

Note: This morning's worship service will be live-streamed on YouTube

Participants in Today's Service

Worship Leader: Rev. Sheth LaRue

Musician: Evan Closser

Children's Sermon: Rev. Sheth LaRue

Audio/Video: Bob Ziebart, Gordon Helm, Jeremy Funk

Church Staff Members

Pastor: Rev. Sheth LaRue

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Doug Petersen

Music Minister: Evan Closser

Custodians: Lee Hamilton and Charase Dorsey

Ministers: All the Church Members

Session (Church Elders)

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Rev. Sheth LaRue, Moderator

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24/7 CALL, TEXT, CHAT

Church Office Hours

Tuesday 9a - 12p

Thursday 12p - 4p

Pastor Sheth's Office Hours

Monday - Sabbath

Tuesday 9a - 12p

Wednesday 9a - 12p and by appointment

Thursday 1p - 4p and by appointment

Friday By appointment

Our Mission

Church Contact

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We of First Presbyterian Church of Benton Harbor are a small family of believers committed to bridging the gulf of racial and class separation. As a part of the body of Christ in Benton Harbor and acknowledging Christ's claim on our lives, our congregation is called to proclaim the Gospel and witness to Christ's love, both within the faith community and in our larger community. In doing this we will share our faith with openness, love, warmth, and respect for the dignity and individuality of all people; we will welcome and value diversity; we will strive to meet the needs of people in our community for sustenance and nurturing, and we will seek to deepen and broaden our own faith as we journey. We will do these through the doctrine and structures of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

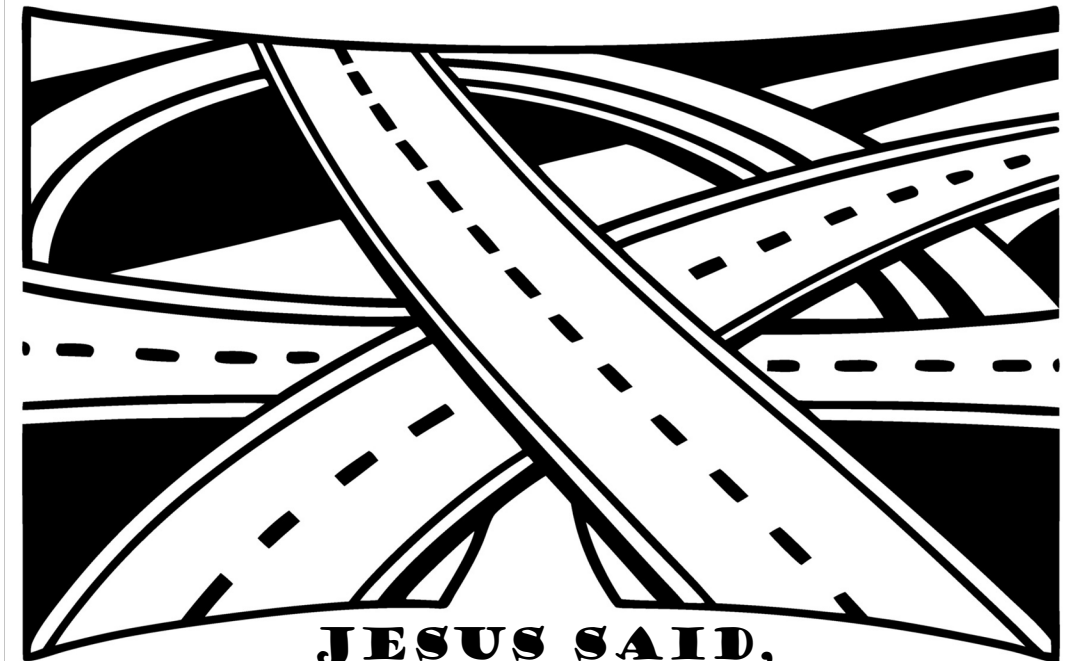
Our Vision

To be as Christ calls us:

Love Centered, Community Oriented, Servant Hearted, Fully Inclusive and Integrated

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Benton Harbor



**JESUS SAID,
"I AM THE WAY
AND THE TRUTH
AND THE LIFE."**

Does it Look Like Jesus?

1 Peter 2:1-10 + John 14:1-14

Standing Tall on Morton Hill for over 130 Years

May 3, 2026 • Fifth Sunday After Easter

We Are Welcomed

Welcome

Opening Prayer

“I Will Sing a New Song” by Howard Thurman

Prelude + Setting the Table for Worship

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.” John 1:5

We light the Christ Candle each week as a reminder that Christ – the One who shines brightly in the darkness – is ever-present with us, not only here in worship, but in our every day life.

“...we were buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4

We pour water into the font each week as a reminder of our own baptism – that moment when we connected with God’s creative purpose, cleansing power, and redemptive promise.

We Are Gathered

The Call to Worship

Our God refuses to shame us. God’s justice delivers us.

Praise God, in whom we seek shelter and guidance!

Our God listens to us. God rescues us from danger.

Praise God, in whom we seek shelter and guidance!

Our God renews our spirits. God is always faithful.

Praise God, in whom we seek shelter and guidance!

We trust our God. Let us worship God, whom we call ours.

Praise God, in whom we seek shelter and guidance!

Song of Praise

Please stand as you are able, in body or in spirit

To God Be the Glory *Glory to God #634*

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

God of compassionate mercy,

your grace and love extend to all people.

We are called to forgive others as you forgive us.

Far too often, however,

we wield forgiveness like a weapon.

We see others doing wrong

and feel haughty when we grant them grace.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We offer our thanks and praise, O God, for the glories of creation: for the black velvet of the night sky that allows the stars to twinkle, and the moon to glow; for the sun that peeks over the horizon and paints the sky as it sets. We offer our thanks and praise for the heavens and the inhabitants of Heaven, for the cloud of witnesses. We on earth sing with them above as we say together these words:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

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

Will You Come and Follow Me

Glory to God #726

Charge + Benediction

Postlude

Questions for Reflection

Is the ‘dwelling place’ (John 14:1-14) of which Jesus speaks a place for us after we die, or does it include our life in the present? What does Jesus mean when he says that his disciples ‘will do greater works’? What does it mean to pray ‘in Jesus’ name’?

Joys + Concerns

As a community, we believe in the importance of knowing what is happening in each other's lives. At this time we create space for people to share if they are celebrating good news or are carrying something too heavy.

*There will be times when what another person shares may trigger an emotional response in yourself. Invite God to speak to you through your discomfort, asking *What is this situation teaching me?**

As you prepare to share with the congregation, please do the following:

Please remember that we stream our services and store those videos on a number of platforms. Also remember that nothing is taken down from the internet.

Please be mindful of others' privacy. If you are talking about someone else, it may be more respectful to solicit prayer for "a medical concern" than to describe his or her situation in detail. Remember: the extra detail doesn't make our prayer more effective.

Please be careful to guard the reputation of your children and other members of your family.

*Please consider how to express yourself concisely before you speak. Brevity helps create the space for others to speak.**

** adapted from West Hills Friends: A Quaker Meeting in Portland, OR*

Prayers of the People

The Invitation to the Table

The opportunity to eat and drink at this table is not a right bestowed on the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. All who choose to come to the table are free to eat and drink, regardless of their age or understanding. All we ask is that you prepare yourself to celebrate by trusting in Christ, even with doubt. Come and be assured of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ.

Song of Communion

Look Who Gathers at Christ's Table

Glory to God #506

The Sacrament of Communion

Blessed are you who hunger for justice, for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who thirst for righteousness, for you will drink deeply of the cup of joy.

Blessed are you who yearn for reconciliation, for you will find peace.

Blessed are you who are persecuted in the name of religion,
for yours are the glories of the heavens.

Blessed are we – for Christ calls us to his table
where there is room for everyone, and plenty for all.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

**We call out the sins of the powerful
but fail to notice our own power.
We become narrow in our quest for truth
and ignore other people,
in other rooms,
crying out for your justice.
Help us search ourselves and seek forgiveness
from those we have made beg us for mercy.
Connect us to others
and guide us to share power and grace as we follow you.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

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 1 Peter 2:1-10 *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

This honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,
“The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner,”
and

“A stone that makes them stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Holy wisdom, Holy word.

Thanks be to God!

A Time for Young People / Scripture Reading

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.

Scripture Reading John 14:1-14 *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are

going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

These words are trustworthy and true.

Thanks be to God!

Song of Preparation

Open the Eyes of My Heart *Glory to God #452*

Proclamation of the Word

Does it Look Like Jesus? Rev. Sheth LaRue

Moment of Meditation

What good news did I hear God say to me and to this community this morning?

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 go to: The OutCenter of Southwest Michigan

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.