

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## Benton Harbor



What's the Deal with Prayer?

Psalm 22:1-8 + Romans 8:24-27 + Mark 11:12-14, 20-24

Standing Tall on Morton Hill for over 130 Years

June 14, 2026 • Third Sunday After Pentecost

# We Are Welcomed

## Welcome

### **Opening Prayer** *from Kol HaNeshamah Synagogue in Seattle, WA*

We come together this Shabbat, each bringing to this sanctuary a private world of hopes, of fears, of dreams. Some of us are burdened by anxieties and cares that all but crash our faith in the future. Others have hearts filled with happiness, grateful for the joys of the past week, yet aware that even the most fortunate are vulnerable before the mystery of tomorrow. Every life is a unique blending of joy and sorry, of fulfillment and frustration.

Beneath our uniqueness we are all bound together by our common humanity. All of us most deeply yearn for the blessings of freedom and peace. Each of us seeks the personal liberation of a mind that is not enslaved to conventional wisdom. A heart that is able to love without fear, a spirit that cries “yes!” to the universe. Each of us strives too for the inner peace that comes with finding a harmony between our aspirations and our abilities. This is the Shabbat peace to which we aspire.

### **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**

Children of God: welcome!

**Welcome to this place of love and grace,**

Welcome to this place of hope and perseverance.

**God invites all of us to be a part of the beloved community,**

God invites all of us to share in the good news:

**We are welcome, just as we are. We are loved, just as we are.**

In gratitude for all of this, let us worship God.

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

Rejoice, the Lord is King! *Glory to God #363*

*[see next page]*

## **Call to Confession**

### **Prayer of Confession**

**O Lord, you are our shepherd,**

**And yet we want.**

**We lie down when we could act,**

**We stir the pot when we could offer peace,**

**We wander tempting paths instead of following you.**

**We see courage and comfort in earthly things rather than in you.**

**We hate our enemies and refuse to break bread with them,**

**We see scarcity even when you offer us abundance.**

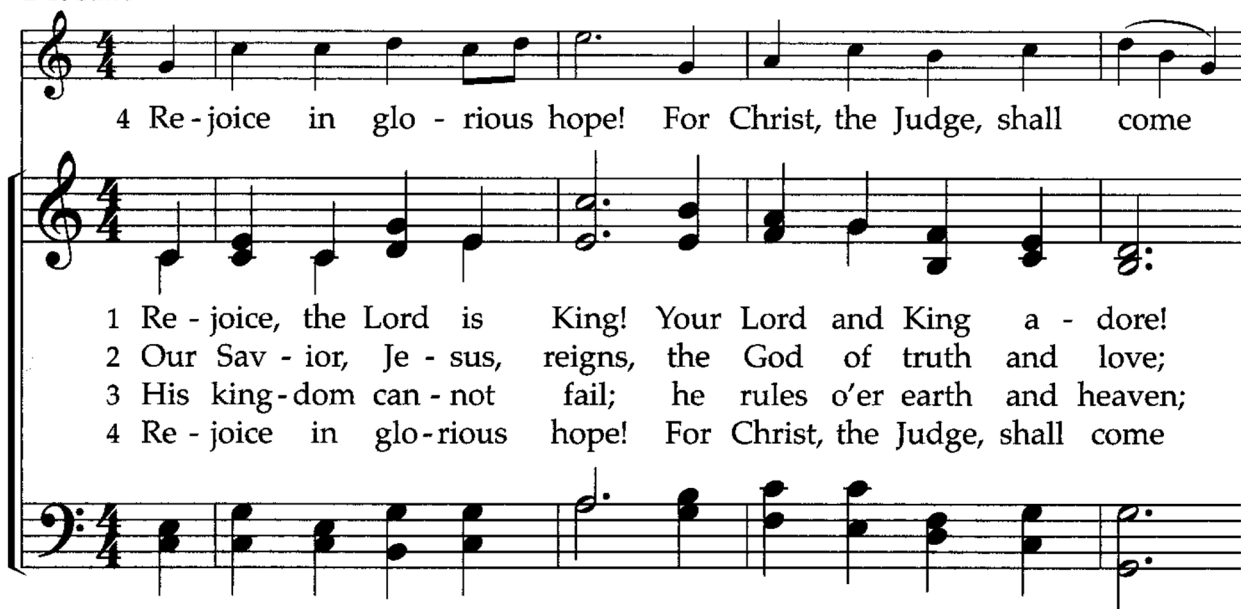
**We pray for forgiveness, for your goodness and mercy,**

**So that we might dwell in You, in your grace, forever. Amen.**

## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

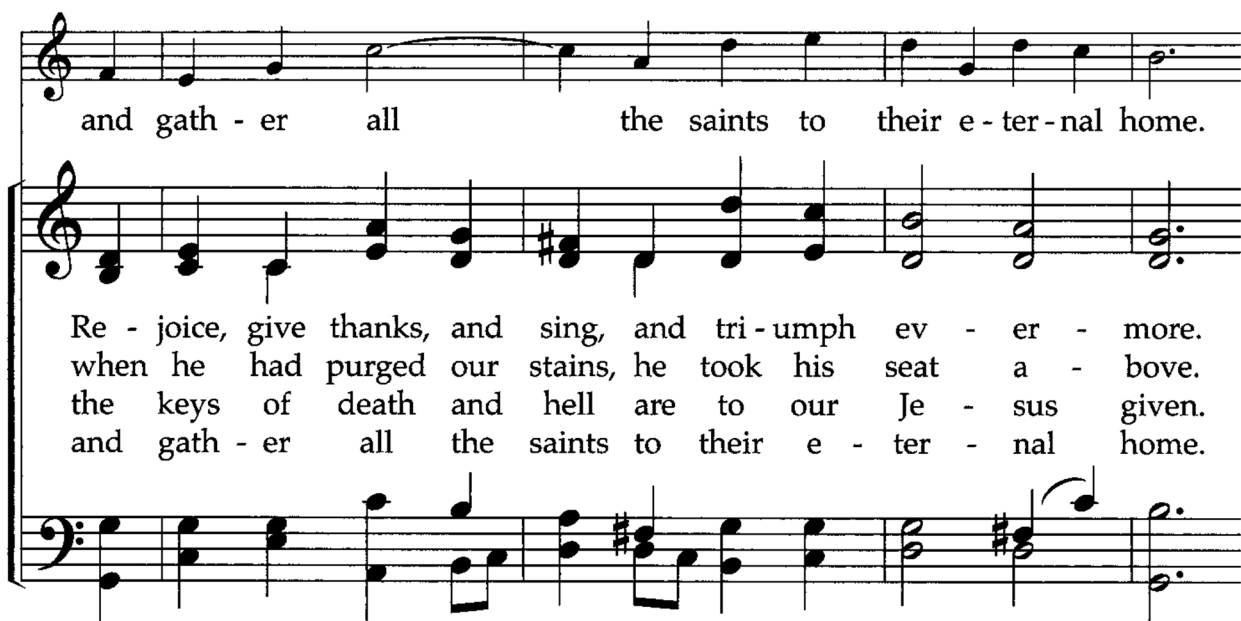
# Rejoice, the Lord Is King! 363

Descant



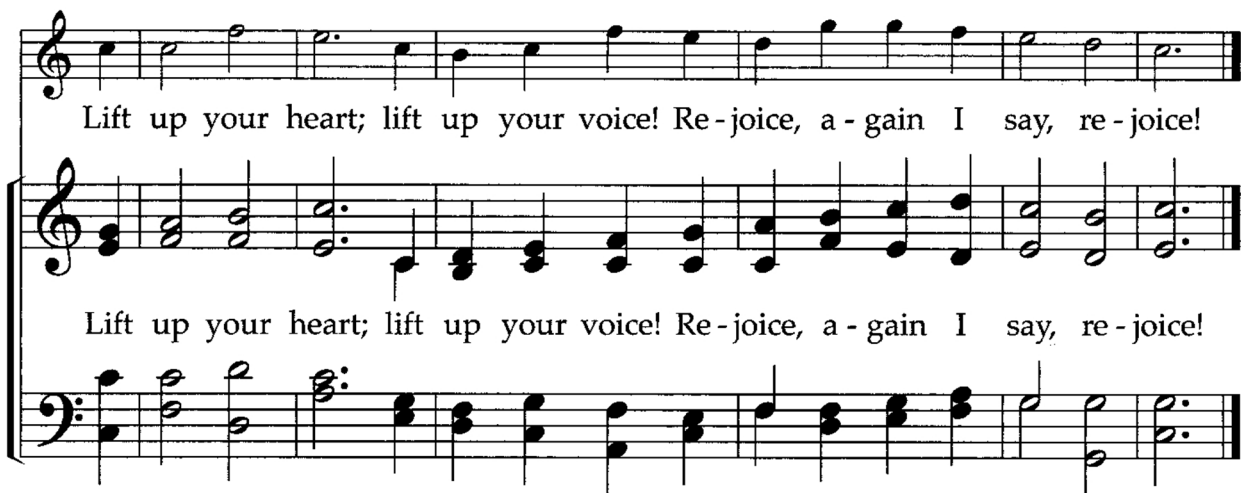
4 Re - joice in glo - rious hope! For Christ, the Judge, shall come

1 Re - joice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King a - dore!  
2 Our Sav - ior, Je - sus, reigns, the God of truth and love;  
3 His king - dom can - not fail; he rules o'er earth and heaven;  
4 Re - joice in glo - rious hope! For Christ, the Judge, shall come



and gath - er all the saints to their e - ter - nal home.

Re - joice, give thanks, and sing, and tri - umph ev - er - more.  
when he had purged our stains, he took his seat a - bove.  
the keys of death and hell are to our Je - sus given.  
and gath - er all the saints to their e - ter - nal home.



Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Re-joyce, a - gain I say, re - joice!

Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Re-joyce, a - gain I say, re - joice!

## **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**

*We Hear God's Word*

## **Prayer for Illumination**

### **Scripture Reading**

Psalm 22:1-8

*New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night but find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm and not human, scorned by others and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they sneer at me; they shake their heads;

“Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—  
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”

Holy wisdom, Holy word.

**Thanks be to God!**

## **A Time for Young People**

### **Scripture Reading**     Romans 8:24-27     *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God!**

### **Song of Preparation**

God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me     *Glory to God #543*

*[see next page]*

### **Scripture Reading**     Mark 11:12-14, 20-24     *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he [Jesus] was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it.

In the morning [of the next day] as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. Then Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received [are receiving] it, and it will be yours.

These words are trustworthy and true.

**Thanks be to God!**

# God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me

543

O Christ, Surround Me



1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to  
2 Bind to my-self the Name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -  
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light-ning,  
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to  
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that



move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:  
es en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:  
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:  
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:  
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:



O Christ, sur-round me; O Christ, sur-round me.

## Proclamation of the Word

What's the Deal With Prayer?

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

**Quarters Collection: 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.**

## 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**

Loving God, you cause rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

Hear our prayers for your church and world:

For the hungry and the overfed,

**may we have enough.**

For the mourners and the mockers,

**may we laugh together.**

For the victims and the oppressors,

**may we share power wisely.**

For the peacemakers and the warmongers,

**may clear truth and stern love lead us to harmony.**

For the silenced and the propagandists,

**may we speak our own words in truth.**

For the unemployed and the overworked,

**may our mark on this earth be kindly and creative.**

For the troubled and the secure,

**may we live together as wounded healers.**

For the homeless and the pampered,

**may our homes be simple, warm, and welcoming.**

For the vibrant and the dying,

**may we all die to sin and live to love.**

## 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

Come to the Table of Grace

Glory to God #507


# Come to the Table of Grace 507

Capo 3: (D) F (A) C (Bm) Dm (D7/A) F7/C (G) B $\flat$




1 Come to the ta - ble of grace. Come to the

(A) C (D) F (A) C (D) F (Em) Gm



ta - ble of grace. This is God's ta - ble; it's

(D/A) F/A (G) B $\flat$  (D/A) F/C (A7) C7 (D) F (G) B $\flat$  (D) F



not yours or mine. Come to the ta - ble of grace.

2 Come to the table of peace...

3 Come to the table of love...

4 Come to the table of hope...

5 Come to the table of joy...

## **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.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

for the forgiveness of sin.

## **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

**Camp Greenwood's** summer camp schedule is full of fun and adventure for kids 6-17. If you're interested in your young folks attending, please speak with Pastor Sheth. Scholarships and grants are available to cover camp costs.

|            |            |                              |
|------------|------------|------------------------------|
| June 14-19 | Ages 9-13  | <i>Imagination Unchained</i> |
|            | Ages 14-17 | <i>Art Unleashed</i>         |
| June 21-26 | Ages 9-13  | <i>Wacky Water Week</i>      |
|            |            | <i>Science Snoops</i>        |
| June 28-30 | Ages 6-8   | <i>Mini Camp</i>             |
| July 5-10  | Ages 12-17 | <i>Adventure Camp</i>        |
| July 12-17 | Ages 9-13  | <i>Wacky Water Week</i>      |
|            |            | <i>Science Snoops</i>        |

**The Session of First Presbyterian Church** of Benton Harbor will be meeting this Wednesday at 10 am. The Trustees meeting will take place at 930 am. Both meetings are held at the church and are open to all to attend.

**Book Club** will meeting this Tuesday, June 16 to discuss the second half of *The Poisonwood Bible* and the book as a whole. Plan on lunch at 1130am followed by our discussion. July's reading is *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistlestop Café* by Fannie Flagg. If you need help finding the book or acquiring it, speak with Jan or Sheth.

**An Interfaith PRIDE Service** will be held on Sunday, June 28 at 6 pm. Located at Saint Augustine's Episcopal Church in Benton Harbor (1753 Union Ave). If you want to tag along with Pastor Sheth, please reach out.

# We Are Sent by God

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

Live into Hope

Glory to God #772

[see next page]

## 772

## Live into Hope

1 Live in - to hope of cap - tives freed, of sight re -  
2 Live in - to hope! The blind shall see with in - sight  
3 Live in - to hope of lib - er - ty, the right to  
4 Live in - to hope of cap - tives freed from chains of

gained, the end of greed. The op-pressed shall be the  
and with clar - i - ty, re - mov - ing shades of  
speak, the right to be, the right to have one's  
fear or want or greed. God now pro - claims our

first to see the year of God's own ju - bi - lee!  
pride and fear, a vi - sion of our God brought near.  
dai - ly bread, to hear God's word and thus be fed.  
full re - lease to faith and hope and joy and peace.

**Charge + Benediction**      Psalm 20:1-8

The Lord answer you in the day of trouble!

The name of the God of Jacob protect you!

May he send you help from the sanctuary  
and give you support from Zion.

May he remember all your offerings  
and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices. Selah

May he grant you your heart's desire  
and fulfill all your plans.

May we shout for joy over your victory  
and in the name of our God set up our banners.

May the Lord fulfill all your petitions.

Now I know that the Lord will help his anointed;  
he will answer him from his holy heaven  
with mighty victories by his right hand.

Some take pride in chariots and some in horses,  
but our pride is in the name of the Lord our God.

They will collapse and fall,  
but we shall rise and stand upright.

**Postlude**

## **Prayer for the Week**

“a blessing for when you might not know how to pray (or want to)”

Kate Bowler

Blessed are you in this terrible, wonderful now.

Fumbling around for the right words.

You need so much and it seems impossible to say at all.

Blessed are you for whom prayer feels hopeless, disappointing, futile.

Blessed are you in your radical honesty,

in the ways you speak of your grief.

The long, sleepless nights in a still-empty bed.

Or the physical pain you feel, the joints that don't work like they used to,  
the brain fog or chronic migraines,

who speak of your loneliness, the empty home or nest or womb.

Blessed are you who have the audacity to ask for the miracles you need,  
the healing or a new friend or a redeemed family.

Blessed are you as you learn to trust,

trust a God who hears, who listens, who hasn't left your side,

who prays on your behalf,

interpreting those deep groans you can't quite put into syllables or sounds.

Blessed are you, as you settle into acceptance.

And blessed are we who live here in the someday, but not now.