

# **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

## *Benton Harbor*



## *Such As These*

The Good News is Protection and Care for the Vulnerable

A Few Old Testament Passages + Matthew 19:13-15

Standing Tall on Morton Hill for over 130 Years

March 15, 2026 • Fourth Sunday in Lent

# *We Are Welcomed*

**Welcome**

**Opening Prayer**

**Prelude + Setting the Table for Worship**

# *We Are Gathered*

**The Call to Worship**

To you who are filled with joy:

**Welcome.**

To you who are weary and need rest:

**Welcome.**

To you who are mourning and long for comfort:

**Welcome.**

To you who are doing okay, all things considered:

**Welcome.**

Our doors are open,  
our hearts are open,  
our minds are open,  
our hands are open:  
let us worship God!

**Song of Praise** *Please stand as you are able, in body or in spirit*

He Came Down *Glory to God #137*

*[see next page]*

# He Came Down

137

He came down that we may have love; he

The first system of music is in G major and 4/4 time. It features a treble and bass staff. The melody in the treble staff includes a triplet of eighth notes. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and a triplet of eighth notes.

came down that we may have love; he came down that we may

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. It includes a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff and another triplet in the bass staff.

Leader: Why did he come?

have love; hal-le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.

The third system concludes the main melody. It features a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff and a triplet in the bass staff. The system ends with a double bar line.

*Additional stanzas:*

... that we may have light  
... that we may have peace  
... that we may have joy

## Call to Confession

### Prayer of Confession

God said,

“When a foreigner resides among you  
in your land, do not mistreat them.”

**Holy God, we confess,  
we have mistreated the immigrants in our land.**

Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.”

**We confess, we have sought guns and war  
more than we have pursued peace.**

God said,

“When you gather the grapes of your vineyard,  
do not glean what is left;  
it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.”

**We confess,  
we have hoarded our resources  
and failed to care for our neighbors.**

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not stop them.”

**We confess,  
we have been gatekeepers  
of the good news.**

*[moment for inward reflection]*

### Assurance of Forgiveness

Fortunately for all of us, God also said,

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name; you are mine.”

**By God’s grace, despite our sin and shortcomings,  
we are redeemed, claimed, forgiven, and loved.**

May this good news change our lives!

**Amen.**

## **Song of Gratitude**

“Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me” *Glory to God #582*

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me  
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me  
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, amen.

World without end, without end. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, amen.

## **Passing of the Peace**

*As Christ has forgiven us and received us into peace, let us now forgive one another and receive one another into our peace. There are many ways to share signs of peace with one another while minimizing physical contact: We can wave and smile; we can give the ‘peace’ sign; or we can bring our hands together in the center of our chests and bow slightly toward one another saying, “Peace be with you.” Whichever way you choose to share, do so with respect and love for your neighbors! Let us share signs of peace.*

*We Hear God's Word*

## **Prayer for Illumination**

### **Scripture Reading**

*Contemporary English Version*

Exodus 22:21-23: You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry.

Leviticus 19:33-34: When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the native-born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.

Deuteronomy 10:17-19: For the Lord your God is God of Gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Psalm 146:7-9: [God] gives justice to the poor and food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free and heals blind eyes. He gives a helping hand to everyone who falls. The Lord loves good people and looks after strangers. He defends the rights of orphans and widows but destroys the wicked.

Jeremiah 7:5-7: For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave to your ancestors forever and ever.

Ezekiel 47:21-23: So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel. You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who reside among you and have fathered children among you. They shall be to you as native-born of Israel; with you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. In whatever tribe aliens reside, there you shall assign them their inheritance, says the Lord God.

The Word of God for the People of God.

**Thanks be to God!**

## **The Choir of First Presbyterian Church of Benton Harbor**

“Take Me to the Water”

## **A Time for Young People**

*Young people of any age are invited to the chancel to hear a special message. Children are welcomed and encouraged to remain in worship following the message. They may remain at the prayerground at the front of the sanctuary or they may return to their adults. Children under 5 years old may go to the nursery with our childcare provider.*

## **Song of Preparation**

Thy Word is a Lamp unto My Feet *Glory to God #458*

*[see next page]*

# Thy Word Is a Lamp unto My Feet 458

Refrain



Thy word is a lamp un-to my feet and a light un-to my



path. Thy word is a lamp un-to my feet and a



light un-to my path. When I feel a-fraid, and I



think I've lost my way, still you're there right be-side me.



Noth-ing will I fear as long as you are near.



Please be near me to the end.

## **Scripture Reading**

Matthew 19:13-15

*New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

Then children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them, but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

These words are trustworthy and true.

**Thanks be to God!**

## **Proclamation of the Word**

The Good News is Protection and Care for the Vulnerable

## **Moment of Meditation**

*We Respond to God's Word*

## **The Offertory**

*As those who have been claimed and set free by Christ's grace, we respond with gratitude, offering him our lives, our spiritual gifts, and our material goods. The gifts we offer express our stewardship of creation, demonstrate our care for one another, support the ministries of the church, and provide for the needs of the poor. Offerings may be placed into any one of the plates in the sanctuary. At this time children may use one of the baskets found on the front pew to collect quarters for our quarter tube offerings, collected for specific missions and ministries of this church.*

## **Quarter Donations Recipient: One Great Hour of Sharing**

**Doxology + The Prayer of Dedication** *Please stand as you are able, in body or in spirit*

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow**

**Praise Christ all creatures here below**

**Praise Holy Spirit evermore**

**Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

## **Joys + Concerns**

## **Prayers of the People**

## **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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## **Song of Trust**

Amen      *Glory to God #600*

## **Announcements**

*We Are Sent by God*

## **Song of Sending** *Please stand as you are able, in body or in spirit*

Go, My Children, with My Blessing      *Glory to God #547*

*[see next page]*

## **Charge + Benediction**

## **Postlude**

## **Questions for Reflection**

In Matthew 18:6 and 18:10 Jesus offers harsh directives to protect and care for “the little ones.” Deuteronomy 24:19-21 includes specific instructions for how to care for “the immigrant, orphan, and widow” by leaving behind gleanings in the field. In addition to those named in these scriptures, who are the vulnerable people groups in your community and church? What acts of protection and care do they need?

“Protecting” the vulnerable from harm is an important step, but “caring” means working to make sure everyone has the opportunity to thrive. What steps can your church take to not just protect vulnerable populations, but also provide care?

# Go, My Children, with My Blessing 547



1 "Go, my chil-dren, with my bless-ing, nev-er a-lone.  
2 "Go, my chil-dren, sins for-giv-en, at peace and pure.  
3 "Go, my chil-dren, fed and nour-ished, clos-er to me.



Wak-ing, sleep-ing, I am with you, you are my own.  
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.  
Grow in love and love by serv-ing, joy-ful and free.



In my love's bap-tis-mal riv-er I have made you mine for-  
Here you heard my dear Son's sto-ry; here you touched him, saw his  
Here my Spir-it's pow-er filled you; here my ten-der com-fort



ev-er. Go, my chil-dren, with my bless-ing, you are my own."  
glo-ry. Go, my chil-dren, sins for-giv-en, at peace and pure."  
stilled you. Go, my chil-dren, fed and nour-ished, joy-ful and free."



# Announcements

- **Book Club!** Join us this Tuesday, March 17 to discuss *A Man Called Ove*. We'll start our discussion at around 11:30 with light refreshments.
- **If you're interested in getting involved with the Berrien Immigrant Solidarity Network (BISN)**, the next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 24 from 630p-830p. The meeting will be held at the Lincoln Twp. Library (2099 W. John Beers Rd. Stevensville).
- **Protecting Children from Gun Violence: Imagining a New World** Each Wednesday at Noon from April 15-May 13. Register using this link: <https://tinyurl.com/332wvjzf> This five session series on Zoom will guide you and your congregation in finding your action for protecting children from gun violence. Created by educational and pastoral leaders in the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, this faith-based program covers in one hour a key topic each week:
  - Children in the Crossfire: Why is gun violence the top killer of our children?
  - Saving Child Lives with Secure Gun Storage
  - Seeing Our Children: The mental and spiritual health of children in the crossfire
  - Direct Action Options for Real Safety for Children
  - Advocacy, Voting and Finding Next Steps for Your Congregation

## Coming Up

Monday  
March 16

Pastor's Sabbath

Tuesday  
March 17

Bible Study @ 10 am  
Pub Theology @ 730 pm

The Gathering Space  
The Livery in Benton Harbor

Thursday  
March 19

Veteran's Counseling—All Day  
Community Dinner @ 6 pm

The Gathering Space  
Goff Hall