



REVISING APB 1989

UPDATE #10

A PRAYER BOOK FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA  
TOMORROW - TODAY  
*Under Southern Skies – In an African Voice*

**Using *Celebrating Sunday* through the Season of Epiphany**

The celebration of the *Epiphany* arrives twelve days after Christmas, six days after the start of New Year and in the middle of the summer holidays in the Southern Hemisphere. A significant number of the clergy take the first two weeks of the year as part of their time catching up with their own families, and most parishes work with a skeleton staff until the schools re-open. And in all that period of relaxation after the “Festive Season”, the *Feast* and the *Season of Epiphany* are, for the most part, lost.

Through the ages, the *Feast of Epiphany* has been a significant celebration for the Church for a number of reasons. For the Orthodox Church it is the major feast of the Nativity, the celebration of the Incarnation. It was a significant time for baptisms in the early Church, with candidates being prepared through Advent. It also marked a shift from the narrow understanding of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah to the wider calling of Saviour of the World.

It is important that the celebration of the *Epiphany* be planned to include observance of the *Holy Name of Jesus* on 1 January [formerly called the *Circumcision of Jesus*, and still so designated in *APB 1989*, on the eighth day after his birth], as well as the *Presentation in the Temple* on 2 February, the fortieth day after his birth. These are significant markers reminding us that Jesus was born and raised a devout Jew.

It is also important to recognise the role of the Magi, the outsiders who came from the East in search of the One born to be King of Israel. And all of this should reflect something of the role of Baptism in the life of Jesus, and in the life of the Church today.

*APB 1989* on page 18 lists among the Great Festivals:

<i>APB 1989</i> Great Festivals [see page 18]	
The Epiphany of our Lord	6 January [ <i>fixed Calendar date</i> ]
<i>The First Sunday of the Year</i> - - <i>The Baptism of Christ</i>	Sunday between 7 and 13 January in <i>APB</i> this is the <i>First Sunday of the Year</i> ; in <i>RCL</i> this is the <i>First Sunday after Christmas</i> <i>this year</i>
<i>APB 1989</i> Festivals [see page 19-20]	
<i>The Holy Name of Jesus</i>	1 January [ <i>fixed Calendar date</i> ]
<i>The Presentation of our Lord in the Temple</i>	2 February [ <i>fixed Calendar date</i> ]

In addition, on page 27 of *APB 1989*, *Rules for Observance of the Calendar*, point 7a notes that: **The Epiphany may be observed on any Sunday between 2 and 8 January.**

This rule was later amended to “any Sunday between 2 and 6 January”, which can only reflect the understanding that the celebration of the Epiphany cannot be celebrated on Sunday 7 or 8 January because that would be the first Ordinary Sunday of the Year and would already be the celebration of The Baptism of Christ.

In most years there are no difficulties in deciding to celebrate the Epiphany on the Sunday on or before 6 January so that the Sunday following 6 January could rightfully be celebrated as the Baptism of Christ. However, in 2017 the Sunday before would be the Holy Name of Jesus, the Circumcision, and in 2018 the Sunday before would be 31 December that should be the First Sunday after Christmas.

[These considerations are required as we are in transition between using the Lectionary of APB 1989 and the Revised Common Lectionary. As the Liturgical Committee proceeds with the enormous task of collating, revising and editing the four lectionaries currently in use in ACSA further consideration will be given to these, and similar, challenges in the Calendar.]

Many churches have a special service to build the Christmas Crib, usually late afternoon on Christmas Eve. The first decision that needs to be made for this service is where to place the Magi. Should they be included on Christmas Eve when they were clearly not present? Or perhaps located some distance away from the Crib scene, visible but awaiting their proper entry at the start of the celebration of Epiphany. The shepherds could be moved out, or at least put to one side to facilitate this change of emphasis. Again, it would seem a pity for the crib scene to then be dismantled the following day dismissing the Magi as soon as they arrive. This might perhaps be an opportunity to maintain the crib until the end of the Season of Epiphany on 2 February or the Sunday nearest, at the end of which the children, already back into their Sunday School mode can process them all out of the church.

### **Developing the programme of services for the Season of Epiphany**

It is unlikely that many people would attend a service on 6 January to celebrate the Epiphany on a Friday or Saturday during the midsummer holidays, so one is left with having to make a decision about how to accommodate both the *Feast of the Epiphany* and the *Baptism of Christ* on 7 or 8 January as will happen in 2017 [8 January] and 2018 [7 January].

The next decisions would be how to include the celebration of the *Holy Name of Jesus* as well as the *Feast of the Presentation* with the important reminders they bring that our Lord was born, lived, and died as a Jew.

Here is a list of suggested possible programmes for the Sundays after Christmas in 2017:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>
1 Jan	Holy Name Name of Jesus [ <i>The Circumcision of Jesus</i> ]	Feast of Epiphany	Holy Name Name of Jesus [ <i>The Circumcision of Jesus</i> ]
6 Jan*	Feast of Epiphany		
8 Jan	Baptism of Christ	Baptism of Christ	Epiphany <i>and</i> the Baptism of Christ observed together
15 Jan	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany
22 Jan	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany
29 Jan	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Epiphany	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	Feast of Presentation
2 Feb*	Feast of The Presentation		
5 Feb	5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	Feast of Presentation	5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany
12 Feb	6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany
19 Feb	7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany	7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany
26 Feb	Transfiguration Sunday	Transfiguration Sunday	Transfiguration Sunday

\* Indicates that this is not a Sunday

The second decision that is needed will follow from the decision taken above. How are the liturgical colours to be determined for the Season of Epiphany, or the Sundays after Epiphany?

If one chooses to follow the *Season of Epiphany*, as has been indicated in Options 1 and 3 above, the appropriate liturgical colour for the Sundays would be white until the celebration of the *Presentation*, and green thereafter until Transfiguration Sunday when the colour will return to white. However, if one follows Option 2 above, it would be appropriate to change to green on the second Sunday after Epiphany and remain green until Transfiguration Sunday when the colour will be white.

Furthermore, one must remember that the *First Sunday in February* is designated as a *Special Day and Season of Prayer* in *APB 1989* for Education [see Education Sunday, *Lectionary for 2016-2017*, p.83]. This might influence the decision about when and how to observe the *Feast of the Presentation* on a Sunday.

### Using the textual material from *Celebrating Sunday* for Epiphany:

#### Gathering Rite

The Responsory at G11 would be most appropriate for the Sundays in January.

With the amount of alternative material that is presented in *Celebrating Sunday*, it may be worth considering the familiar Collect for Purity as one of the familiar landmarks in the Epiphany liturgy.

The invitation to the *Act of Penitence* could be introduced at services between the Feast of Epiphany and the Presentation in the Temple by using a sentence from the Readings set for the liturgy or perhaps John 3:16, with the emphasis on “God so loved the **world** ...” see *APB 1989* p141.

#### Proclaiming and Receiving the Word of God

Many preachers use a short prayer at the start of their sermons asking that the Spirit will direct the preaching and the response to it. This suggests that the sermon is the proclamation for the day. However, the proclamation includes the Readings for the day, the Psalm and the Canticle *as well* as the Sermon. This would perhaps be better understood if there were a distinct *Prayer for Illumination* prayed before the start of the first reading for the day. One of the prayers from section G12 could be chosen at this point.

The second of the *Affirmations of Faith* in section R3, based on Ephesians 3, which a set text for the Feast of the Epiphany, would be appropriate particularly for the Sundays between the *Feast of the Epiphany* and *Feast of the Presentation*.

#### Responding to the Proclaimed Word

The *Prayers of the People* suggested in R5 provide an adequate framework for the Intercessions.

It would be important to include particular prayers for the local community and for immediate situations of need in either or both of the suggested places.

#### Celebrating at the Lord's Table

*The Great Thanksgiving* suggests a new dialogue at the start that will need to be provided for the congregation. This could be either by projection or in a printed text. This would apply also to the additional responses throughout the prayer.

The text for the *Invitation* to communion is provided.

#### Going out as God's People

There are three separate *Blessings for Epiphany* and these could be used throughout the Season.

The *Dismissal* is particularly appropriate for the Season of Epiphany.

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