

**HYMNS:** 504 217 366 341

**INTROIT:** Psalm 27:1-9

The LORD is my Light and my Salvation. Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the Fortress of my life. Of whom should I be afraid?

When evildoers came against me to devour my flesh, my oppressors and my enemies stumbled and fell.

If an army were to pitch camp against me, my heart would not be afraid. If a war were to break out against me, in this I would be confident.

One thing I have asked of the LORD. That I shall seek, that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD, and to reflect in His temple.

For He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble. He will conceal me under the cover of His tent. He will set me high on a rock.

Now my head will be high above my enemies all around me. Therefore I shall offer sacrifices in His tent with shouts of joy. I shall sing and make music to praise the LORD.

Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud! Be gracious to me and answer me!

When You said, "Seek My face!" my heart said to You, "Your face, O LORD, I shall seek."

Do not hide Your face from me! Do not turn Your servant away in anger! You have been my Help. Do not cast me off or abandon me, O God of my salvation!

**COLLECT:** Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*Welcome to all worshipping with us today!*

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

Email him at [paziebell@gmail.com](mailto:paziebell@gmail.com) or to the church office at [ddaelc@gmail.com](mailto:ddaelc@gmail.com).

***Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.***

**READINGS:**

Isaiah 9:1-4 The people who were walking in darkness will see a bright Light.

1 Corinthians 1:10-18 I appeal to you... that you may be perfectly united with the same mind and with the same judgment.

Matthew 4:12-25 The calling of Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

**Isaiah 9:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> However, there will be no more gloom for the land that has had such distress, when, in an earlier time, He had treated with contempt **the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali**. However, in the later time He will bring glory to **the Road beside the Sea, to the Land across the Jordan, and to Galilee of the Gentiles**.

<sup>2</sup> **The people who were walking in darkness will see a bright Light. A Light will shine on those who were living in a land of deep darkness.**

<sup>3</sup> You will enlarge the nation for them. You will make their joy great. They will rejoice before You as people rejoice at the harvest, or like those who rejoice when they divide plunder. <sup>4</sup> For You will shatter the yoke that is a burden on them, the cane that is on their shoulders, and the rod of those who forced them to work, as You did on the day of Midian.

**1 Corinthians 1:10-18**

<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, fellow-Christians, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree with one another, that there may be no divisions among you, and that you may be perfectly united with the same mind and with the same judgment! <sup>11</sup> For, my fellow-Christians, Chloe's people have informed me about you, that there are quarrels among you. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is this: 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? Surely Paul was not crucified for you? Or were you baptised into the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I did not baptise any of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so that none of you may say that you have been baptised into my name. <sup>16</sup> Yes, I also baptised the family of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptised anyone else. <sup>17</sup> For Christ has not sent me to baptise, but to tell the Good News, not with wise words, that the cross of Christ may not be emptied of its power. <sup>18</sup> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**Matthew 4:12-25**

<sup>12</sup> After Jesus had heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> He left Nazareth and went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> in order that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled: <sup>15</sup> **“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, on one side of the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.**

**<sup>16</sup> The people who used to dwell in darkness have seen a great Light, and a Light has dawned for those who used to dwell in the land and shadow of death.”**

<sup>17</sup> From that time on, Jesus began to preach, “Repent! For the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

<sup>18</sup> While He was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon, who was called “Peter,” and his brother Andrew throwing a casting-net into the sea. For they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> Jesus told them, “Come! Follow Me! I shall make you fishers of men.”

<sup>20</sup> They immediately left their nets and began to follow Him. <sup>21</sup> He went on from there, and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. Jesus called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father, and began to follow Him.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus began to go around everywhere in Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people. <sup>24</sup> The news about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those who were suffering severe pain, demon-possessed people, epileptics, and paralysed people, and He healed them.

<sup>25</sup> Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the region across the Jordan followed Him.

**A LIGHT HAS DAWNED**  
**Sermon for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany, 2023**  
**Matthew 4:12-25**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is our Gospel from before, Matthew 4:12-25: **After Jesus had heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew to Galilee.** <sup>13</sup> **He left Nazareth and went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali,** <sup>14</sup> **in order that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled:** <sup>15</sup> **“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, on one side of the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.** <sup>16</sup> **The people who used to dwell in darkness have seen a great Light, and a Light has dawned for those who used to dwell in the land and shadow of death.”**

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Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, grew up in Nazareth, and was baptised in the Jordan, He began undertaking His public ministry in Capernaum. Capernaum was a fishing village on the northern side of the Sea of Galilee, on the road from Damascus to the Mediterranean Sea, in the territory that had been assigned to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali when the Israelites had occupied the land under Joshua. Some of Jesus' relatives and disciples also lived in Capernaum. It was not all that important of a city, located in a somewhat looked-down-upon part of the country, pretty far away from Jerusalem, in a region that the Jewish elite did not think highly of. Galilee had been overrun by pagan Gentiles centuries earlier, and was still influenced by Gentile culture. Yet this is where Jesus goes to do so much of His work. Galilee was populated by many Gentiles in addition to the Jews who lived there. This mixture of Jews and Gentiles had an effect on the religious life of the people. The God of Israel was not unknown there, but the worship of God had departed considerably from the forms of worship that the Law of Moses called for, but this was all according to God's plan. That Jesus would carry out much of His ministry in Galilee was fulfilling a prophecy from the Book of Isaiah: **“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, on one side of the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. <sup>16</sup> The people who used to dwell in darkness have seen a great Light, and a Light has dawned for those who used to dwell in the land and shadow of death.”**

**“A Light has dawned.”** The Light had come to Galilee and dawned on those dwelling in darkness and death because Jesus had come there to carry out His ministry. Where Jesus is, there shines forth light and life. This is why we can say that it was not only on Zebulun and Naphtali, not only on Capernaum and Galilee but also now *here in our own backyard* where **“a Light has dawned.”**

Are people dwelling in darkness in our land? Are they dwelling in the region and shadow of death here? You bet they are. You know they are. There is darkness across our land. You can see the darkness all around. People all around us are lost, not knowing how to live the right way. You can probably picture them in your mind. I am sure we all know such people personally and genuinely fear for their eternal salvation. It isn't easy to see the way they live. There is no fear or trust in God, no keeping or acknowledging His commandments. There is no urgency to gather regularly to receive Him through Word and Sacrament. There is so much sin and pain in the world around us. But not only that - perhaps

we can see some of this darkness in *ourselves*, our actions, and our way of living. Are we living in the Light, or dwelling in the shadow of death? Every one of us has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.<sup>1</sup>

And so, this land of darkness is, therefore, the region and shadow of death. Where there is sin, there death is sure to follow. In fact, death is like the hound tracking you down, chasing you to the grave. There is no escape - no way out. The death rate for sinners is still 100%. There is a tombstone with your name on it somewhere in the future, and who knows how soon it will come?

But **“the people who used to dwell in darkness have seen a great Light, and a Light has dawned for those who used to dwell in the land and shadow of death.”** On us, that Light has dawned. Here comes Jesus, doing His thing, and His “thing” is at least three things we can see in our text: preaching, teaching, and healing. **“Jesus began to go around everywhere in Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the kingdom and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.”** Preaching, teaching, and healing. We’ll take them one at a time.

First, preaching.

**“Repent! For the kingdom of heaven has come near.”** Jesus says this because He is the one bringing the kingdom of heaven into our midst. In view of that, it’s time for us to repent, for we all have sins to repent of. And it even goes deeper than that. It’s our whole person we have to confess - our whole sinful self. It goes to the depth of our nature as self-serving sinners *who have turned away from God and chosen our own way of living*. To “repent” calls for a radical transformation of the entire person, a fundamental turnabout. To repent meant to be converted from unbelief to faith.

**“Repent! For the kingdom of heaven has come near.”** Jesus is bringing the kingdom, which is the whole reign of God, God’s great and gracious rule coming into our midst. It’s the blessing; it’s the end-time salvation; it’s the rescue from the darkness and the death that surrounds us and inhabits us. Jesus comes bringing the kingdom of heaven here on earth. We shall see Him manifesting and dispensing those blessings of the kingdom in His ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 3:23

So, the first thing we see Jesus doing is preaching. It's the proclamation, the heralding, announcing that the kingdom is here now, and so it's time to repent and pay attention and heed the call that Jesus issues.

The next activity of Jesus in His ministry is His teaching.

To do that, He will need people to teach, and so He calls disciples. The first bunch are a few of those Galilean fishermen: Peter and Andrew, James and John. **“Come! Follow Me! I shall make you fishers of men”** He said. Jesus is going to train these simple fishermen so that down the road, they will bring more people into the net of the church, where they, too, can learn from Jesus and follow Him.

But not only fishermen. You and I have also been called to follow Jesus and learn from Him. And that means not just knowing a bunch of facts, so you can win at Bible trivia. No, the purpose of Jesus' teaching ministry is to unfold for us the true meaning of God's Word so that we may believe and live right, according to God's design. And that, basically, is to live in faith toward God and in fervent love toward one another. Jesus teaches us not to trust in our own merits and our own righteousness, which amounts to nothing. Rather, we trust in the merits of Christ, who went to a hill called Calvary to obtain the only righteousness that works. Christ crucified - there is true wisdom, God's wisdom and power, wisdom and power that does look like foolishness<sup>2</sup> and weakness in the eyes of the world.

The teaching ministry of Jesus. Jesus calls us to follow Him in faith and to learn from Him as His disciples. This is an ongoing discipleship, our whole life long. Yes, indeed, our salvation has already been won; make no mistake about that. Jesus took care of all that on the cross and by His mighty resurrection, and we have been joined to Jesus in our baptism and given the Holy Spirit. *That is already secure*. Our hope in Christ for eternal life is firm and solid because it rests outside of us and in God's promise. But life as Christ's disciples is always growing. The Lord will continue to teach us as we continue in His Word. This leads us to the third aspect of Jesus' ministry: healing.

Through the ministry of the church, Jesus preached and taught and continues to do so today. But where is the healing? Look at what Jesus did. **“People brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those who were**

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:18

**suffering severe pain, demon-possessed people, epileptics and paralysed people, and He healed them.”**

One thing to remember here about those healings is that all those people that Jesus healed at that time ended up dying. They got sick from something else down the line and died. But it wasn't like Jesus' healings didn't "take." No, it's just that they served a limited purpose, in a way. These healings showed what is in store for all of us because of what Jesus would do through His death and resurrection. The healings are a "sneak preview," if you will, of the ultimate healing we shall all receive when Christ comes again on the Last Day.

The point is that God is also committed to healing our bodies and restoring the whole of this broken creation. That day is coming. It will come on the day when Christ returns. Resurrection. Glorified bodies. Creation made right, better than ever. A new heaven and a new earth. Eternal life. This is where the Sacraments come in. This is the part of the church's ministry today, the ministry Christ instituted, that shows that God is committed to healing our bodies. For while preaching and teaching goes into our ears and reaches our souls, the Sacraments - Holy Baptism and Holy Communion - the Sacraments put God's healing touch and His claim on our bodies.

Luther makes this very point in the Large Catechism. About the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, he writes: *"I am baptised. And if I am baptised, it is promised to me that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body." For that is the reason why these two things are done in Baptism: the body - which can grasp nothing but the water - is sprinkled and, in addition, the Word is spoken for the soul to grasp. Now, since both, the water and the Word, make one Baptism, therefore, body and soul must be saved and live forever.*" Likewise, in regard to the Sacrament of the Altar, Luther writes: *"It will cure you and give you life both in soul and in body. For where the soul has recovered, the body also is relieved."*

Dear friends, the preaching, teaching, and healing ministry of Jesus have not stopped. Our Lord Jesus Christ is still giving forgiveness, life, and salvation to us and among us through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Yes, here where we live - here in this land of darkness, here in the region and shadow of death - this is the Galilee where Jesus is doing His thing today. This is why we great joy and confidence we may say, And so we can say, with great joy and great confidence, *"a Light has dawned on us – us – who have been called into the kingdom of heaven."* Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

## PRAYER FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You for wanting all people to worship You in spirit and in truth, and for making that possible by the light of Your Word. We, Your people, who have gathered to worship and praise You, now offer You our thanksgiving, praise, and prayer.

We thank You, Father, for sending Your Son Jesus Christ, and for making known through Him Your loving purpose that all who believe in Him may have everlasting life. We give You thanks for our redemption through His cross, for the forgiveness of our sins, for deliverance from all evil, and for the sure hope of eternal glory. We praise You for the gift of Your infallible Word, through which Your Spirit has given us saving faith. Send forth Your Word with power so that many may come from east and west and rejoice in Your saving mercy. May Your kingdom be filled with believers from every nation and tribe though they are sinners like ourselves, so that heaven and earth together may ring with praise for Your great salvation in Christ.

Renew our minds. Cleanse us from every sin. Lead us along the path to eternal life. Grant that we may trust Your love and power. As we live out our short spans of life, make us spiritually wise, so that in humility, forgiveness, and love, even to those who hate us, we may reflect Your grace. Help us so that we may not be conquered by evil, but may rather conquer all evil with good. Grant that we may use well the charismatic gifts that You have provided for the good of all. Heal us of every disease. Uphold those who face the test of sickness or other suffering. Guard our loved ones wherever they may be. Shield us from the powers of wickedness. Give us each day our daily bread, and make us contented in every circumstance.

Watch over Your Church. Give it pastors who are true shepherds and faithful teachers of Your people.

Give wisdom and understanding to those who are entrusted with the responsibilities of governing our country. Grant them a concern for Your will, and the desire to rule in such a way that all people may live in quietness and peace. Let the war continuing to rage in Ukraine comes to a swift end, and bring to justice all those who are instigating the murder of innocent people.

These things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer who loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it: Amen.

**Children's Message:**

Here's a question: Is breaking things good or bad?

Today we hear from a prophet named Isaiah. The prophet Isaiah is talking to people who are very sad. Isaiah tells these sad people some very good news. He tells them that God is going to break something.

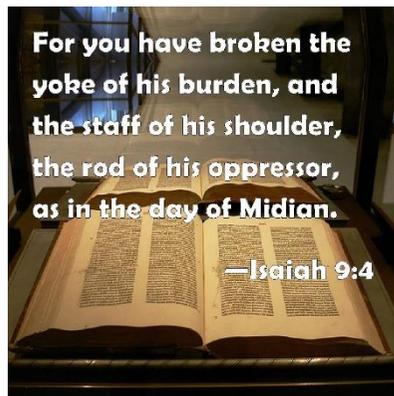
How is breaking something good news? Let me give you an example. Imagine having a mouse trap set to catch a mouse. If you grab a pencil and touch the trap where the cheese is, what happens? It goes SNAP! Now, what if instead of using a pencil, you used your finger! You wouldn't want to do that because it would hurt!

But what if you had to? What if someone was going to take your hand and force you to put your finger in the trap? That would hurt a lot, wouldn't it?

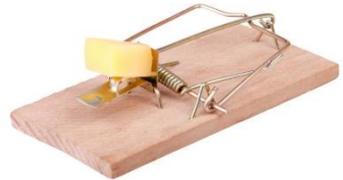
You know what would be good news? If someone was going to force you to put your finger in the trap, it would be good news if someone broke the trap first. That way, it wouldn't snap on your hand when you touched it. A mouse trap that isn't set cannot hurt you. It is completely harmless.

The prophet Isaiah promises that Jesus is going to break something. He was going to "shatter the yoke" (Is. 9:4) that was hurting His people. He's going to break the power of sin, the power of death, and the power of the devil. These bad things had us trapped and in trouble. But Isaiah says that God has broken these things that had us trapped. Jesus breaks them so that we can live free with Him.

We aren't able to break them ourselves. We're trapped and not strong enough. We can't break sin ourselves. We can't beat the devil ourselves. We can't escape death



ourselves. But Jesus can. And Jesus has. Jesus loves us. He sees the trouble we're in, and He died on the cross and rose from the dead. Even when Jesus was dead and buried in the grave, death and the grave couldn't keep Him trapped. His rising broke the trap of death. And because God breaks the bad things in our lives, we are able to enjoy all the good things of God. *Dear Jesus, thank You for breaking bad things. Help us to live in the freedom You have given us. Amen.*



**Article: Grace is God's undeserved love**

The Apostle Paul tells us that we are saved “by grace” (Eph. 2:8). It is always important to understand how the Bible defines terms, for people often place their own meaning into Christian terms and thus deceive people. A Mormon missionary was once asked whether he was sure of going to heaven. He responded that he didn't think anyone could be sure. He stated that if he made it to heaven, it would be purely by the grace of God. However, when he was asked what he would give as a reason why God should let him into heaven, he responded, “I would have to say that I earned it.” It is obvious he was not using grace in the same way that the Bible uses the term.

It is true that, in a few cases, the word grace refers to a spiritual gift that God has worked in believers (Rom. 15:15-16; 1 Peter 4:10). However, this use of grace is excluded by Scripture in regard to our salvation. God justifies us, not because of His work of sanctification in us but because of His unmerited favour toward us, for Jesus' sake. In the Old Testament, grace is God's favour which moves Him to forgive sins. The Hebrew noun used predominately to speak of God's “grace” (*chen*) refers to “the free bestowal of kindness on one who has neither claim upon our bounty, nor adequate compensation to make for it.” This concept of grace is often used in relation to God's steadfast love (*chesed*) and God's pity (*racham* “expresses a deep and tender feeling of compassion, such as is aroused by the sight of weakness or suffering in those that are dear to us or need our help”).

Note what the Lord said to Moses about Himself: “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin” (Ex. 34:6-7). Grace, in the New Testament, is usually referred to by the word *charis*, which is closely related to God's love (*agape*), mercy (*eleos*), and pity (*oiktirmos*). The New Testament also makes it clear that saving grace is God's kindly disposition to all people. It is not something in us but something God shows to us for Jesus' sake. Paul excluded the idea that grace is something in us when he wrote, “And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace” (Rom. 11:6). God's grace is His unmerited favour, brought about by Christ's substitutionary life and death, by which God is moved to forgive sin and give salvation to sinners.

**WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

<b>29 January 4 Epiphany</b>	<b>5 February 5 Epiphany</b>	<b>12 February 6 Epiphany</b>
10.00am HC AUB AELC Service.	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC & Bible Study	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
<b>29 January</b>		
READINGS: Micah 6:1-8; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12		
HYMNS: 828 (tune 270) 239 494 323 287 443		
<b>5 February</b>		
READINGS: Isaiah 58:3-9a; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16; Matthew 5:13-20		
HYMNS: 500 823 344 (65 292) 263		

Tuesday, 24 January. Confirmation classes are set to resume in Oakey.

Wednesday, 1 February, 10.00am. Women's Guild at Bethlehem Toowoomba. Opening devotion: Kathie. Choose a Bible Verse from Exodus 37-40. Item of interest: A funny memory from your childhood.

Next Sunday: Please place your offering in an envelope marked back to your own congregation. The loose offering for the day will go to the Seminary Committee. Please also provide something for a shared lunch.

A short meeting of the Parish Executive will be held after lunch next Sunday. Each congregation – please ensure a representative is in attendance.

AGM Dates: Oakey -

Toowoomba - Sunday, 12 Feb, 2.00pm.

Greenwood -

Aubigny -

Marburg -

Lowood -

Parish -

Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at [www.aelc.org.au](http://www.aelc.org.au).

Weekly Sunday School lessons are also now available in the Members section.

If there are any late changes to be made to divine services, these will be listed immediately on the website, and a text sent out to members.

*If you are unsure, please contact pastor.*