



Celebrate

Second Sunday after Epiphany

January 18, 2026

Today's gospel opens with further reflection on Jesus' baptism. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and the one anointed by the Spirit. In the liturgy we come and see Christ revealed among us in word and meal. We go forth to invite others to come and worship the Holy One and to receive the gifts of grace and peace made known among us.

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, our strength and our redeemer, by your Spirit hold us forever, that through your grace we may worship you and faithfully serve you, follow you and joyfully find you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 49:1-7

Here the servant, identified as Israel, speaks for herself and describes her honored mission. Called before her birth like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, the servant is not only to restore Israel. The servant's ultimate assignment is to bring news of God's victory to the ends of the earth. God in faithfulness has chosen Israel for this task.

Listen to me, O coastlands;
pay attention, you peoples from far
away!

The LORD called me before I was born;
while I was in my mother's womb he
named me.

²He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid
me;

he made me a polished arrow;
in his quiver he hid me away.

³And he said to me, "You are my
servant,

Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

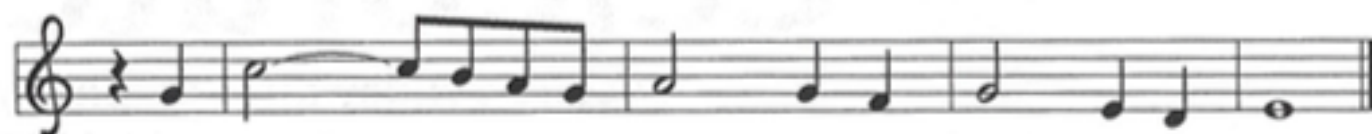
⁴But I said, "I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing
and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the LORD
and my reward with my God."

⁵And now the LORD says,
who formed me in the womb to be
his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to
him,

for I am honored in the sight of the
LORD,
and my God has become my
strength—

⁶he says,
"It is too light a thing that you should
be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the
end of the earth."

⁷Thus says the LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy
One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by
the nations,
the slave of rulers,
"Kings shall see and stand up;
princes, and they shall prostrate
themselves,
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has
chosen you."



I love to do your will, O my God, O my God.

I waited patiently up-¹ on the LORD,
who stooped to me and ¹ heard my cry.

²The LORD lifted me out of the desolate pit,
out of the ¹ miry clay,

and set my feet upon a high cliff,
making my ¹ footing sure.

³The LORD put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise ¹ to our God;

many shall see, and stand in awe,
and put their trust ¹ in the LORD.

⁴Happy are they who trust ¹ in the LORD!

They do not turn to enemies or to those who ¹ follow lies. **R**

⁵Great are the wonders you have done,
O LORD my God! In your plans for us,
none can be com-¹ pared with you!

Oh, that I could make them known and tell them!

But they are more than ¹ I can count.

⁶Sacrifice and offering you do ¹ not desire;

you have opened my ears: burnt-offering and sin-offering
you have ¹ not required. **R**

⁷And so I said, "Here I ¹ am; I come.

In the scroll of the book it is writ-¹ ten of me:

⁸"I love to do your will, ¹ O my God;

your law is ¹ deep within me."

⁹I proclaimed righteousness in the ¹ great assembly;

I have not restrained my lips, O ¹ LORD, you know.

¹⁰I have not hidden your righteousness in my heart;

I have spoken of your faithfulness
and ¹ your deliverance;

I have not concealed your steadfast love and truth
from the ¹ great assembly.

¹¹You are the LORD;

do not withhold your compas-¹ sion from me;

may your steadfast love and your truth

continually ¹ keep me safe. **R**

Though God's church in Corinth is a fractious congregation beset with many conflicts, Paul opens this letter by spotlighting the multiple ways God has enriched and sustained its life as part of the divine call into the fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

²To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that

has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind ⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you ⁷so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel

John 1:29-42

John the Baptist's witness to Jesus initiates a chain of testimony as his disciples begin to share with others what they have found.

[John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" ³⁰This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ³¹I myself did not know him, but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." ³²And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Chosen One."

³⁵The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,

³⁶and as he watched Jesus walk by he

exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" ³⁷The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). ⁴²He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

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.

Gracious God, gather the church into one great fellowship. Equip your people to work together for justice and peace, following the example of Martin Luther King Jr., renewer of society, whose birth we remember this week. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Creating God, sustain the web of life on this planet. Protect wild places, endangered species, and vulnerable habitats. Come to the aid of those affected by natural disasters (*current situations may be named*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Just God, you desire respect and equality for everyone. Raise up prophets who speak truth to the nations. Embolden leaders and those in authority to advocate for people in need. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Healing God, you lift up those who are bowed down by trouble, oppression, or illness (*especially*). Bring an end to social injustice and inequities of every kind, so that all people may have abundant life. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Abiding God, you are present with this congregation. Keep us mindful of our mission and guide our ministries in this community (*local ministries may be named*). Kindle in us a desire to help one another. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Faithful God, you promise to be with us always. We remember with gratitude the faithful departed who now rest in you. Strengthen us to the end, that we may see you face to face. 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 (Confession of Peter [transferred]); commemoration of Henry, Bishop of Uppsala, martyr, died 1156); Matthew 16:13-19. **Tuesday** Psalm 40:6-17. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Agnes, martyr, died around 304) Isaiah 48:12-21. **Thursday** Psalm 27:1-6. **Friday** 1 Samuel 9:27—10:8. **Saturday** Luke 5:27-32. **Third Sunday after Epiphany** (week of Prayer for Christian Unity ends) Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23.

CELEBRATE January 18, 2026

Volume 57, Number 1

CELEBRATE (ISSN 1063-3242, USPS 763-460) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 411 Washington Avenue North, Third Floor, Minneapolis, MN, 55401. Periodicals postage paid in St. Paul, MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Celebrate, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1553. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$5.79 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rates. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings during the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by John Folkenberg. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year A* (Augsburg Fortress, 2007). Please visit our website at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year A. 9 of 13
CELEBRATE is protected through trademark registration in the U.S.A. and Canada. ITEM014624 Tracks 1 and 2