

**Sunday 18 January 2026,  
Epiphany 2**

**Collect:**

Eternal Lord, our beginning and our end:  
bring us with the whole creation  
to your glory, hidden through past ages  
and made known in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for this week:**

*Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-12; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42*

Epiphany themes, and links with the last two weeks are to be found throughout these readings. We begin with the second of the Servant songs in Isaiah, which again affirms the Servant's divine calling. There is strong emphasis on the Servant's role in bringing the straying nation of Israel back to a faithful relationship with God, but there is also acknowledgement that the Servant is a light to all the nations, enabling it to reach to the ends of the earth. This confirms the message of Epiphany, when people from beyond the borders of Palestine are drawn to meet the Son of God. The words of the Servant end at verse 6, with God responding, acknowledging the Servant's suffering and underscoring that kings and princes (of the world) will be humbled in his presence. These would have been both consoling and challenging words to those who Isaiah was initially addressing, the remnant of his people returning from a long and painful exile to their despoiled homeland. Psalm 40 also speaks of suffering, appreciating how this can lead to new insights. Again, we have a speaker who recognises that they have been chosen by God for a specific role, one they are aware will not be easy.

Like Isaiah's compatriots, the Christians of Corinth profess to be followers of God but their actions betray them. Paul, in the opening lines of his first letter to them, gives thanks, as the Psalm does for God's presence, and for his own role as apostle, one that he has come to understand will involve hardship and suffering. He sees much good in the Corinthian church, but knows that they have strayed from the Gospel and will need him to be firm in directing them on the right course.

Following on from last week's account of the baptism of Jesus in Matthew, today we hear John's account of the same event, taken from the Baptist's viewpoint. As God has done with Isaiah, with the Servant in Isaiah and with Paul on the Damascus road, so God confirms, or anoints Jesus in his role, in words heard by the Baptist who makes them public. That role, we, Paul and John the Gospel writer understand includes fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecies of the suffering Servant.

God of glory,  
you nourish us with your Word  
who is the bread of life:  
fill us with your Holy Spirit  
that through us the light of your glory may shine in all the world.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for next week:**

*Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1,4-12; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23*  
*Epiphany 3*