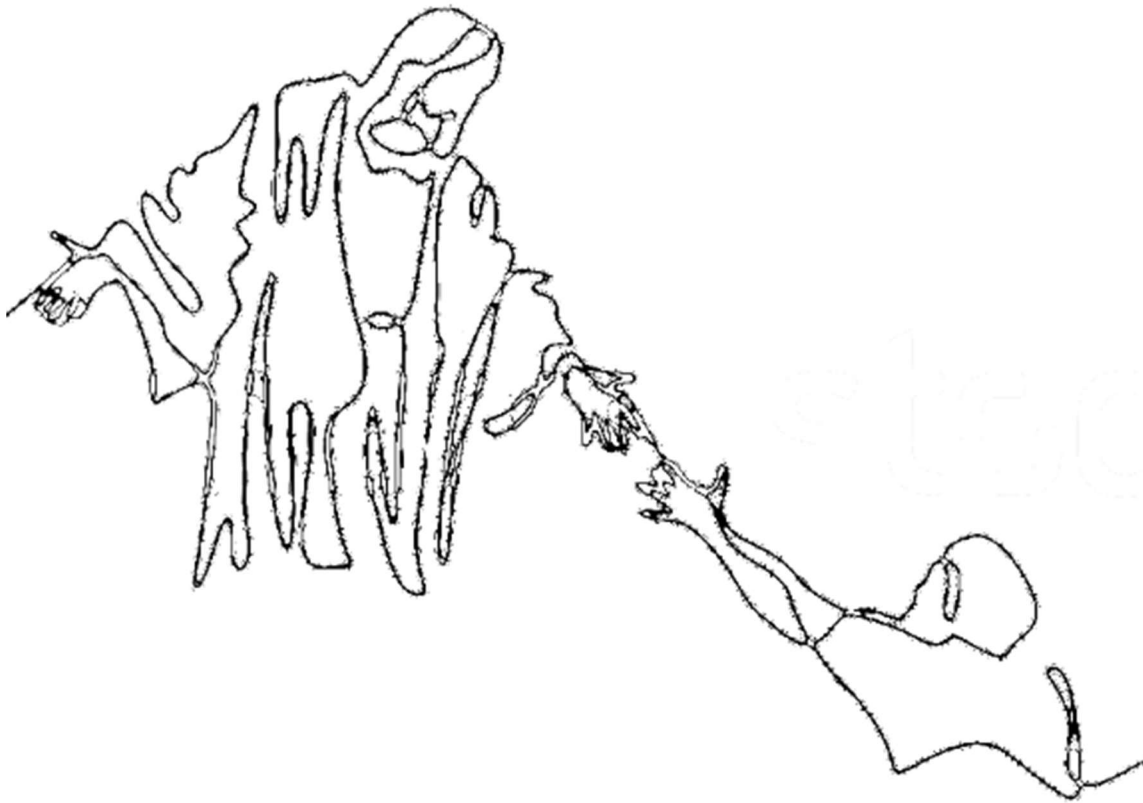


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Benton Harbor



Help!

Exodus 25:8 + John 14:16-18 + Psalm 18:1-19 + Psalm 121

We Are Welcomed

Welcome

Opening Prayer “Helping” by Shel Silverstein

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

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

I will sing praises to God all my life long.

Happy are those whose help is in God:

**Creator of heaven and earth,
who is forever faithful.**

God brings justice for the oppressed and feeds the hungry;
God sets prisoners free and opens the eyes of the blind;
God lifts up those who are bowed down and loves the righteous.
The Lord protects immigrants and migrants and asylum seekers.
God upholds the orphan and widow;
but the way of the wicked is brought to ruin.

**The Lord our God will reign forever,
for all generations. Praise the Lord!**

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

Brethren, We Have Met to Worship *Glory to God #396*

[see next page]

Brethren, We Have Met to Worship 396



1 Breth-ren, we have met to wor-ship and a - dore the Lord our God.
2 Sis - ters, will you come and help us? Mo-ses' sis - ter aid - ed him.
3 Is there here a trem-bling jail-er, seek-ing grace and filled with fears?
4 Let us love our God su - preme-ly; let us love each oth - er, too.



Will you pray with all your pow - er while we try to preach the word?
Will you help the trem-bling mourn-ers who are strug-gling hard with sin?
Is there here a weep-ing Mar - y pour-ing forth a flood of tears?
Let us love and pray for sin - ners till our God makes all things new.



All is vain un - less the Spir - it of the ho - ly One comes down.
Tell them all a - bout the Sav - ior. Tell them that he will be found.
Breth-ren, join your cries to help them; sis - ters, let your prayers a - bound!
Christ will call us home to heav - en; at his ta - ble we'll sit down.



Breth - ren, pray, and ho - ly man - na will be show-ered all a-round.
Sis - ters, pray, and ho - ly man - na will be show-ered all a-round.
Pray, O pray, that ho - ly man - na will be scat-tered all a-round.
Christ will gird him-self and serve us with sweet man-na all a-round.



Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

**When we have wandered and found ourselves lost,
we pray that you would find us
and help us find our way home.**

**When we cannot quench our thirst,
when we want that which is harmful to ourselves or others,
satisfy us with your love and grace.**

**When we need forgiveness,
shower us with your unending mercy.
Receive this prayer,
and the silent prayers of our hearts.**

Silent prayer

Assurance of Forgiveness

It has been said that sin is to God's mercy
like a hot coal is to the sea.
Know that God loves you beyond all measure,
that in Christ, God forgives,
and that the Holy One extends hope to all.
Hallelujah! 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

We Hear God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

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.

“I also want them to build a special place
where I can live among my people.”

Exodus 25:8, *Contemporary English Version*

Scripture Reading John 14:16-18 *Amplified Bible*

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby), to be with you forever—the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive [and take to its heart] because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He (the Holy Spirit) remains with you *continually* and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans [comfortless, bereaved, and helpless]; I will come [back] to you.

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading Psalm 18:1-19 *The Message Translation*

I love you, God—you make me strong.

God is bedrock under my feet, the castle in which I live, my rescuing knight. My God—the high crag where I run for dear life, hiding behind the boulders, safe in the granite hideout. I sing to God, the Praise-Lofty, and find myself safe and saved.

The hangman's noose was tight at my throat; devil waters rushed over me. Hell's ropes cinched me tight; death traps barred every exit. A hostile world! I call to God, I cry to God to help me. From his palace he hears my call; my cry brings me right into his presence—a private audience!

Earth wobbles and lurches; huge mountains shake like leaves, quake like aspen leaves because of his rage. His nostrils flare, bellowing smoke; his mouth spits fire. Tongues of fire dart in and out; he lowers the sky. He steps down; under his feet an abyss opens up. He's riding a winged creature, swift on wind-wings. Now he's wrapped himself in a trenchcoat of black-cloud darkness. But his cloud-brightness bursts through, spraying hailstones and fireballs.

Then God thundered out of heaven; the High God gave a great shout, spraying hailstones and fireballs. God shoots his arrows—pandemonium! He hurls his lightnings—a rout! The secret sources of ocean are exposed, the hidden depths of earth lie uncovered the moment you roar in protest, let loose your hurricane anger.

But me he caught—reached all the way from sky to sea; he pulled me out of that ocean of hate, that enemy chaos, the void in which I was drowning. They hit me when I was down, but God stuck by me. He stood me up on a wide-open field; I stood there saved—surprised to be loved!

For the Holy Word written and read, proclaimed and lived:
Thanks be to God!

Song of Preparation

Precious Lord, Take My Hand *Glory to God #834*
[see next page]

Proclamation of the Word

Help! Rev. Sheth LaRue

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: Interfaith Action of Southwest Michigan

Why Does FPC Benton Harbor Matter to Me? Andrea (AJ) Paul-Bonham

Doxology *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

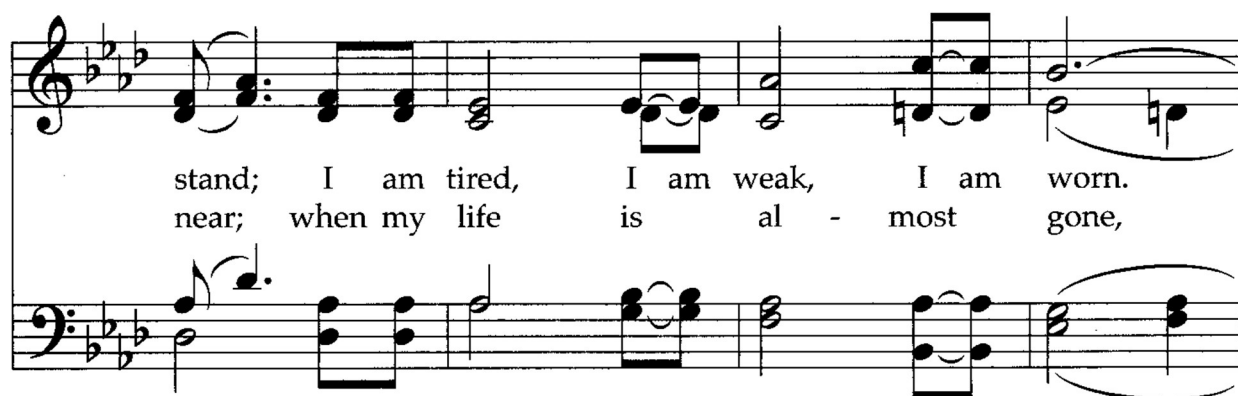
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

The Prayer of Dedication

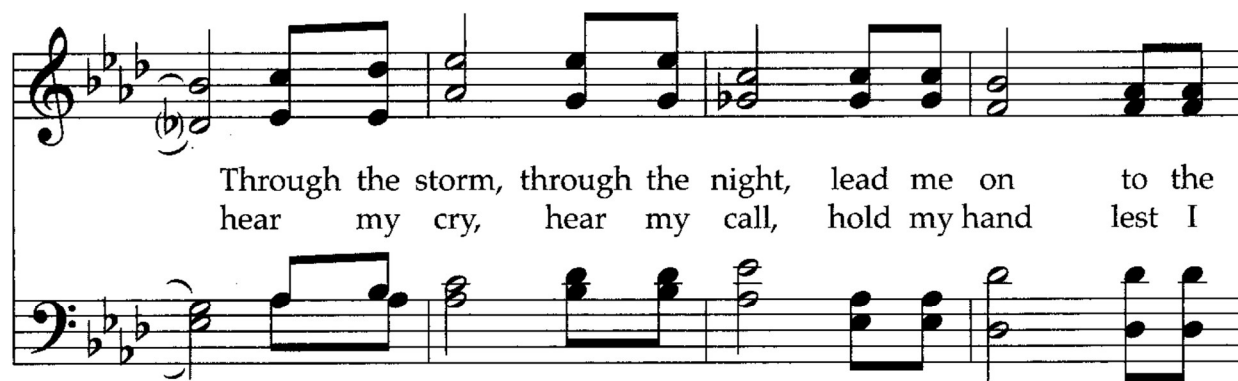
834 Precious Lord, Take My Hand



1 Pre - cious Lord, take my hand; lead me on, help me
2 When my way grows drear, pre - cious Lord, lin - ger



stand; I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
near; when my life is al - most gone,



Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the
hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I



light; take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.
fall; take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

Joys + Concerns

Prayers of the People from Kate Bowler, “a blessing when it is all just too much”

God, I don't know how to say this any other way: this is just too much.
I am in a body that needs healing, in a world that needs healing, and I am overwhelmed.

O God, please start it now, the promised beautiful healing of the nations, with me in it. I can't wait any longer.

**God have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Spirit have mercy.**

Blessed are we who pray like a child: O God, please help me feel better soon. Take away the pain I suffer, and let me see good days again. Send relief through the competent hands of medical people whose training has prepared them, and whose disposition propels them to seek out the answers that can make a difference for me and for others.

Blessed are we who pray, O God heal us all, each one: the old and the young, the sorry and sad, the angry, the vengeful, the mindless, the innocent, the misguided, the snide, the cruel and powerful, the weak and the frail, the prisoners and protesters, the politicians and police, scientists and engineers, the nurses and doctors, the workers and unemployed, all the sick, the hungry, poor and homeless, the lonely and the dying, every soul in all your creation. O God establish Your reign! let goodness prevail.

Blessed are we, in the midst of it all, who say to You O God: *What can we do in face of such sorrow?*

**We can lament honestly,
and pray continually,
and be truly glad for others when relief comes,
for we are not diminished by it,
but rather, emboldened to pray: me too, Lord!
for my hope is in You.**

God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

God have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Spirit have mercy.

We pray for your help, O God:

These are our prayers to you:

God have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Spirit have mercy.

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

Next week in worship we're continuing with Anne Lamott's book and we'll be meditating on the prayer of 'Thanks'. If you need a copy of the book, there are a few remaining copies in the narthex if you'd like to join with us. Reading the book is not necessary and no tests will be given!

Book Club! Your reading selection this month is *Mercy Creek* by Matt Matthews. In this quietly suspenseful story with splashes of manic humor, the eccentrics, the outcasts, the bigots, and the bores join the small-town human parade. *Mercy Creek*, winner of the 2011 South Carolina First Novel Prize, is a memorable work by a new voice in fiction. This author is a friend of the Paul-Bonhams, and will join us in person for our discussion. Please join us on October 20 after a light lunch at 1130 am. If you need a copy of this book, see Scott or Donna.

We Are Sent by God

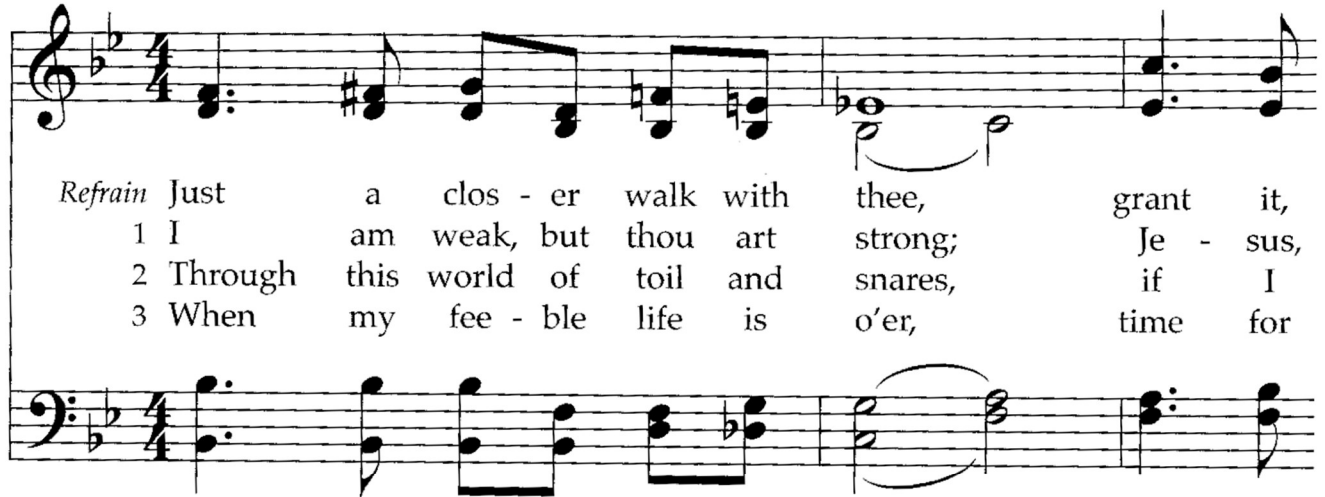
Song of Sending

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

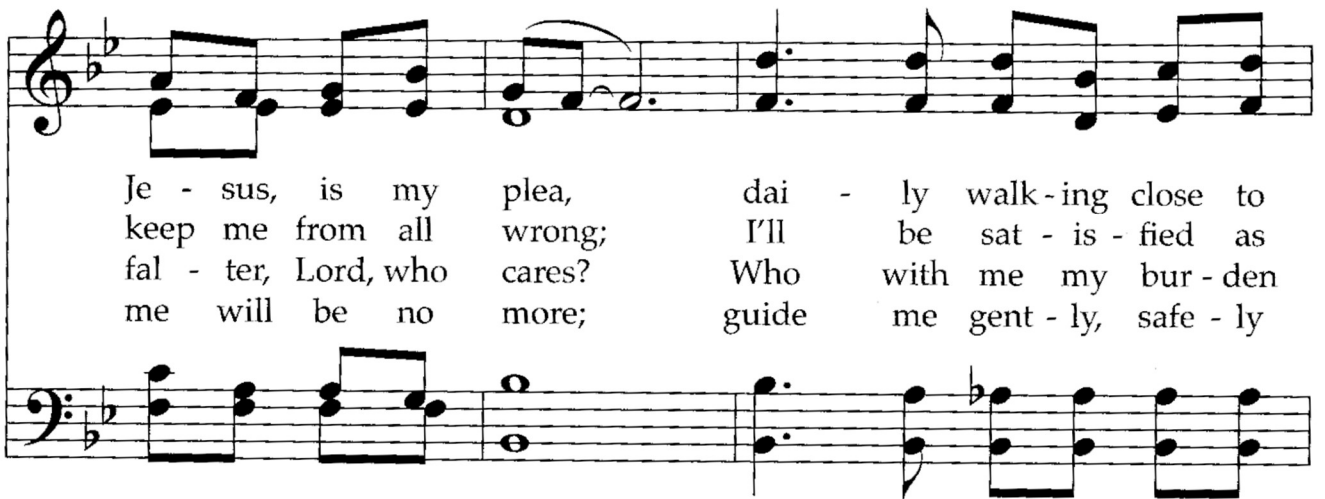
Just a Closer Walk with Thee

Glory to God #835

Just a Closer Walk with Thee 835



Refrain Just a clos - er walk with thee, grant it,
 1 I am weak, but thou art strong; Je - sus,
 2 Through this world of toil and snares, if I
 3 When my fee - ble life is o'er, time for



Je - sus, is my plea, dai - ly walk - ing close to
 keep me from all wrong; I'll be sat - is - fied as
 fal - ter, Lord, who cares? Who with me my bur - den
 me will be no more; guide me gent - ly, safe - ly



thee: let it be, dear Lord, let it be.
 long as I walk, let me walk close to thee. *Ref.*
 shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee. *Ref.*
 o'er to thy shore, dear Lord, to thy shore. *Ref.*

Charge + Benediction from Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?

**My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.**

Turn to your neighbor and testify some more:

**God will not let your foot be moved;
God who keeps you will not slumber.
The Keeper of God's people
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

Tell us some good news, friends:

**The Lord is your Keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day
nor the moon by night.**

The Lord will keep you from all evil;

God will keep your life.

The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.

Postlude

Questions for Reflection

Anne Lamott writes that “imagination is from God” and helps us to understand our world. What role does imagination play in your personal prayer life or faith journey?

Is there a specific “Help!” prayer or memory that has sustained you during your weakest or most frightening moments?

How can we make a prayer for help as our first step in all that we do?