Rev. Lisa Schrott
November 8, 2026
Luke 5:1-11
All in With Our Future

Our scripture passage this morning tells the story of calling of the disciples, a story that is found in all four gospels, although with some different details in each one. It is present in the three year cycle of scriptures known as the Revised Common Lectionary every year during the season of Epiphany, after Christmas. I find it interesting that across my years of preaching, I have never preached the version from Luke's Gospel (nor the version from Mark), while I have preached Matthew and John's versions many times. So for those of you who remember this story, I invite you to listen with fresh ears to how Luke shares this event that not only shaped Jesus' ministry, but the history of Christianity. Hear now these words from Luke 5:1-11 from the Common English Bible version of scripture.

> One day Jesus was standing beside Lake Gennesaret when the crowd pressed in around him to hear God's word. Jesus saw two boats sitting by the lake. The fishermen had gone ashore and were washing their nets. Jesus boarded one of the boats, the one that belonged to Simon, then asked him to row out a little distance from the shore. Jesus sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he finished speaking to the crowds, he said to Simon, "Row out farther, into the deep water, and drop your nets for a catch." Simon replied, "Master, we've worked hard all night and caught nothing. But because you say so, I'll drop the nets."
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> So they dropped the nets and their catch was so huge that their nets were splitting. They signaled for their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They filled both boats so full that they were about to sink. When Simon Peter saw the catch, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Leave me, Lord, for I'm a sinner!" Peter and those with him were overcome with amazement because of the number of fish they caught. James and John, Zebedee's sons, were Simon's partners and they were amazed too.
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> Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people." As soon as they brought the boats to the shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.
> **The Word of God for the People of God. Thanks be to God.**

It had been a busy stretch for Jesus after his baptism by John. He had been in wilderness for 40 days, standing firm as temptations for adulation and power are thrown his way. Jesus then begins his ministry of teaching and healing in the region of Galilee. He is well received by the people – scripture tells us he was praised by everyone – until he returns to his hometown to preach in the local synagogue where he told those present that the Spirit of the Lord is upon him. Jesus shared that he has been anointed to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And this message was not well received. The

crowd turned hostile when Jesus recalled the work of the prophets of Elijah and Elisha. They got so angry that they got up and drove Jesus out of the town. So Jesus channeled his inner Michigander spirit went up north to the lake. He stopped initially in Capernaum, a city on the northwest shore of Lake Gennaseret – a lake so big and great – it is also known as a sea – the Sea of Galilee. And that is where we find him this morning.

I can imagine the scene in my mind. I can feel the wind blowing the water and sand around; hear the calls of the birds and the workers shouting greetings to each other; the background chatter of daily weather updates and health reports. And I can smell the salty air and lingering odor of fish. That is the overwhelming sensory motif I get from this scene – the smell of the shore. As I thought about how to bring the story to life this morning, I wished I had a Scentronic. What you may ask is a Scentronic? It is an "artificial intelligence–assisted olfactory interface for remote odor sharing and transmission" according to a report in the journal *Science.* This device "can detect smells in one place and reproduce them miles away." Currently Scentronic can deliver the scents of cake, beer, red wine, coffee, and oranges. When one device detected one of these odors, it was able to send the data over WiFi to another device and trigger the correct emission.[1] No smell of the beach just yet… but maybe by the next time I preach this text, we can have a Scentronic unit with someone remote-scent sharing the Gennaseret lakeshore with us.

As Simon Peter was inhaling the scent of fish and salt air and likely a bit of sweat from his compatriots that morning, did he have a clue of what lay ahead for him when Jesus got into that boat that day? Jesus hops on board, asks him to row out a bit and Jesus starts teaching the crowds from the boat. I imagine that was an odd request, and Peter rolled with it. Or at least scripture doesn't say he objected. And when Jesus tells him to row out farther, into the deep water, and drop their nets for a catch, Peter goes all in saying, "Master, we've worked hard all night and caught nothing. But because you say so, I'll drop the nets."

But because you say so, I'll drop the nets. And we move from scarcity to abundance. So many fish that the nets begin to break and the boats were about to sink. Peter recognizes that something astounding has just happened. He has heard Jesus teach and he has experienced Jesus' power. He recognizes that Jesus is no ordinary iterant preacher. So much abundance that Peter is overwhelmed. Peter falls at Jesus' knees and says, "Leave me, Lord, for I'm a sinner!" And as we hear over and over and over again in scripture, Jesus says, "Don't be afraid." "Do not be afraid." Jesus continues saying, "from now on, you will be fishing for people." As soon as they brought the boats to the shore, they – that is Peter and his partners James and John left everything and followed Jesus.As theologian Rev. Jospeh Yoo says in his commentary about this passage, "This isn't just a miracle story. It's a surrender story. The disciples walk away from the catch of a lifetime. They leave behind income, stability, and familiarity. They leave their nets, their boats, and even the fish. They go all in." [2]

[1] https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.aee9266; https://www.newscientist.com/article/2595189-digital-scents-could-add-a-new-dimension-to-virtual-worlds/?et_rid=106033485&et_cid=6102878
[2] Joseph Yoo. All In. *A Preacher's Guide to Topical Sermon Series*. Westminster John Knox, 2026; p102.

All in. Jesus gives them a different ending than they expected. He gives them new directions and a new identity. He gives them a new future. A future that undoubtably looks way different than their past and one that they certainly could not have predicted when they got back that morning after fishing all night and not catching anything. They had no blueprint, no plans, no earthly idea of what would happen next. And Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people.” As soon as they brought the boats to the shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Jesus called people of all sorts to put aside the priorities the world says to value – to leave their nets – and to work toward making the realm of God appear on earth. To follow one who preached a radical welcome of inclusion to the great banquet, who overturned social norms of the day, to follow one who said to love your neighbor as yourself, and moreover, to love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you. To leave your nets behind and follow Jesus. To go all in.

For Peter and James and John, they had no idea what lay ahead of them. The journey of discovery of just who Jesus is, and just as importantly, who they were to become in Jesus was a mystery. While they may have been impulsive, they were not being reckless or careless. They were stepping out in faith, with their hands and their hearts open. To go all in with, and for, their future.

That is what is being asked of us this Stewardship Season at PCO, because dropping your nets to follow Jesus is as much of a command for the community of believers as it is for individuals. To go all in. To believe that Jesus is calling us here at PCO to a future that we don’t fully understand yet. That is full of unknowns. That may look different than the future did ten years ago or even five years ago. To step into the future with trust in our in hearts when the path may be unclear, because to quote Joseph Yoo, “the one who calls us is trustworthy.”[3]

Peter says, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and caught nothing. But because you say so, I’ll drop the nets.” At PCO we say we will commit to being welcoming to all and intentionally intergenerational because we know we can encounter God’s love in profound ways when we worship and play and serve with people whose life experiences reflect distinctive eras and being uniquely created in the image of God. We say we will partner with other faith communities and organizations because we know that we can reflect more light and love and care into the world when we work with others. That we can embody our vision and our impact can be deeper when we serve with others. Jesus modeled this shared ministry for us, calling disciples into community to learn from each other and share meals together and witness and heal and serve as a united body.

And we know this work, this ministry, of the disciples took resources. Resources of time and energy. Financial resources. Resources that were not always obvious. Resources that some

[3] *ibid*

thought of as scarce. Resources that could have been spent on something else. And still, the disciples were All In. As we are asked to be ***All In*** here at PCO.

Our text this morning teaches us that God works with people who don't have everything figured out, people who are fearful and unsure, people who recognize their own failures and sin. Our call may seem impractical and impossible, and we may hear ourselves echoing the disciples saying, "We have already tried that and it didn't work. We just spent the whole night fishing and we caught nothing." And Jesus says, "Go back out into the deep water. Be bold. Cast out your nets again. Be All In. Throw off the mindset of scarcity and feast. Feast in the abundance of the transformative power of God. Feast in what we here at PCO can become through Christ, to paraphrase the words of preparation in this morning's bulletin. Feast because it Jesus is the one doing the asking, and while we may not know what the future holds, we most certainly know in whose hands it rests.

In a few minutes we will feast at the Table of Grace. When Jesus was preparing the disciples for his death and resurrection, he gathered them for one last meal. He was preparing them for their future. A future where they would be carrying on his message of mercy and redemption, justice and love. Where they, these disciples, would truly be fishing for people, teaching them and healing them and empowering them to love their neighbors – yes all of their neighbors.

Jesus knew that it was not going to be easy for the disciples to be All In for the future that lay ahead. There would be tough and painful moments. Times when they wanted to give up and go back to something that seemed safer and less risky than the unknown path that lay ahead. So as they dined together, Jesus asked them to feast at his banquet table in remembrance of him. To remember Jesus is to claim the consequences of his death and resurrection as a call on our lives to be members of the body of Christ. This calls us to hard places, to live lives which honor the sacrifice promised that night. To remember that we are not Christians by ourselves. That we come to the table as members of one body. This kind of remembering is a continual process of glimpses of God's grace amidst the realities of life. This kind of remembering is different that the dates and times of history classes or perpetual where did I leave my phone questions. And that is indeed good news for us. Because this type of re-membering doesn't diminish with age or disease processes. Instead it is deepened through the hills and valleys of our life together. Because it is the life together that Christ is calling us to – a life that is All In. All In. All in with our hearts. All in with our hands. All in with our resources. All in for our future.

Next Sunday we opportunity to commit ourselves to be All In. In a few minutes you will hear from Emily Conroy-Krutz, who was a member of the Journey to 2030 visioning team about our future priorities. I invite you to prayerfully consider committing to being All In with your energy, intelligence, imagination, love, hearts, hands, and yes, your resources, as we boldly and confidently step out in faith and drop our nets for a future where we joyfully share the abundant love and grace of Jesus Christ with our community and throughout the world. Join me in prayer.