



# Celebrate

Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 25, 2026

*Jesus begins his public ministry by calling fishers to leave their nets and follow him. In Jesus the kingdom of God has come near. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. We see this light most profoundly in the cross—as God suffers with us and all who are oppressed by sickness, sin, or evil. Light dawns for us as we gather around the word, the font, and the holy table. We are then sent to share the good news that others may be “caught” in the net of God’s grace and mercy.*

## Prayer of the Day

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Lord God, your lovingkindness always goes before us and follows after us. Summon us into your light, and direct our steps in the ways of goodness that come through the cross of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Isaiah 9:1-4

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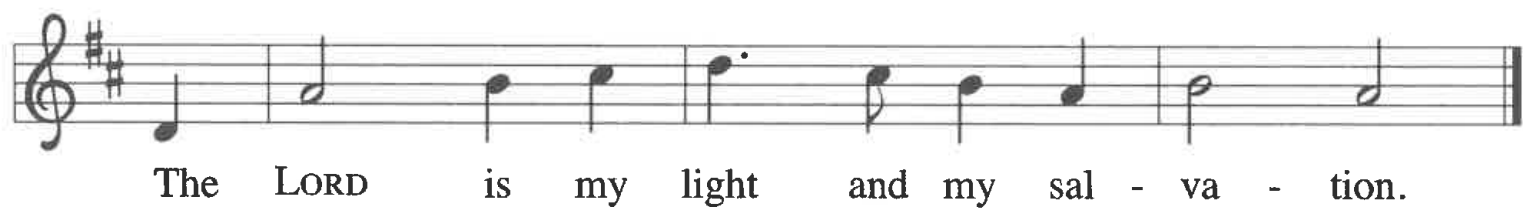
*The northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali experienced the gloom of defeat by Assyrian military forces, but they are assured that their condition will be reversed when God makes a light-filled appearance. The joy they will experience will resemble celebrations of great harvests, because God will deliver them from everything that diminishes or oppresses them.*

There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time [the LORD] brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep  
darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied exultation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing  
plunder.

<sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden  
and the bar across their  
shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of  
Midian.



The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom then I shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?  
**4One thing I ask of the LORD; one I thing I seek;  
that I may dwell in the house  
of the LORD all the days of my life  
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD  
and to seek God I in the temple.**  
**5For in the day of trouble God will I give me shelter,  
hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary,  
and raise me high up- I on a rock.**  
**6Even now my head is lifted up above  
my enemies I who surround me.**  
Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary,  
sacrifices of rejoicing;  
I will sing and make music I to the LORD. **R**  
**7Hear my voice, O LORD, I when I call;  
have mercy on me and I answer me.**  
**8My heart speaks your message— I “Seek my face.”  
Your face, O LORD, I I will seek.**  
**9Hide not your face from me, turn not away  
from your ser- I vant in anger.**  
Cast me not away—you have been my helper;  
forsake me not, O God of I my salvation. **R**

*Paul calls on the Corinthians to end their dissensions and share the unified outlook of the gospel. Discord arises when we forget that we belong not to human leaders or institutions but to Christ. Indeed, the unifying word of the cross of Christ is the center of the gospel and the power of God's salvation.*

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you but that you be knit together in the same mind and the same purpose. <sup>11</sup>For it has been made clear to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. <sup>12</sup>What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." <sup>13</sup>Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup>I

thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup>so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup>I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. <sup>17</sup>For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel—and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

<sup>18</sup>For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

## Gospel

## Matthew 4:12-23

*Jesus begins his public ministry shortly after John the Baptist is imprisoned by Herod. He proclaims the nearness of God's reign and calls four fishermen to be his first disciples.*

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup>He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup>so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

<sup>15</sup>"Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,  
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles—  
<sup>16</sup>the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,  
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

<sup>17</sup>From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

<sup>18</sup>As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. <sup>19</sup>And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." <sup>20</sup>Immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup>As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. <sup>22</sup>Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

<sup>23</sup>Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

# Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

As God’s beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

A brief silence.

Holy One, you entrust the message of the cross and the mission of the gospel to the church in every land. Guide the newly baptized and deepen the faith of all who follow Christ. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Holy Creator, you lavish creation with splendor, and we praise you for the gift of life. Teach us to live as wise stewards, sharing the earth’s resources with all inhabitants of this garden planet. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Holy Judge, your power is love, and you judge the nations by the measure of Christ. Free any who are unjustly accused or wrongly condemned. We pray for those in authority (*local and national officials may be named*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Holy Lover, you care for vulnerable young children, frail elders, and any who are sick (*especially*). We pray for all who are affected by natural disasters (*individuals or situations may be named*). Provide for their needs and relieve their suffering. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Holy Giver, you gather, forgive, and shape us as disciples of Christ. Nurture in us a spirit of patience and respect, that we may love one another as you love us. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Holy Savior, you free us from the power of death. Lead and guide us until we come at last into the communion of all your saints in light. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God’s loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** (Conversion of Paul [transferred]; commemoration of Timothy, Titus, and Silas, missionaries) Galatians 1:11-24. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith) Psalm 27:7-14. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Thomas Aquinas, teacher, died 1274) Luke 1:67-79. **Thursday** Psalm 15. **Friday** Deuteronomy 24:17—25:4. **Saturday** John 13:31-35. **Fourth Sunday after Epiphany** Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12.

CELEBRATE January 25, 2026

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