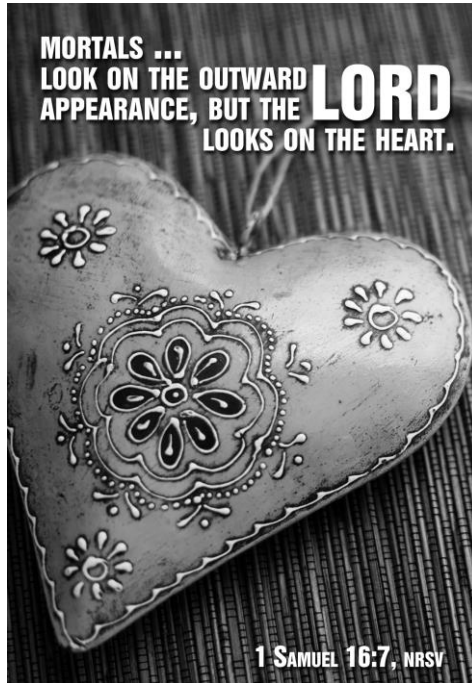


# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

March 19, 2023



## *Welcome to First Presbyterian Church of Plainwell!*

We are a diverse faith family who value traditional worship, including Biblical teaching, prayer, confession, music, and a fellowship of caring and sharing.

We believe in the Trinity: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We practice the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion which define who we are and encourage and sustain us in our daily life.

By the Grace of God and to the Glory of God, as servants of God, we strive to demonstrate the Love of God through Jesus Christ and in the Peace of the Holy Spirit by offering a welcoming and nurturing community and by reaching out in compassion beyond our fellowship to people in need.

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

March 19, 2023

10:30 a.m. Worship

## Fourth Sunday in Lent

(\* *Stand as you are able*)

Please phone 269-215-0384 to join together!

<https://meetings.dialpad.com/room/plainwellpcusa>

## WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

### WELCOME AND CONNECTING CHURCH & HOME

\*OPENING HYMN #172      *"My Shepherd Will Supply My Need"*

### LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

*We invite you to light a candle in your home and remember  
that Jesus Christ IS the Light of the World!*

### CALL TO WORSHIP AND SALUTATION

*Pastor Ruth Lowry*

God does not see as mortals see.

*1 Sam. 16:7*

We look on the outward appearance; God looks on the heart.

**Jesus, Light of the World,**

*John 9:5*

**give us eyes to see as You see!**

Once we lived in darkness, but now—

*Eph. 5:8–9*

as children of light, we are called

to what is good and right and true.

**Jesus, Light of the World,**

**give us eyes to see as You see!**

### WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Michelle Boer, Liturgist*

### SONG OF PRAISE (*Psalm 23*)

*(Responsive)*

L: The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

**P: He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;**

L: He restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for His name's sake.

**P: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff-- they comfort me.**

L: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

**ALL: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days  
of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my  
whole life long.**

**WE CENTER OURSELVES AS WE WORSHIP** *Christy Connell*  
*“Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us”*

**CALL TO CONFESSION** *Pastor Ruth Lowry*  
As children of God’s light, *Eph. 5:8–10*

we are called to do what is pleasing to the Lord:  
to participate in what is good and right and true, and expose what  
is unfruitful and evil. Knowing that we turn from the light, we  
bring our confession to God, so that what is hidden in us becomes  
visible, and the shadows of our hearts may be illumined by grace.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)**

**Gracious God,  
we are people who still love darkness rather than light.**

*John 3:19*  
*Eph. 5:12*

**We keep shameful deeds secret,  
but flaunt our occasional acts of virtue.  
We see ourselves as blameless, but pass judgment on others.  
We do not stand firmly enough with those who  
are vulnerable,  
but step back, protecting ourselves.**

*John 9:21–22*

**Forgive us, we pray.  
Bring us into Your light that we may see ourselves rightly.  
Bring us into Your light that we may know ourselves loved.  
Bring us into Your light that we may live more fruitful lives.  
Keep raising us, we pray, from the deadness of sin,  
and shine upon us with Your grace.  
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, light of the world. Amen.**

**DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

The psalmist assures us that God’s goodness and mercy will follow  
us, even pursue us, all the days of our life. *Ps. 23:6*  
As God’s forgiven people, receive this goodness and mercy,  
and live a new life in the grace of Jesus Christ.

**We will live as children of the light  
for Christ shines on us.**

*Eph. 5:8b, 14b*

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God.**

**\*GLORIA PATRI # 579**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.**

### **WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

*Michelle Boer, Liturgist*

Gracious God, illumine our hearts and minds

as the Scriptures are read and proclaimed, so that by the power of  
Your Holy Spirit we may see what is good and right *Eph. 5:9–10*  
and true. And seeing, help us to do what is pleasing to You, so that  
Your glory becomes visible in our words and deeds.

In Christ’s name, we pray. **Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE** 1 Samuel 16:1–13, Ephesians 5:8–14, John 9:1–41

**SERMON**

*“What Do You See?”*

### **WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

**\*HYMN (INSERT)**

*“Healer of Our Every Ill”*

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

*(Apostles’ Creed)*

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven  
and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who  
was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and  
buried; He descended into hell. The third day He arose again  
from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the  
right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall  
come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy  
Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the  
forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life  
everlasting. Amen.**

## INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

*Our lives overflow with the goodness of God. Ps. 23:5  
Sharing what we have so abundantly received, we bring now our  
tithes and offerings to God, with gladness and gratitude.  
(We invite you, at this time, to write a check and mail it to the  
church, if you are able.)*

Offertory "The Old Rugged Cross" Christy Connell

\*The Doxology #592

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow!  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!***

**\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING/DEDICATION** Liturgist

In gratitude, O God, we come to Your table,  
into Your presence, into Your house.

For all that You have done for us, most especially, for bringing us  
into the light of Jesus Christ, Eph. 5:8–10

We offer our thanks and praise. We long to live as children of  
light, doing what is pleasing to You and bearing the fruit of the  
light through Jesus Christ, who awakens those who sleep, Eph. 5:14b  
and raises those who are dead to new life.

In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

**PRAYER OF INTERCESSION** Michelle Boer, Liturgist

*[A brief silence may be kept after each intercession.]*

God our faithful Shepherd, we depend on You Ps. 23  
for everything we need: for daily food, for guidance and  
protection, for healing in injury and comfort in sorrow.

You respond in abundant provision.

Thank You for Your tender care of us.

Thank You for soothing the wounds of this life.

Thank You that in the presence of enemies, especially the last  
enemy of death, You are with us, as Shepherd, Host, Home.

Knowing Your faithfulness in our lives,  
we bring before You the lives of others, the cares of this world,

entrusting all things to Your goodness and mercy.  
Bring healing to those who are ill in mind, body, or spirit.  
Bring release to those who are held captive by old hurts  
or new bonds that oppress and entangle.  
Bring freedom to those unjustly accused, relief to those burdened  
with debt, comfort to all who suffer from abuse of any kind.

We pray for people living precariously in the midst of war.  
Protect, we pray, citizens and soldiers alike, and teach us to put  
away our weapons, taking up instead words of peace and  
reconciliation. By the power at work in Christ, break down the  
walls of hostility we build so that we may learn to live together  
graciously.

We remember those living in the midst of drought and famine.  
We pray for rain to fall and crops to grow,  
and for generosity to overflow from our own hands and resources,  
until all Your children receive their daily bread;  
until all Your children have clean water to drink;  
until all Your children have adequate shelter and medical care.  
Compel us to be better stewards of creation  
so that our habitation is sustainable and responsible.

Loving God, help us to see the world as You see it; to see others as  
You see them; and to see ourselves rightly, too.

Because You have come into this world for judgment, *John 9:39*  
we can leave our judgments behind.

Pursue us all with Your goodness and faithful love *Ps. 23:6*  
until goodness and faithful love fills every heart and informs every  
action. We pray these things in the name of the one who came that  
we might see, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who taught us to  
pray:

**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 debts, as  
we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but  
deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**CHARGE***Pastor Ruth Lowry*

Arise! Shine!

for the light of Christ is upon you.

*Eph. 5:14*

Go into the world bearing the fruit of Christ's light

*Eph. 5:9*

so that all might see what is good and right and true;

and live as children of the light to the glory of God.

*Eph. 5:8b***\*CLOSING HYMN #170 "The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want"****BENEDICTION***Pastor Ruth Lowry*

May the love of God pursue you,

the light of Christ enfold you,

and the Holy Spirit keep you;

as you dwell in the house of the Lord your whole life long.

**POSTLUDE***"All Glory, Laud and Honor"**Christy Connell***GREETINGS TO EACH OTHER***Enjoy a time of greeting each other before ending the phone call.**(Portions of Liturgy are from "Feasting on the Word")*

*Any hymns reprinted are used with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-700000. All rights reserved.*

***Questions for Reflection***

Samuel is told that God does not look upon outward appearances, but looks upon the heart. Then God chooses David, the youngest son of Jesse, to be Israel's next king. We know that as he grew and as life became very challenging, King David's heart was not pure. He was a mixture of great courage and faithfulness—and great sin and failure. What do you suppose God saw and loved in David's heart? What do you think God loves when God looks upon your own heart?

***Household Prayer: Morning***

Good morning, Lord. The day has dawned with the gift of sunlight, and I awaken from sleep into the light and grace of Christ. Thank You for this new day. Stay with me, I pray, shepherding me through all that the day will hold. Lead me into pleasant places, and give me the provisions I will need if I find myself in difficulty or danger. Whenever the cup of gladness overflows, help me to recognize that it is filled with Your goodness and mercy. In praise and anticipation I begin this day; in Jesus' name. Amen.

***Household Prayer: Evening***

With the night, Good Lord, comes rest, and a chance for my soul to be restored. You are with me in this and every darkness, so I will not be afraid. For all I have seen with my own eyes today, for all others have helped me to see, I give You thanks. For those things that I did not notice: signs of beauty and kindness, evidences of Your grace, I pray that You will improve the eyes of my faith so that I can see You more clearly, love You more dearly, and follow You more nearly tomorrow, and all my tomorrows. In the name of Your Son, my Savior, I pray. Amen.