



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

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

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.

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

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

⁴For 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 sal - va - tion.

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom then ¹ shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I ¹ be afraid?

⁴One thing I ask of the LORD; one ¹ 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 ¹ in the temple.

⁵For in the day of trouble God will ¹ give me shelter,
hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary,
and raise me high up- ¹ on a rock.

⁶Even now my head is lifted up above
my enemies ¹ who surround me.

Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary,
sacrifices of rejoicing;
I will sing and make music ¹ to the LORD. **R**

⁷Hear my voice, O LORD, ¹ when I call;
have mercy on me and ¹ answer me.

⁸My heart speaks your message— ¹ “Seek my face.”
Your face, O LORD, ¹ I will seek.

⁹Hide not your face from me, turn not away
from your ser- ¹ vant in anger.

Cast me not away—you have been my helper;
forsake me not, O God of ¹ my salvation. **R**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

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. ¹¹For it has been made clear to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. ¹²What 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." ¹³Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I

thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. ¹⁷For 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.

¹⁸For 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. ¹³He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵"Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across
the Jordan, Galilee of the
gentiles—

¹⁶the 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."

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

¹⁸As 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. ¹⁹And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As 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. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³Jesus 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.

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