

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Benton Harbor



That's Not Fair!

Psalm 112 + Matthew 20:1-16

September 20, 2026 • 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

We Are Welcomed

Welcome

Opening Prayer

“Sanctuary” by Eleanor Nash

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

Whether we embrace God’s call in our lives or try to avoid it,

**God is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

Whether we are longtimers or latecomers in the life of faith,

**God is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

Whether our lives in Christ are comfortable or bring hardship,

**God is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
We praise God’s name forever and ever!**

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

Woke Up Dis Mornin’ *Songs of Zion #146*

[see next page]

Woke Up Dis Mornin'

Traditional

Traditional

Arr. by J. Jefferson Cleveland, 1937-
and Verolga Nix, 1933-*Freely
Leader*

F



1. Oh, I woke updis morn-in' wid mah min', An' it was stayed,

Response



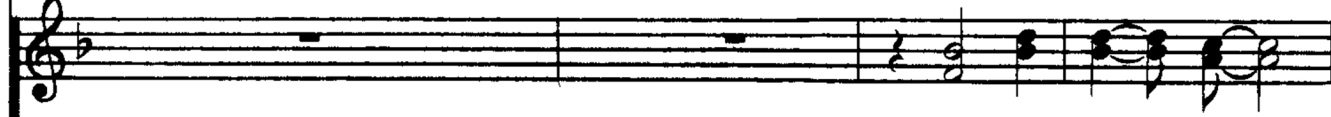
Stayed on Je - sus, -



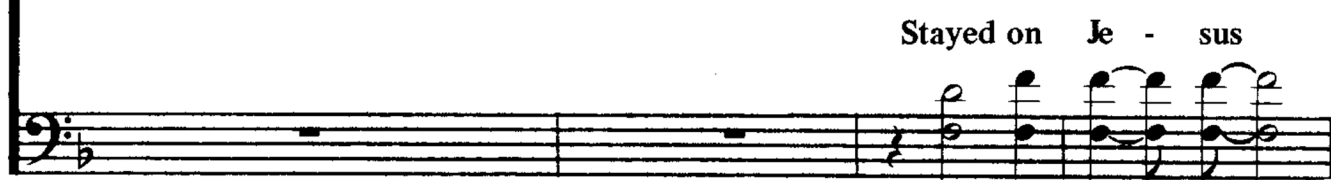
Bb



Woke up dis morn - in' wid mah min', An' it was stayed,



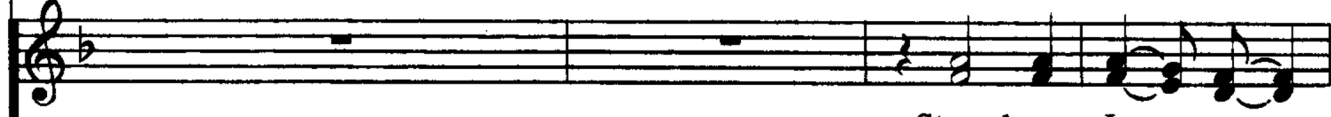
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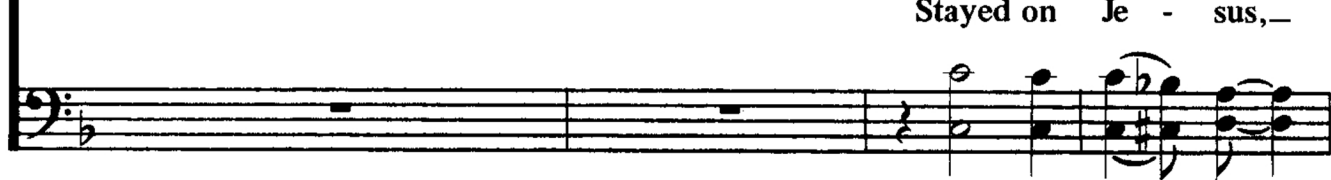
F Dm



Woke up dis morn - in' wid mah min', An' it was stayed,



Stayed on Je - sus, -





2. Can't hate your neighbor in your min', if you keep it stayed, . . .
3. Makes you love everybody with your min', when you keep it stayed, . . .
4. De devil can't catch you in your min', if you keep it stayed, . . .
5. Jesus is de captain in your min', when you keep it stayed, . . .

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

God of abundant goodness,
we confess that we want your grace for ourselves
but we often wish punishment and exclusion on others.

We judge the efforts and motives of others
while ignoring the faults of our own.

Forgive us, we pray,
when we let jealousy overtake us.

Forgive us, we pray, when we are petty
even in the presence of your generosity.

Forgive us, we pray, when we feel slighted by you.

May we ask once again for your mercy?

Will you help us to be more merciful
toward one another?

We pray in the name of Christ Jesus,
by whose grace we are saved.

Assurance of Forgiveness

God extends to us: love beyond our conditions, mercy beyond our deserving, grace beyond our ability to earn it, peace beyond our understanding, living beyond our dying.

**God has granted us the privilege of believing in Christ;
therefore we will live as grateful and forgiven people!
Thanks be to God!**

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.

We Hear God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading Psalm 112 *Contemporary English Version*

Shout praises to the Lord!

The Lord blesses everyone who worships him and gladly obeys his teachings. Their descendants will have great power in the land, because the Lord blesses all who do right. They will get rich and prosper and will always be remembered for their fairness. They will be so kind and merciful and good, that they will be a light in the dark for others who do the right thing.

Life will go well for those who freely lend and are honest in business. They won't ever be troubled, and the kind things they do will never be forgotten. Bad news won't bother them; they have decided to trust the Lord. They are dependable and not afraid, and they will live to see their enemies defeated. They will always be remembered and greatly praised, because they were kind and freely gave to the poor. When evil people see this, they angrily bite their tongues and disappear. They will never get what they really want.

Holy wisdom, Holy word.
Thanks be to God!

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

Spirit, Open My Heart

Glory to God #692

[see next page]

Scripture Reading Matthew 20:1-16 *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’

But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

For the holy word read, holy word proclaimed, holy word lived.

Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

Proclamation of the Word

Here On Time

Rev. Sheth LaRue

Moment of Meditation

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

692 Spirit, Open My Heart

Refrain Capo 3: (D) (G) (D) (G) (A7)
F B $\flat$ F B $\flat$ C7

Spir - it, o - pen my heart to the joy and pain of

(Bm) (D/A) (G) (A7) (Bm) (D/A) (Em)
Dm F/C B $\flat$ C7 Dm F/C Gm

liv - ing. As you love may I love, in re - ceiv - ing

(D) (G) (Em7) (D) (G) (D)
F B $\flat$ Gm7 F B $\flat$ F *Fine*

and in giv - ing. Spir - it, o - pen my heart.

(D) (G) (D) (G)
F B $\flat$ F B $\flat$

1 God, re - place my ston - y heart with a heart that's
2 Write your love up - on my heart as my law, my
3 May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of

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

kind and ten - der. All my cold - ness and
goal, my sto - ry. In each thought, word, and
sis - ter, broth - er. In the wel - come of

(Bm) (Em7) (D) (G2) (G)
Dm Gm7 F B $\flat$ 2 B $\flat$ *to Refrain*

fear to your grace I now sur - ren - der.
deed, may my liv - ing bring you glo - ry.
Christ, may we wel - come one an - oth - er.

The pace and diversity of modern life often hinder us from remaining vulnerable to our emotions and to the humanness of other people. This prayerful text to be open to such joys and pains draws on Ezekiel 11:19 and 36:26 in stanza one and echoes Jeremiah 31:33 in stanza two.

TEXT: Ruth Duck, 1994

MUSIC: Irish melody; arr. Alfred V. Fedak, 2011

Text © 1996 The Pilgrim Press

Music Harm. © 2011 Alfred V. Fedak

WILD MOUNTAIN THYME
Irregular

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

Quarters Ministry Recipient: Interfaith Action 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

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

Come to the Table of Grace

Glory to God #507

[see next page]

The Sacrament of Communion

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.

Come to the Table of Grace 507

Capo 3: (D) (A) (Bm) (D7/A) (G)

F C Dm F7/C B $\flat$

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

(A) (D) (A) (D) (Em)

C F C F Gm

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

(D/A) (G) (D/A) (A7) (D) (G) (D)

F/A B $\flat$ F/C C7 F B $\flat$ 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 simple, formulaic nature of this song makes it especially suitable for use during the communion portion of the Lord's Supper. Because it can be learned readily and does not require reference to a printed source, it frees people to sing before and after receiving the elements.

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*

Let Us Build a House Glory to God #301

[see next page]

Charge + Benediction

Postlude

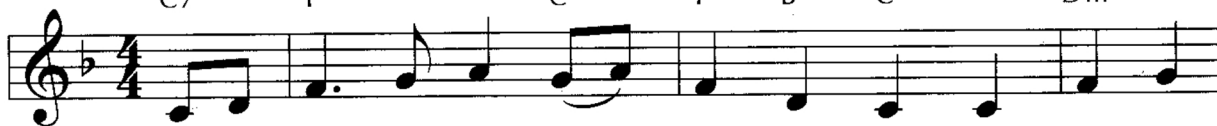
Questions for Reflection

In Matthew 20:1–16, what is the landowner's motivation for paying the workers the same wages? When has God provided for you? How does God's generosity invite us to think about our own lives?

Let Us Build a House

All Are Welcome

Capo 3: (A7) (D) (A) (D) (G) (A) (Bm)
C7 F C F B $\flat$ C Dm



1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can
2 Let us build a house where proph - ets speak, and words are
3 Let us build a house where love is found in wa - ter,
4 Let us build a house where hands will reach be - yond the
5 Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and



safe - ly live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell
strong and true, where all God's chil - dren dare to seek
wine, and wheat; a ban - quet hall on ho - ly ground
wood and stone to heal and strength-en, serve and teach,
vi - sions heard and loved and trea - sured, taught and claimed



how hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and
to dream God's reign a - new. Here the cross shall stand as
where peace and jus - tice meet. Here the love of God, through
and live the Word they've known. Here the out - cast and the
as words with - in the Word. Built of tears and cries and



vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the
wit - ness and as sym - bol of God's grace; here as
Je - sus, is re - vealed in time and space; as we
strang - er bear the im - age of God's face; let us
laugh - ter, prayers of faith and songs of grace; let this

Refrain

(D) (G) (F#7) (Bm) (Em) (Bm)
 F B $\flat$ A7 Dm Gm Dm

love of Christ shall end di - vi - sions:
 one we claim the faith of Je - sus:
 share in Christ the feast that frees us: all are wel - come;
 bring an end to fear and dan - ger:
 house pro-claim from floor to raf - ter:

(F#m) (Em) (D) (Em) (A7) (D) (G) (D) (A7)
 Am Gm F Gm C7 F B $\flat$ F (C7)

all are wel - come; all are wel - come in this place.