . ”

*all recite the Lord's Prayer*

Lord our God,  
    may Your divine name be always holy within our home.  
May You, as Holy Father and Divine Mother,  
    lovingly care for all who shall live here.

May Your kingdom come in this home  
    as we love and respect one another.  
May we always do Your holy will  
    by living in harmony and unity.

May we never suffer from lack of bread,  
from a lack of all that we need  
to nourish our family.

May the spirit of pardon and forgiveness reside with us  
and be always ready to heal our divisions.

May the spirits of mirth and laughter, hope and faith,  
playfulness and prayer, compassion and love  
be perpetual guests in our home.

*Mother goes to the door of the home, opens it and prays:*

MOTHER: May our door be always open to those in need.

Open be this door

to the neighbor or to the stranger.

May our friends

who come to us in times of trouble and sorrow,  
find our door open to them and to their needs.

May the holy light of God's presence

shine forth brightly in this home

and be a blessing for all who shall live here

and for everyone who shall come to this door.

May God's holy blessing rest upon us all,

in the name of the Father,

and of the Son

and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen+

*The blessing of the home may be followed by a festive meal where family and guests pres would christen the home with laughter and song.*

## BLESS THIS HOUSE\*

*Mary H. Brahe and Helen Taylor*

Bless this house, O Lord, we pray  
— Make it safe by night and day:  
Bless these walls so firm and stout  
· Keeping want and trouble out;

Bless the roof and chimneys tall,  
Let Thy peace lie over all:  
Bless this door, that it may prove  
Ever open to joy and love.

Bless these windows shining bright,  
Letting in God's heavenly light:  
Bless the hearth ablazing there,  
With smoke ascending like a prayer:

Bless the people here within,  
Keep them pure and free from sin;  
Bless us all that we may be  
Fit, O Lord, to dwell with thee.

Nov. 16, 1985

Grady residence, Thoreau Place,  
Reston, VA.

HOUSE BLESSING

Bless this house, dear God, we pray  
Make it safe by night and day  
Bless the walls so firm and stout  
Keeping want and trouble out  
Bless the roof and chimneys tall  
Let thy peace lie over all.<sup>1</sup>

Rising sun when you shall shine  
Make this home happy!  
Glorious moon with your silver beams  
Make this home happy!  
Rain and winds  
Make this home happy! <sup>2</sup>

Family, neighbors and friends  
Make this home happy!  
Keep the mail coming, the 'phone ringing, the doors opening wide  
Make this home happy!

Dear Jim and dear Fran  
Make this home happy!  
Cherish each other and teach us the same  
Make this home happy!  
God: our Father, Mother and confidant  
Make this home happy!  
Watch over Fran and over Jim  
Be present in their memories and future hopes  
Be with them in their coming and going  
  
Make this home happy!

Sonja M. Donahue

<sup>1</sup> Exerpt from the song "Bless This House", music by Mary H. Brahe, words by Helen Taylor, copyright 1927 by Boosey and Company, Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Exerpt from a Navaho chant

## BLESSING OF GOLDSCHMIDT HOME

Hosts: Welcome. Thank you for coming to bless our home.

Leader: Gracious God, surround this shelter with your Holy Spirit;

*outside* Encompass all its four sides with your protection,  
so that no evil or harm will come near.  
Sweep from it evil, danger, sickness and bad spirits,  
and make room for peace, light and happiness.

Leader: Hand out noisemakers and instruct children to follow Laura through the house, making as much noise as possible. (light a candle)  
When Children return:

Leader: Gracious God, source of life and home for our spirit  
You have been with the Goldschmidts on Fourth Street.  
We pray that you now settle with them in their new home  
on Livingston Street.  
Fill their abode with your grace, that they may breathe you in and out,  
like pure air.  
Be the strong foundation of their house, so that all who dwell here  
feel secure in your care.  
Shadow the place, like a mother eagle,  
giving protection and safety to its inhabitants,  
in sickness and in health  
in good times or sad. (pass candle on to 1 so he can use it)

*open door*  
Well Wisher 1: Blessed be this doorway.  
(light candle on hall table)  
May all who come to it be treated with respect and kindness.  
May all comings and goings be under the seal of God's loving care.

All: May this house be a home.  
May this home be a place of welcome  
May this welcome place be happy.

*Enter house → Living Room*

*Cockleys*  
Well Wisher 2: Blessed be the living rooms of this house.  
(light candle on mantle, and in kitchen)  
May each of them be holy and filled with the spirit of happiness.

All: May this house be a home.  
May this home be a place of welcome.  
May this welcome place be happy.



Well Wisher 3: Bless the stairs of this house, dear God.  
(light candle on landing)  
May our feet tread steadily on these stairs,  
and may our ascending and descending remind us of our  
journeying with you.

Family : Bless the bedrooms of this house, where we find rest,  
refreshment and renewal.  
(family goes upstairs to light candles in bedrooms)

All: May this house be a home.  
May this home be a place of welcome.  
May this welcome place be happy.

Leader: (leads all out onto deck or patio, putting candle into holder on  
table)  
Bless the garden and grass; the trees that comfort us with shade  
and the flowers and leaves that delight our senses. May  
Your spirit of rest and playfulness be our companion here.  
Larry and Cathy,  
May this be your happiest home yet.  
May you experience peace here,  
and the fruits of your labors.  
May family, colleagues and companions make you glad  
to be living here in this place of your future.

Larry: Welcome to our home.  
Come in and bless it with friendship, enjoyment, and good times.

July 1996

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Aug

## Blessing of Dianne and Eric's new home

Hosts: Greetings ... Welcome ...

Thank you for helping us bless  
this house

Part I: Chasing out the negatives... the  
poor vibes... the evil spirits with  
clatter & clamor & a symbolic sweep

Part II: Invocation to good, positive  
vibrations & benevolent spirits,  
with candles, incense & Prayer

Prayer Leader:

Gracious God: source of life and home  
for our spirit

You have been with us, human beings,  
in caves, in tents and many kinds of  
built structures.

You have also been with the Carrolls  
on Barton St. & South Sixth St.

We pray that you now settle with them  
in their new home

on Yukatan St., in Falls Church.

Fill their abode with your grace  
that they may breathe you in and out,  
like pure air.

Be the strong foundation of their house,  
so that all who dwell here  
feel secure in your care.

Shadow the place, like a mother eagle,  
giving protection and safety to its inhabitants  
in sickness and in health,  
in good times or sad.

Well wisher # 1:

Bless, dear God,  
the roof and ceilings of this house.

(throw confetti up, 1-2 times)

May roof and ceilings  
shelter against ill winds and un-  
savory elements,  
be they of human or natural origins.

All: May this house be a home  
May this home be a place of welcome  
May this welcome place be happy

Well wisher #2

Bless the walls of this house,  
dear God.

(Attach a moon and sun  
sticker to nearby walls)

As we need limits in our life  
for self-discipline,  
So we need confines for security  
and simplicity.

All: May this house be a home  
may this home be a place of welcome  
May this welcome place be happy

Well wisher #3

Bless the doors of this house,  
dear God

(Put a sunflower sticker on  
two different doors)

May the doors open wide  
to those who come in need  
or offering friendship.

But may they keep out  
danger, foulness or anxiety.

All: May this house be a home  
may this home be a place of welcome  
may this welcome place be happy

Well wisher # 4

Bless the windows of this house,  
dear God,

(Affix a couple of stars  
to two different windows)

May the windows  
let in your light & wholesome sights.  
And may they let out  
whatever is of excess.

All:

May this house be a home  
may this home be a place of welcome  
may this welcome place be happy

Well wisher # 5

Bless the stairs of this house,  
dear God,

(attach heart stickers  
to stairs, in a visible spot)

May our feet  
tread steadily, on these stairs,  
as we go up and down.

And may our ascending and de-  
cending  
remind us of our journeying with you.

All: May this house be a home  
may this home be a welcome  
place  
may this welcome place  
be happy



Well wisher # 6

Bless the furnishings, here,  
dear God.

(Attach some heart stickers)

May the furnishings  
facilitate

good work... play... rest... and  
relationships.

May <sup>we</sup> use them and conserve them  
as your grateful stewards.

All:

May this house be a home  
may this home be a welcome place  
may this welcome place be happy

Prayer leader:

takes Eric & Dianne by the hands,  
saying:

Eric and Dianne,  
may this be your happiest home yet.  
May you experience peace here  
and the fruit of your labours  
and generosity.

May you have friends & good neighbours  
to share your holidays & celebrations.

May family, colleagues and companions  
make you glad  
to be living — here,  
in this place

of your choice and future.

God be with you, always!

All, sing:

(to the tune of Happy Birthday):

Happy new home to you (x2)

happy new home,

new and always;

happy new home to you.

Gift offerings

eg. bread and salt

Native American smudge stick

guest bk or address book

welcome or peace plaque

house flag or windsock

new address labels

Tour of house, if desired

Refreshments ... visiting

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Atlington, Friday, Jan. 20, '95

Dear Karen and Richard,

I have not forgotten about my offer to work with you on a house blessing. But getting to it has been more difficult.

This past week Gil was home recovering from a cataract operation, so our normal routine was somewhat interrupted and I found some time to think about this ritual. The following are some ideas. Look them over ... add or subtract ... and feel free to call me with questions and comments (703; 527-0969). My suggestions are just that - a possible point of departure. When you are ready, we can find a time and place to meet and you can set a date for the ceremony, if you still wish to do so.

I hope this finds all of you well!

Sincerely yours,

Sonya

P.S. Please keep the notes;

I don't have a duplicate.

Thanks.

(2)

Ways to involve children:

Walk-through house, reflect on the favorite aspects of each room; also, things which may need improvement.

Talk about functions ... feelings ... remembrances connected to each place;

Conversation about the House Blessing ritual

Choosing and assembling items needed

Taking a picture of the house

Making a poster, identifying Markey property; set up at walkway or entrance on day of Blessing;

Make signs marking children's rooms or blow up balloons to identify their beds

Help make or buy cookies for refreshments

### ③. Family preparation:

Walk-through house; see above

Some conversation concerning feelings related to house/home

Some discussion concerning Blessing:

- thanking God for shelter
- difference between house and home
- characteristics of Markey home/life style:
  - particular traditions
  - favorite accents
  - special places
  - importance of home's door & windows —
    - \* practical purposes
    - \* symbolic functions
- home as domestic church ... and parents as priestly people ... consideration of a "sacred" spot, where family may gather in times of stress, prayer, celebration...

(4)

## Blessing

Walk around <sup>outside</sup> periphery of house  
stop at four distinct points  
sprinkle house, at that point, with holy water.

Note:

Blessing things does not make them holy;  
everything God has created is already good;  
blessing expresses the gratitude of the  
person doing the blessing;

blessing is a sign of gratitude and praise.  
Also, we never pray or worship all alone;  
our community of faith - ie church - prays  
with us and makes up what we lack in  
faith and commitment.

Prayer for 1<sup>st</sup> station

All-present God

who are at home in the heavens and on earth  
bless this house, our home  
and abide with us.

Grace us with your love and peace.

Prayer for 2<sup>nd</sup> station

All-generous God

we thank you for our house and home;  
protect it from destruction and evil  
and keep us safe and well  
when we are in it.

(5)

Prayer for 3<sup>rd</sup> station

Dear God: you enjoy the fullness of life.

Let this home be a haven for us.

May our days here

be filled with growth,

mutual caring and support.

Help us to make this our special place  
of grace and good fun.

Prayer for 4<sup>th</sup> station

God of pilgrim and strangers as well as homebodies.

Help us make our home

a welcoming place

for all who come here

for refreshment and in need of friendship.

Approach entrance door

(attach a wreath... welcome or peace plaque... ribbon)

"Blessed be this doorway;

may all who enter and leave

be treated with respect and kindness"

By living room or family room

(put a fresh flower in a vase)

"Blessed be this living room"

==



(6)

By kitchen or dining room

(offer guests a plain cookie ceremoniously;  
to be eaten in silence)

"Blessed be this place of nourishment...."

By bedrooms

(light a candle)

"Blessed be this bedroom ...

these children's room (balcons)

By bathroom

(put out a small bowl of pot-pourri)

"Blessed be this room of cleanliness and health"

By study or work room

(hang a picture of house or a lettered blessing)

"Blessed be this study or work room ..."

All: Our Father

Concluding prayer:

Holy God, our Father and Mother

May your Spirit abide with us always.

May you be present

when we need to forgive each other

when we must work together

when one of us needs special help or quiet

when we are happy and ready to play.

All: So be it! Amen!

Take a picture of assembled guests  
Refrainments

(7)

Music possibilities:

Prayer of St. Francis

He's got The Whole World in His Hands

May the long-time sun shine upon you / Round

May the spirit of Christ  
be your hope through the day  
be your light through the night  
your companion on the way

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## A Blessing For Your Home

May your home be a sabbath of the heart:  
replete  
with joy and health,  
free  
of fret and strife,  
full  
to overflowing with dear comforts.

(2)

May it be the place  
where you work gladly  
and rest without doubts.

May its doors open in welcome,  
and welcome be

the guests who seek you out.

May learning, growing and singing  
settle in with you

always leaving room for wonder and surprise.

May your home be a sabbath of the heart.

May your home be a sabbath of the heart:

where you meet your Self often...

where you find love, with your chosen kin...

and know, surely,

God is close to you.

Best wishes,

Sonja M. Tomalene  
May 25, 1997

BLESSING OF THE REICH APARTMENT  
December 21, 1996

P.L. Gracious God:

source of life and home for our spirit,  
You have been our Emmanuel in caves,  
tents and many <sup>kindly of</sup> built structures.  
You have also been with the Reichs  
on S. Stafford St.  
We pray that You now settle with them  
in the new home.

Fill their abode with Your grace  
that they may breathe You in and out,  
like pure air.  
Be the strong foundation of their house,  
so that all who dwell here  
feel secure in Your care.  
Shadow their place, like a mother eagle,  
giving protection and safety to its  
inhabitants, in sickness and in health,  
in good times or sad.

P.L. passes candle to Well-wisher #1

Well-wisher #1:

Blessed be this entrance way.  
May all who come to it  
be treated with respect and kindness.  
May all comings and goings  
be under the seal of God's loving care.

All:

May this house be a home  
May this home be a place of welcome  
May this welcome place be happy.

Well-wisher #2: lights candles--on mantel or coffee table  
in living room  
--on counter or table, in  
kitchen

Blessed be the living rooms of this house.  
May the work and play which animate them  
expand the partnership lived out here,  
and may the good created here,  
spill over in blessings to all  
whom Tom and Anna touch.

All:

May this house be a home  
May this home be a place of welcome  
May this welcome place be happy.

Well-wisher #3: lights candle on or near a window sill

Bless the windows of this home, dear God.  
May they let in Your light  
May they also make visible the beauty of  
our city,  
reminding us that You are a God who desires  
to live among His creation.

All:

May this house be a home.  
May this home be a place of welcome  
May this welcome place be happy.

Presider: takes Tom and Anna by the hands, saying:

Tom and Anna  
may this be  
your happiest home yet.  
May you experience peace here,  
and the fruits of your labors.  
May family, colleagues and companions  
make you glad  
to be living here, in this place  
of your choice and future.

GOD BE WITH YOU, ALWAYS!

Nov. 16, 1985

Grady residence, Thoreau Place,  
Reston, VA.

HOUSE BLESSING

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Bless the roof and chimneys tall  
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Glorious moon with your silver beams  
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Make this home happy!  
Cherish each other and teach us the same  
Make this home happy!  
God: our Father, Mother and confidant  
Make this home happy!  
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Be present in their memories and future hopes  
Be with them in their coming and going  
  
Make this home happy!

Sonja M. Donahue

1  
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2 Exerpt from a Navaho chant

## BLESSING OF GOLDSCHMIDT HOME

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 so that no evil or harm will come near.  
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 and make room for peace, light and happiness.

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 on Livingston Street.  
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 Be the strong foundation of their house, so that all who dwell here  
 feel secure in your care.  
 Shadow the place, like a mother eagle,  
 giving protection and safety to its inhabitants,  
 in sickness and in health  
 in good times or sad. (pass candle on to 1 so he can use it)

Well Wisher 1: Blessed be this doorway.  
 (light candle on hall table)  
 May all who come to it be treated with respect and kindness.  
 May all comings and goings be under the seal of God's loving care.

All: May this house be a home.  
 May this home be a place of welcome  
 May this welcome place be happy.

Well Wisher 2: Blessed be the living rooms of this house.  
 (light candle on mantle, and in kitchen)  
 May each of them be holy and filled with the spirit of happiness.

All: May this house be a home.  
 May this home be a place of welcome.  
 May this welcome place be happy.



Well Wisher 3: Bless the stairs of this house, dear God.  
(light candle on landing)  
May our feet tread steadily on these stairs,  
and may our ascending and descending remind us of our  
journeying with you.

Family : Bless the bedrooms of this house, where we find rest,  
refreshment and renewal.  
(family goes upstairs to light candles in bedrooms)

All: May this house be a home.  
May this home be a place of welcome.  
May this welcome place be happy.

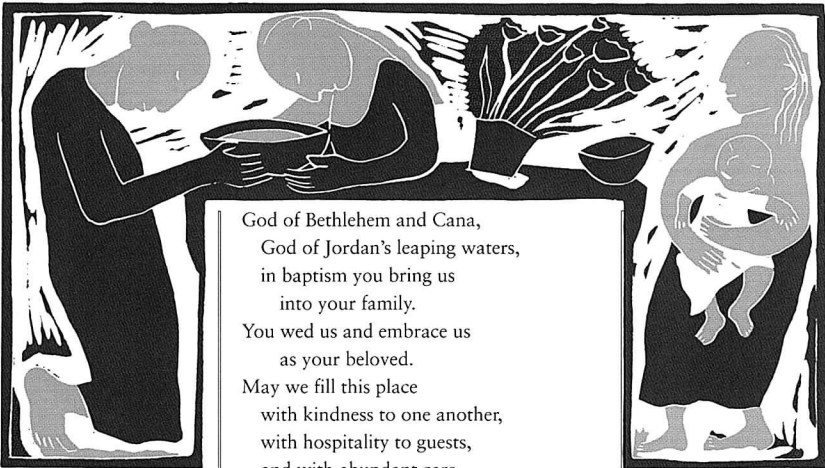
Leader: (leads all out onto deck or patio, putting candle into holder on  
table)  
Bless the garden and grass; the trees that comfort us with shade  
and the flowers and leaves that delight our senses. May  
Your spirit of rest and playfulness be our companion here.  
Larry and Cathy,  
May this be your happiest home yet.  
May you experience peace here,  
and the fruits of your labors.  
May family, colleagues and companions make you glad  
to be living here in this place of your future.

Larry: Welcome to our home.  
Come in and bless it with friendship, enjoyment, and good times.

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Sindy

May this house be a home  
may this home be a welcome place  
may this welcome place be happy



God of Bethlehem and Cana,  
God of Jordan's leaping waters,  
in baptism you bring us  
into your family.

You wed us and embrace us  
as your beloved.

May we fill this place  
with kindness to one another,  
with hospitality to guests,  
and with abundant care  
for every stranger.

By the gentle light of a star,  
guide home all who seek you  
on paths of faith, hope and love.

Then we will join the angels  
in proclaiming your praise:  
Glory in heaven and peace on earth,  
now and for ever. Amen.

*Whether you live alone or  
with others, use this prayer to  
bless your home. Mark in  
your Bible Matthew 2:1–12.*

*Pause for a moment to  
remember that God is near.*

*Read the scripture slowly,*

*and then say this prayer. You  
may wish to inscribe your  
doorway (see Monday's entry  
on the other side of this  
sheet). Sing the song under  
Tuesday's entry or sing any  
Christmas carol.*