

January Article:

Happy New year everyone!

As I write to you, it is often a few weeks before the next month in order to meet our deadline for printing. I hope you had a peaceful, happy and meaningful Advent season, Christmas Day and a bright and joyous new year ahead.

We learned during December that Christmas Day does not end for our Anglican tradition on the 25th of December, but our anticipation continues to the Season of Epiphany on January 6. The time between December 25 to January 6 is known as the Twelve Days of Christmas.

First fun fact, Epiphany is celebrated with special pastries in some countries, and children often receiving small gifts in their shoes to represent the Magi's gifts to the infant Jesus. I wish you many sweet treats during these days, and a warning to look inside your shoes before you step into them!

From January 6 until March 2, we will begin the time of Epiphany. The word Epiphany comes from the Greek meaning, "manifestation." We commemorate the first manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles by the noble pilgrims from the East (The Magi), and the manifestation of his divinity as it occurred at his baptism and at his first miracle at Cana in Galilee.

The history of this festival originated in the Eastern church, where it at first included a commemoration of Christ's birth. By 354, in Rome, Christ's birth was being celebrated on December 25 (Christmas Day,) and later part of the 4th century, the church in Rome began celebrating Epiphany on January 6.

Next fun fact, it is estimated that Jesus' birth might have occurred between 6 and 4 BCE. The biblical account in Matthew 2 indicates two sightings of the star, one before the Magi began their journey (probably from Babylonia or Persia) and the other near their journey's end, when the omen (sign or warning) "stopped over the place where the child was." Chinese annals record a novae in 5 BCE and 4 BCE, and in the early 17th century, German astronomer Johannes Kepler advanced the view that the Star of Bethlehem may have been a nova occurring in or near some conjunction of bright planets.

Whatever the fascinating discoveries in science, Epiphany is a special time set aside in our Episcopal Church for people to celebrate how a star led the Magi to visit the baby Jesus after he had been born. May the Epiphany season "reveal" more of what we need to know and learn about ourselves and about our Savior.

We have an exciting 2025 ahead. A few things happening in February that you may wish to write in your calendar. On Saturday, February 1, the Bishop will be here to install me as your seventh Rector. Please join us in this big event, and consider helping our committee with the event. There will be many guests from our Diocese, so come early. The service begins at 10 am, so if you are able to volunteer your time, please speak to Jeanie, Florine or Melissa Albers.

Also, on February 9th, after the 10 am service, we will have a brief annual meeting. Have a great January. Peace, Father Joshua+