

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

of Wausau, Wisconsin

Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 25, 2026

GATHERING

Text in **bold type** is to be spoken or sung in unison

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE Little Prelude and Fugue in F Major J.S. Bach

CALL TO WORSHIP

In the sea of life's daily stress and strife, in the struggle to keep our heads above the waves, Jesus calls us from the shore: "Follow me, and be fishers of people!"

God gathers us into new boats built with room for friend and stranger.

“Follow me, and use your gifts with purpose. Follow me, and build abundant life.”

We will be weavers of community, architects of justice, gardeners of peace.

OPENING PRAYER

God our light and our rescue, our fortress in times of trouble, when human powers seek to crush us, protect us in the hidden places of your heart. Ease our fears and let us rest in you. When we are safe, but other lives are threatened, fortify our resolve to be your protection for all our kin and all your good creation. When the work is done, we ask only to live in your house and enjoy your beauty forever. **Amen.**

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven; to his feet your tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, evermore his praises sing:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the everlasting King.

2 Praise him for his grace and favor to his people in distress;
praise him still the same as ever, slow to chide, and swift to bless:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Glorious in his faithfulness.

3 Fatherlike, he tends and spares us; well our feeble frame he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us, rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Widely yet his mercy flows.

**4 Angels, help us to adore him; you behold him face to face.
Sun and moon, bow down before him, dwellers all in time and space:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise with us the God of grace.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

Christ calls us to follow, knowing that we are human. Jesus knows we are not perfect. He knows we will not always get it right. All he asks is that we try, learn, and try again. Let us go to God, telling how we have tried and failed, that God may teach us what we must learn.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Christ, our Messiah, you call us to fish for people, but we are hesitant to leave our boats. We are afraid to let go of the things we hoard, believing they make us secure. We are afraid to put our trust in you, afraid to follow, afraid we will fail. Forgive us. Transform our fear into faithfulness, and enable us to walk with you, that we may be part of your work in the world. Amen.

Please continue in silent reflection and your personal prayer of confession.

SUNG RESPONSE

Restore in Us, O God

434, v. 1

**Restore in us, O God, the splendor of your love;
renew your image in our hearts, and all our sins remove.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Just as Jesus called the disciples, so Christ calls us.
Forgiven of our sin and freed to serve, let us answer Christ's call.
Christ calls us, forgives us, heals us, and teaches us.

Thanks be to God!

SUNG RESPONSE

Let the Whole Creation Cry

679, v. 1

**Let the whole creation cry, "Glory to the Lord on high."
Heaven and earth, awake and sing, "Praise to our almighty King."
Praise God, angel hosts above, ever bright and fair in love;
sun and moon, uplift your voice; night and stars, in God rejoice!**

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God, illumine our minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and your Word proclaimed our eyes may see your kingdom, our ears may hear the call of Jesus, and our hearts may know the joy of your salvation. **Amen.**

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 9:1-4

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.

PIANO SOLO

O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee

arr. Gail Wasson

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON

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—

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.”

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.

MESSAGE

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

**1. Lord, you have come to the lakeshore, looking neither for wealthy nor wise ones,
You only asked me to follow humbly.**

Refrain:

O, Lord, with your eyes you have searched me, and while smiling have spoken my name;
now my boat's left on the shoreline behind me; by your side I will seek other seas.

2. You know so well my possessions; my boat carries no gold and no weapons. You will find there my nets and labor. Refrain

3. You need my hands, full of caring, through my labors to give others rest, and constant love that keeps on loving. Refrain

4. You who fished other oceans, ever longed for by souls who are waiting,
My loving friend, as thus you call me: Refrain

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from the Confession of 1967, 9.15

God's sovereign love is a mystery beyond the reach of the human mind.

Human thought ascribes to God superlatives of power, wisdom, and goodness.

But God reveals divine love in Jesus Christ by showing power in the form of a servant, wisdom in the folly of the cross, and goodness in receiving sinful men and women. The power of God's love in Christ to transform the world discloses that the Redeemer is the Lord and Creator who made all things to serve the purpose of God's love.

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.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God, the source of all good things, has given us what we need. In joyful response, let us offer our gifts, the fruit of our labor, and the dedication of our hearts for loving service in the name of Christ.

OFFERTORY

You are invited to use the time of offering to reflect on how you show your gratitude to God, whether through acts of service or through sharing of resources. Offering plates are available at the doors to leave a gift before or immediately after the service, or you may give online at www.firstpreswausau.org or through your Realm login.

*SUNG RESPONSE

Jesus, Light of Joy

673, v. 3

**With the saints we lift our voices, God of power, God of might.
All creation shines with glory, singing praises day and night:
alleluia, alleluia, holy, holy, holy light**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of our salvation, receive these gifts we offer and bless them for the work of your kingdom, through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING OUT

*HYMN

You Walk Along Our Shoreline

170

1. You walk along our shoreline when land meets unknown sea.
We hear your voice of power, "Now come and follow me.
And if you still will follow through storm and wave and shoal,
Then I will make you fishers but of the human soul."
- 2 You call us, Christ, to gather the people of the earth.
We cannot fish for only those lives we think have worth.
We spread your net of gospel across the water's face,
Our boat a common shelter for all found by your grace.
- 3 We cast our net, O Jesus; we cry the kingdom's name;
We work for love and justice; we learn to hope through pain.
You call us, Lord, to gather God's daughters and God's sons,
To let your judgment heal us so that all may be one.

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore

arr. John Carter

Thank you to those who helped us with worship today:

Rev. Rachel A. Wann, senior pastor
Rev. Joy Nelson-Jeffers, pastoral associate
Jann Slayton, liturgist

Susan Schaefer, organist/pianist
Rick Builer, sound and video
Griswold Team, hospitality
Peter Hessert, doorkeeper
Mary Anderson and Marcia Glashagel, bulletin assembly