



**Welcome to  
Eastern Hills Anglicans  
8 January 2012  
The Festival of  
The Epiphany of the Lord  
Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles**

*We have seen his star in the east, and  
have come with gifts to adore the Lord.*

***Welcome***

As we gather to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany of our Lord. Well I know that Woolworths and other supermarkets have their Easter eggs out already! However, for Christians Christmas is a 12-day celebration from Christmas on the 25<sup>th</sup> December to the Feast of Epiphany on the 6<sup>th</sup> January. However, we celebrate Epiphany on the nearest Sunday, today, for conveniences sake. At the beginning of Christmas, we hear Luke's story of Christmas and we conclude with Matthew's version.

***Martyn's Mutterings – Teaching & Comments by Fr Martyn  
Dates, Calendars and odd things.***

**Little Christmas, Feast Day of the Kings and Old Christmas**

'Little Christmas' is one of the traditional names for today's celebration of the Epiphany in Ireland and in parts of England. In Scotland, this day is also known as the 'Feast Day of the Kings'. This all comes about because today we hear Matthew's version of the Christmas story, which has the three Magi - Wise Men visiting the Holy Family.

Just to complicate matters this day is also called 'Old Christmas'! This comes about because of Western Europe's switch from the Julian (Julius Caesar's) Calendar to the Gregorian (Pope Gregory XIII's) Calendar in 1582. By the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the old Julian calendar was not in keeping up with the solar year and a gap of 12 days had emerged. So, Pope Gregory abolished 12 days in 1582, along with other calendar reforms, to correct the problem. The reform was not acceptable in England for a couple of

hundred years as they were suspecting some popish plot. So, we had the odd situation where England's Christmas day fell on January 6 in the new Gregorian calendar – if you can follow the argument! Eventually, the change was made but many felt unhappy with the changes and hence the memory of the older date when people celebrated the Lord's birth.

**The Announcing of Easter at the Feast Epiphany**

Another problem in previous ages was the exact date on which Easter was to occur. Unlike us, there was no computers and mobile phones and with the lack of printing, no printed calendars. The added problem was Easter is calculated by the lunar calendar, so the Early Church agreed that the Patriarch of Alexandria, in which city were the most skilled astronomers of Christianity, had the mission to send the date of Easter to the other Patriarchs and to the Pope in Rome. They in turn notified the local Archbishops who arranged that the date of Easter was to be sung after the Gospel reading to all congregations at Epiphany. For 2012 it reads:

*Know, dearly beloved Brethren, that by the mercy of God, as we have been rejoicing in the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, so also do we announce unto you the joy of the Resurrection of the same our Saviour. Septuagesima Sunday\* will be on the 5th day of February. Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the fast of most holy Lent will be on the 22th of the same month. On the 8th of April, we shall celebrate with joy the holy Easter of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ will be on the 17th of May. The Feast of Pentecost on the 27th of the same month. The Feast of Corpus Christi on the 7th of June. On the 2nd of December will occur the first Sunday of the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom are honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

\* The third Sunday before Lent