

January 25, 2026 + 10:30 A.M.

Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

We Join in Worship

Liturgist: Bonnie Perryman

If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker, or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of our Prayground, the extra space across the aisle from the sound booth.

PRELUDE Jesus Call Us, O'er the Tumult

H.A. Matthews

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*THE PEACE OF CHRIST

* CALL TO WORSHIP *(Adapted from Psalm 27)*

Leader: The LORD is our light and our salvation; whom shall we fear? The LORD is the stronghold of our lives; of whom shall we be afraid?

ALL: **One thing we asked of the LORD, that we will seek after: to live in the house of the LORD all the days of our lives, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in LORD's temple.**

Leader: For the LORD will hide us in shelter in the day of trouble; the LORD will conceal us under the cover of a tent; the LORD will set us high on a rock.

ALL: **We will sing and make melody to the LORD!**

Leader: Hear, O LORD, when we cry aloud, be gracious to us and answer us! "Come," our hearts say, "seek the LORD's face!" Your face, LORD, do we seek. Do not hide your face from us. Teach us your way, O LORD, and lead us on a level path.

ALL: **We will sing and make melody to the LORD!**

Leader: We believe that we shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Let us wait for the LORD; let us be strong, and let our hearts take courage; let us wait for the LORD!

ALL: **We will sing and make melody to the LORD!**

*OPENING HYMN: "Just as I Am, Without One Plea" (370)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader: Paul writes, "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 united in the same mind and the same purpose." Together let us confess our failure to unite under your Lordship.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

God who calls us, guides us, and unites us, we lift our prayer of confession unto you. You call us to a life of discipleship, following the example and teachings of Jesus. And yet, we choose to follow different paths. We become disciples of parties and pundits instead of Jesus. We give our hearts and energy to visions that are opposed to the vision of Jesus. We accept teachings by false prophets who distort the words of Jesus. We choose our nations over the Kingdom of Jesus. Forgive us for following others. Forgive us for straying from the true and right path. Help us to do better. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Friends, hear the good news! The message of the cross is the power of God!
ALL: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

STATEMENT OF FAITH: (From *The Second Helvetic Confession*)

Those who are in the Church have one faith and one spirit; and therefore they worship but one God, and him alone they worship in spirit and in truth, loving him alone with all their hearts and with all their strength, praying unto him alone through Jesus Christ, the only Mediator and Intercessor; and they do not seek righteousness and life outside Christ and faith in him. Because they acknowledge Christ the only head and foundation of the Church, and, resting on him, daily renew themselves by repentance, and patiently bear the cross laid upon them. Moreover, joined together with all the members of Christ by an unfeigned love, they show that they are Christ's disciples by persevering in the bond of peace and holy unity.

We Hear God's Word

EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Guide us, O God, by your Word, and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover peace. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: *Isaiah 9:1-4*

EPISTLE LESSON: *1 Corinthians 1:10-18*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 4:12-23*

SERMON Leaving Our Nets

MUSICAL MEDITATION *When I Return*, in memory of Sharon LaFlech

We Respond in Faith

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE

OFFERING INVITATION:

Leader: Jesus called the first disciples in a land called Galilee. Like them, may we be willing to give up all that we have in order to follow. Let us give our tithes, offerings, and pledges. Please place your offering in the plate as it is passed. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Now let us reflect on and practice stewardship as we listen to today's offertory.

OFFERTORY Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore

Gabarain/harm. Chaves-Melo

*** DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen!**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)**

O God, we dedicate these gifts to you and to your Kingdom as disciples of the King. Give us the wisdom to use them well. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

We Go Into the World

*** CLOSING HYMN: "Will You Come and Follow Me?" (Glory to God 726)**

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Let Us With a Gladsome Mind

R.J. Powell

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* So that we can properly greet people who come to the building during Sunday morning worship, Door A will be the only unlocked external door during the worship service.

PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 1/25:	Adult Study – 9:00 AM Worship In Person & Online – 10:30 AM Annual Meeting & Luncheon
MONDAY 1/26:	GA – 6:30 PM Al-Anon Annual Meeting (FH) – 6-10 PM
TUESDAY 1/27:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Prayer Shawl – 1:00 PM AA – 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAY 1/28:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) “Bring Your Own Bible” Bible Study 7-8 PM (Zoom) GA – 7:00 PM
THURSDAY 1/29:	Choir – 7:00 PM
SATURDAY 1/31:	Sackurday 12:00 PM AA – 6:30 PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **ANNUAL MEETING AND LUNCHEON TODAY AFTER WORSHIP** Our congregation’s annual meeting will be after worship in Fellowship Hall. We will have a potluck luncheon with meat provided by Session. Join us even if you did not sign up!
- **RUMMAGE SALE PLANNING MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, 1/28, AT 1:00 PM** A rummage sale planning meeting will be held on Wednesday, January, 28, at 1 pm in the meeting room. Please contact Lexa Miller or Donna Nelson with questions. Anyone interested in helping is welcome to come!
- **“BYOB”** (Bring Your Own Bible) discussion group meets on Wednesday evenings from 7-8 pm online using Zoom. Each week this group takes a look at the scriptures from our Sunday worship services, asking questions, bringing up different perspectives, and hopefully encountering the Holy Spirit in a fresh way. The link for the Zoom meetings is emailed out weekly. You can connect to Zoom with a smart phone, tablet or computer. If you’re not familiar with how to use Zoom, or to get on our e-mail list, please contact Pastor Tyler or Heather Casiano.
- **“THE BIBLE IN TODAY’S WORLD”** class meets on Sunday mornings from 9-10 am in the middle classroom (across from Pastor Tyler’s office). This group is reading through the book, “A is for Alabaster” by Anna Carter Florence. Each week is independent of the other weeks, so come as you are able. If you need a book, or for any other questions, contact Heather Casiano.
- **The choir chairs are FINISHED!** They are the culmination of a decades-long held dream of choir members, many of whom have joined the Heavenly Chorus and were part of the desire to have the chairs either replaced or reupholstered. **We are joyously accepting donations to the Choir Chair Fund from anyone and everyone who wants to make a contribution in honor of or in memory of a cherished person in their lives who loves/loved music.**
- **FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!** If you don’t already follow us on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so @firstpchighland on both Facebook and Instagram.
- **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?** You are always welcome here, whether a member or not! If you are interested in joining as a member, though, we would love to have you! Please talk to Pastor Tyler if you would like to learn more.

Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

- **BLESSING BOX** Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates!
- **HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!** Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex and fill it to help the church's food pantry.

Prayer List

Anthony
Brady Vanes
George Griner
Guy Hendricks
Bill and Anettia Holmes
David Markley
David Kingen
Diana and Ray Mendoza
Janet Orem
Cindy Waltz and Sister
Yvonne Suroviak
Georgette Sknerski
Jakob Holden
Denise Matthys
Jan Oprea
Florance Cody
Kathy & Chuck Pumnea
Laura Buono Domsic
The Windstrups
Rick Parker
Gary Everhart
Caroline Studer
Darlene O'Brien
Doug & Sue Matthews
Janet Terpstra
Glen Nahler
Tom
David Hamblin
Jana Tolley
Larry & Bonnie Perryman
Delta Rose
Winnie Owen
Breeanne
Mom Bechtler
Tony
Mildred
Ron Toren

Victor
Marian Clayton
Ella P
Melissa J.
Rita Stroncsek
Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon
OGB
Edna Cruz
Charlie
Jerry & Rena Martinez
Nicole
Greg
Pastor Jane
Mary Ellen Edeus
Jane and David
Flora R.
Tyler Gall
Phil
Luana Sulkowski
Sonny Buono
Shannon Sutton
Robin
Eunice
Betsy
David
Trina & Scott
Joe & Kathy
Breanne Polan
Tammy
Alex
Ben
Mike Kelly
Sue Heth
Ron Toren
Loved ones of Pat Kingen
Neal
Rita
Carolyn

Isaiah 9:1-4

9 But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he 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.

2 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.

3 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.

4 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.

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

10 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. **11** For it has been made clear to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. **12** 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." **13** Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? **14** I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, **15** so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. **16** I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. **17** 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.

18 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.

Matthew 4:12-23

¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so 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—

¹⁶ 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.”

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

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

²³ 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.

Leaving Our Nets

Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

Last week we met Jesus at the River Jordan, where he was baptized by his cousin brother John. I know that I often lift up how deeply connected these two were, and I have yet another occasion to do so today! Let's get into it. Jesus went from the River Jordan to the Judean wilderness, where he fasted and encountered the Satan for forty days and forty nights. We will hear much more about that time in the desert when Lent rolls around. Today's story starts right after that. During those very difficult forty days for Jesus, John was also apparently having a hard time. He was arrested and incarcerated for standing up to and speaking out against the corrupt King Herod Antipas. When Jesus came out of the desert wilderness, this was the news that awaited him. The one person in all the world who could even come close to understanding his experience and identity, indeed his experience of his identity, his cousin brother with whom he had just shared this profound experience of baptismal belovedness, was incarcerated and unlikely to ever be free again in this life. That was supposed to be his partner in crime, his ride or die, the one who was going to transform the world with him! So, grieving this loss to the evil of incarceration, a grief that all too many people experience to this day, Jesus withdrew to Galilee.

That word “withdrew” is significant! While in Judea he had had these two powerful, mystical experiences. First, the Spirit of God had descended upon him while the voice of God claimed him as Son and called him beloved. Second, he had encountered the Satan and not only survived but was waited upon by angels. He should have been on top of the world, ready to burst onto the scene with strength and power as had been anticipated by so many who were awaiting their messiah. These extraordinary events were immediately overshadowed by the loss of John, though. And so he withdrew. He retreated back to Galilee, the region where his boyhood home of Nazareth was. Probably recognizing that he would not be welcome there based on his perpetual outsider status as a refugee, he went to Capernaum by the Sea to make his home. Now get this! Matthew tells us that from that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near!” The exact words that John the Baptist had proclaimed in the Judean wilderness when he was doing his baptism thing. Oh yes, those two had a deep bond indeed! John had declared that Jesus was the one to come and that he was not even worthy to untie Jesus' sandals, and yet Jesus began his public ministry by proclaiming the words of John alongside another body of water. John did not just prepare the Way before Jesus arrived on the scene. John provided the model for Jesus once he got started. Oh yes, their bond was deep indeed!

And with John locked up, Jesus needed to find others with whom to be in community. He could not be a functional human being in total isolation, let alone do the work of world transformation! He needed to be in relationship with others. He needed to form emotional connections. He needed to form intellectual connections. He needed to be able to hear stories and tell stories, to teach lessons and learn lessons. He needed to be able to lean on others when feeling weak or overburdened or just tired. He needed to be able to depend on others who had their own unique gifts. He needed to be able to laugh with others and grieve with others and simply *be* with others.

And so he went from the river to the sea to seek out community. Isaiah ‘twas foretold it. He proclaimed: “In the former time he 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.” This means that it was the home of Zebulun and Naphtali, two often forgotten tribes of Israel, two often forgotten brothers of Joseph of old who into bondage was sold. Their descendants would become known for practicing Judaism much more loosely than the Levitical codes would have dictated. As history progressed, it became known as a sea surrounded by lands with many gentiles, which is what Isaiah means when he calls it Galilee of the nations. This makes sense when you look at the geographic location of Galilee. It encompassed the northern part of modern day Palestine, the very southern part of modern day Lebanon, the very western part of modern day Syria, and the northwestern part of modern day Jordan. It was a crossroads of ancient civilizations—Phoenicians, Israelites, and Romans. From the vantage point of the much more Jewish capital of Jerusalem, Galilee thus would have been home to the foreigners and the religious “others.”

The Sea of Galilee—also called the Sea of Kinneret, the Lake of Gennesaret, and the Sea of Tiberias—was a rare wellspring of fresh water in the region that would have drawn people from all over. It was known especially for its fish, the main export of the province. Towns sprang up all around its shore, including Capernaum, Jesus’s chosen home. These towns would have been home to fisherpeople, marketeers, boat makers, net menders, and fish picklers. From the vantage point of the much more sophisticated capital of Jerusalem, Galilee thus would have been home to the commoners, the day laborers, the working poor.

It also had mountains around, which will come into focus starting next week when we begin to take a look at a certain sermon of great fame. Inevitably, the mountains had temperate valleys around them. Fresh water and temperate valleys meant fertile ground. And so, Galilee was home to much of the agriculture of the region. From the vantage point of the much more cosmopolitan capital of Jerusalem, Galilee thus would have been home to the country bumpkins, the farmers, the peasants.

And so the people around the Sea of Galilee were by no means the people with wealth. They were by no means the people with power. They were the salt of the earth people—those who were most oppressed by the imperial Romans and their client king Herods, those who were most judged and despised by the religious elites at the temple in Jerusalem, those who were most exploited by the business owners and merchants. Oppressed, despised, exploited...these were the ones to whom Jesus went for community. Of course they were! It all makes sense. His movement would grow to take in the other outcasts as well—the sex workers, the tax collectors, the lepers, the people with disabilities, the intersex eunuchs, the terminally ill, the demon possessed. It is not just that they saw in Jesus somebody with whom they could belong. It was mutual. Jesus saw in them a whole community with whom he could belong! Jesus was also an outcast. Jesus was also hated by those with power. Jesus was also different from those who held dominance in society. And at that point in his life, Jesus was very much alone.

He needed a community of people who resisted the powers and principalities in their very identities. He needed a community of people who knew how to live outside of the systems of control implemented by the empire. He needed a community of people who knew what it meant to have to struggle to survive. In short, he needed the people of the sea like Peter, Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee. And they didn’t know it until the very moment that he called them, but they certainly needed him.

For here was somebody telling them that although the struggle was necessary for now, the struggle did not have to last forever. Life could be so much more! Here was somebody who proved that illness could be temporary. Here was somebody who showed that demons could be vanquished. Here was somebody who

preached the possibility of a world in which all were equally worthy, in which the last would be first, in which they themselves would be considered blessed. Here was somebody who loved them fully and completely as they were. Here was somebody who could journey alongside them as they moved from surviving to living to thriving!

And IMMEDIATELY they left their nets to follow him. Just like that! Wow! Those nets are a powerful symbol. They represent the life that *was* before transformation. Yes, they were fishing nets for catching fish, but let us imagine those nets holding other things that define the pre-transformed life as well—things like self-doubt and shame and inadequacy. Things like fear of difference and fear of failure and fear of change. Things like limited imaginations and mindsets of scarcity. Things like acceptance of the status quo. What else would you add? What do you carry in your nets that you need to leave behind? For, following Jesus, becoming his community, meant leaving those nets behind. And they did it IMMEDIATELY—no turning back, no turning back!

Friends, we of course still need Jesus. And Jesus still needs us! Jesus still needs a living, breathing community to love on him, to collaborate with him, to create with him. Jesus still needs fishers of people. Jesus still relies on us, just as he relied on John and then the disciples. Jesus has a deep bond with us, just as he did with John and then the disciples. Are we willing to leave our nets and follow him? Are we willing to leave our nets and become his community? Are we willing to leave our nets and be transformed? I hope it is so! I pray it is so! For this world is desperately in need of a transformation that can only come from transformed people in transformed, beloved community. Sing it with me if you know it!

I have decided to follow Jesus!

I have decided to follow Jesus!

I have decided to follow Jesus!

No turning back! No turning back! Amen.

Just as I Am, Without One Plea

370

WOODWORTH LM

Charlotte Elliott, 1834

William Batchelder Bradbury, 1849
Harm. *The Hymnbook*, 1955

1. Just as I am, with - out one plea But that Thy
2. Just as I am, though tossed a - bout With man - y a
3. Just as I am, Thou wilt re - ceive, Wilt wel - come,
4. Just as I am, Thy love un - known Has bro - ken

blood was shed for me, And that Thou biddest me
con - flict, man - y a doubt, Fight - ings and fears with -
par - don, cleanse, re - lieve; Be - cause Thy prom - ise
ev - ery bar - rier down; Now to be Thine, yea,

come to Thee,
in, with - out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
I be - lieve,
Thine a - lone,

726 Will You Come and Follow Me

The Summons

Capo 3: (D) (A7) (Bm) (Em7) (Asus) (A)
 F C7 Dm Gm7 Csus C



1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call your name?
 2 "Will you leave your-self be-hind if I but call your name?
 3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call your name?
 4 "Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
 5 Lord, your sum-mons ech - oes true when you but call my name.

(D) (A7) (Bm) (Em7) (G) (D)
 F C7 Dm Gm7 Bb F



Will you go where you don't know and nev - er be the same?
 Will you care for cruel and kind and nev - er be the same?
 Will you set the pris-oners free and nev - er be the same?
 Will you quell the fear in - side and nev - er be the same?
 Let me turn and fol - low you and nev - er be the same.

(Em7) (G) (F#m7) (G) (Asus)(A)
 Gm7 Bb Am7 Bb Csus C



Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known;
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare should your life at-tract or scare?
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as this un - seen,
 Will you use the faith you've found to re-shape the world a - round,
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and foot-steps show.

(D) (A7) (Bm) (Em7) (G) (D)
 F C7 Dm Gm7 Bb F



will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?"
 Will you let me an - swer prayer in you and you in me?"
 and ad - mit to what I mean in you and you in me?"
 through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?"
 Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.