© Isa Cummings, 12th grader

First Presbyterian Church
Durham, North Carolina

March 15, 2026

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Fourth Sunday in Lent — March 15, 2026

A SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

(As we prepare to worship, please silence all mobile devices.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS — Esther Hethcox

PRELUDE — Chorale Prelude on *Houston* (*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*) — Rebecca Groom te Velde

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (from Psalm 23) — Noah Dillon, Izzy Allison-Pleasants

Reader: The Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want.
People: God makes us lie down in green pastures, and leads us beside still waters.
Reader: Even when we walk through the darkest valley, we will fear no evil.
People: For our God is behind us, before us, with us.
Reader: As we extinguish the fourth Lenten candle, we are reminded of how we are called to be people of light–to share with the world the light we have experienced, which illuminates the belovedness of our beings. Let us be shining lights to this world.

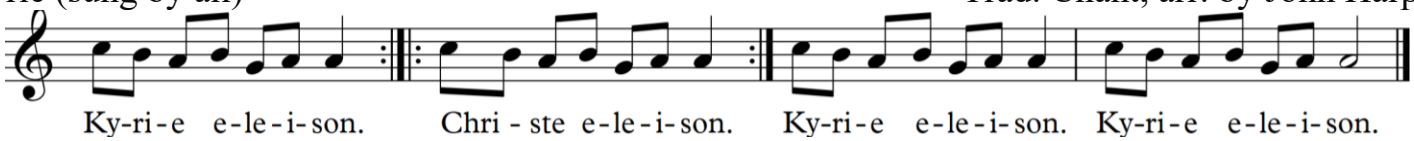
***HYMN NO. 32** — *I Sing the Mighty Power of God* — *Ellacombe*

***CONFESSION OF SIN** — Esther Hethcox

Call to Prayer
Prayer of Confession

God of compassion and mercy,
we sometimes fail to see what you are doing in the world.
We want you to act in ways we predict, but we forget:
You do what is good, not what is expected.
Forgive us when we do not recognize your miracles.
Forgive us when we doubt the wisdom of your actions.
Most of all, forgive us when we do not respond to your call,
ignoring what we need to do to show the world your love and grace.

Silent Confession
Kyrie (sung by all) — Trad. Chant, arr. by John Harper

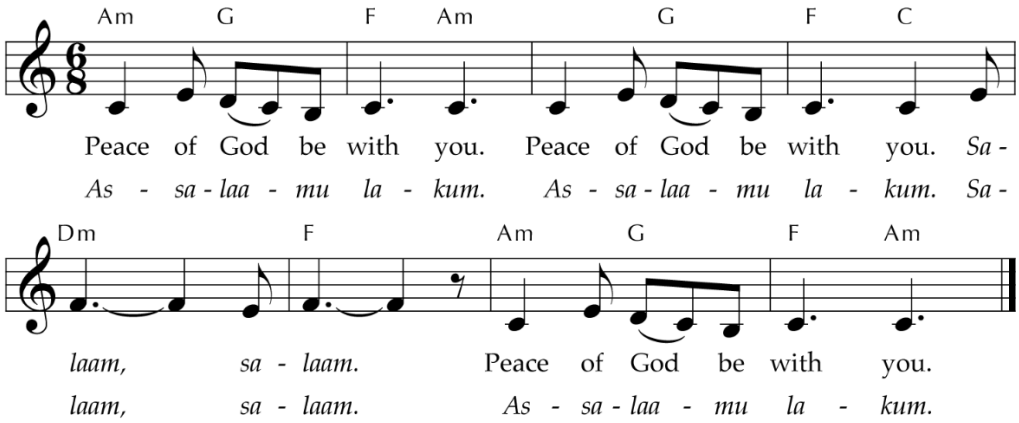


Assurance of Pardon

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**Those who are able, please stand.*

***REGATHERING HYMN NO. 448** *Peace of God Be with You* *As-Salaamu Lakum*



PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION Logan Brown

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Let us pray.
All: 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 and true.
And seeing, help us to do what is pleasing to you,
so that glory becomes visible
in our words and deeds.
In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

EPISTLE READING Ephesians 5:8-14 (Pew Bible, NT Page 194)
Logan Brown

Leader: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God!

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING 1 Samuel 16:1-13 (Pew Bible, OT Page 259)
Mindy Douglas

Leader: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON *"Our Unpredictable God"* Mindy Douglas
(silent reflection)

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** From *A Declaration of Faith* Esther Hethcox

We serve humankind
by discerning what God is doing in the world
and joining God in this work.
We risk disagreement and error
when we try to say what God is doing here and now.
But we find guidance in God's deeds in the past
and divine promises for the future,
as they are witnessed to in Scripture.

We affirm that the Lord is at work,
especially in events and movements
that free people by the gospel
and advance justice, compassion and peace.

***HYMN NO. 182** *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say* *Kingsfold*

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN Lenore Champion

DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

Invitation to Give John Weicher

Offertory Anthem *God So Loved the World* Bob Chilcott

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son
that whoso believeth in him should not perish
but have everlasting life.

*Doxology *Old Hundredth*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above ye heavenly host,
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER *(in unison)* John Weicher

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Let us pray.

(Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession)

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.

***HYMN NO. 377** *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* *Houston*

(Following the hymn, the children going to choir are invited to follow Kathy up to the choir room.)

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING Mindy Douglas

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION** Mindy Douglas

Happening Today

The **Annual Meeting of the Congregation** will take place at the end of worship today. The business of this meeting includes a congregational vote on changes to the pastors' terms of call, a state of the church report from Mindy Douglas, and an update from our Finance and Stewardship Committee Chairs. All are welcome to attend. If you are unable to stay, you may depart at the end of the final hymn.

Easter lilies will grace our sanctuary again this year on Easter Sunday. Members are invited to donate toward the lilies in honor or memory of a friend or family member by completing a lily card and returning it along with cash or a check made payable to First Presbyterian Church, memo: Lilies. Contributions in excess of the money needed to purchase lilies for the sanctuary will be contributed to the One Great Hour Of Sharing offering. Unless otherwise specified by the donor, lilies will be taken to homebound members and friends. **Cards with envelopes are available in the foyer through the deadline of Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026.**

Children's Choir will meet following worship in the Christian Education building.

Youth Group will meet at 5:00pm for Trivia Night with their adults.

First Presbyterian Church welcomes all who worship with us.
Let us know you have joined us for worship by scanning the QR code to the left. For online giving, scan the QR code to the right.

Sign In

Donate Online

We honor and celebrate the human diversity and unity that God gives us in Jesus Christ. First Presbyterian welcomes individuals of every age, race, nationality, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, and economic circumstance to participate fully in the life of the church. So that you may know who is sitting nearby, please sign the ***Friendship Pad***, pass it along the pew, and **then return it to the starting point**, noting the names of those sitting near you.

The ***flowers*** in the sanctuary are given to the glory of God and in memory of Crafton by Margaret, Tom, Neel and John Keller**.**

Today's bulletin cover was created by 12th grader ***Isa Cummings***. Her art is inspired by I Samuel 16:7b, in reference to the shepherd David being anointed as king, "...for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

Today's lay liturgist is ***Logan Brown***, a confirmand. Members of the current confirmation cohort have been leading worship in this way throughout Lent.

The ***Lenten Banner*** was completed in 1990 and dedicated in 1991. It depicts traditional Lenten symbols. The banner was made possible by funds donated in memory of ***Bess Bryant*** and by the stitching of many devoted members of this congregation.

Childcare: A staffed nursery and children's playroom are available on the second floor of the education building during worship. ***Activity bags and baskets*** are available in the foyer for children. Please return them to the foyer at the end of worship.

Restroom locations: To the left and right as you exit the rear of the sanctuary; on the first and second floors of the education building; and on the first and second floors of the church house. There is an infant changing table in the restroom area located to the left as you exit the rear of the sanctuary.

Portions of today's worship resources were reprinted from *Call to Worship* and *Feasting on the Word.* The Call to Worship was written by Esther Hethcox. Music is reprinted under Onelicense.net: A.713926.

~Celebrations and Concerns of the Congregation ~

Celebrations:

We celebrate with ***Sam and Sheila Miglarese*** upon the birth of their granddaughter, ***Katherine Gray Chow*****,** born to ***Madison and Cullen Chow*** on Monday, March 9, in Atlanta.

Condolences:

We remember in prayer ***Cindy Massey***, life partner of ***Amanda Briggs***. Amanda died earlier this week. She was ***Mindy Douglas'*** close friend.

We pray for the family and friends of ***William Watson Regan***, grandson of the late ***Rev. Kelsey Regan***, pastor at FPC from 1941-1960. William died unexpectedly in February in Davidson, NC.

We invite prayers for the family of ***Alice Davis*****,** former FPC member and urban ministry leader, whose memorial service was in Wilmington, Delaware, last week.

We remember in prayer:

Ashley Alvord, who is dealing with complications following stomach cancer surgery. Ashley is a colleague of ***Sharon Hirsch.***

Tony Brown
John Fricks
Lee House
Vickie Luboff
Peggy Needham
Phyllis Verhey
Paul Cornsweet
Sue Fricks
Ann Huff
Elizabeth Manceras
Franzi Rokoske
Sam Crabtree
Joe Harvard
Kelli Hunnicut
Harriett Mitchell
Alfred Tisdale
Susan Cyr
Kerry Holbrook
Bob Lewis
Fred Moore
David Verner

Care Communities:

Croasdaile Pavilion: ***Dub Gulley***
Hillcrest Convalescent**:** ***Carol Wills***
Brookdale Senior Living: ***Debbie Mathews***
Durham Ridge: ***Phillip Herndon***
Pruitt Health - Durham: ***Fred Callaway***
Southpoint Atria: ***Ginny Widmark***
Madge McKeithen

Family and Friends of the Congregation

John Carter, brother of Conrad Carter
Francisca Cristobal, relative of Al and Judy Arrowood
Kim Cummings, father of Drew Cummings
Sara Degand, cousin of Deborah Momsen-Hudson
Gera Fleming, mother of Christyn Klinck
Linda Foster-Momsen, mother of Deborah Momsen-Hudson
Cheryl Fowler, friend of Cheri Reece
Jennifer Hervey, daughter-in-law of Jeanne Hervey
Donna Holladay, friend of Jane & Robert Brawley
Katie Jackson, wife of Matthew Hirsch
Donna Johnson, mother of Ann Huff
Anthony Ketcham, brother of Wil James
Marcia Magee, aunt of Kathryn Muchison
Marie Maly, sister of Barbara Fish
Sandra Mikush**,** mother of Katie Fogleman
Martha Neece, sister-in-law of Vernon & Beth Neece
Ana Sofia Ochoa, family member of Becky Martin
Bill Prochaska, friend of Al and Judy Arrowood
Wu-Chou Su, father of Claire Su
Jim Vacca, father of Jamie Chambliss
Tanya Watkins, friend of Leigh Wynkoop

This week we continue our practice of extinguishing candles as we move through our Lenten journey together. The Lenten "wreath" is covered in rose coloured cloth and live roses for Laetare Sunday, (meaning "rejoice"). Today, we extinguish a pink candle which represents a slight reprieve from the somber journey of Lent as we head toward the cross with Christ. ***This week we invite you to ponder the paradoxes of Christian life: joy amidst sorrow, growth in struggle, the spiritual life and vivacity that come from spiritual death.***

Upcoming Community Events

Many of our events are posted in the bi-weekly newsletter. You may read past newsletters and join our mailing list at https://firstpres-durham.org/weekly-newsletter/

Next Sunday, **March 22**, we will have a special ***Lenten Service of Scripture and Song***, which will feature noted hammered dulcimer player, ***Benjamin Barker***. Please join us for this special music offering which will help prepare us for Palm Sunday and Holy Week.

Yoga is offered at FPC on Mondays at 4:30pm (vinyasa flow class), and Fridays at 10:30am (chair yoga class). Contact ***Karen McPhaul*** for more information at mcphaul@gmail.com.

***First Friends*:** Save the date for First Friends in March & April! Join us on **March 21**, at the home of Barbara Buckley and Scott Randell. More details coming soon. Then, on **April 25** join us at the home of Jane Wettach and Paul Baldasare. First Friends is a community of 55+ individuals who gather monthly for fellowship.

Spring Workday on Saturday, **March 21** from 8:00am – 11:00am. Please bring work gloves, trash grabbers, weed-eaters, and weeding tools. We will: clean out sump pumps, pick up trash on the grounds, tidy up the area outside of the playground. For more information contact ***Barbara Buckley*** at barbjbuckley@gmail.com.

The ***Parking Lot*** will be closed for re-striping on Saturday, **March 28**. If you need to be at the church that day, there should be room in the lot across the alley.

"Wilmington on Fire," a documentary about the 1898 Wilmington Massacre, will be screened at FPC on Sunday, **April 12** at 3:00-5:30pm. All are invited. Historians ***David and Vera Cecelski*** will attend and facilitate a discussion following the viewing. Racial Equity Task Force is sponsoring the event.

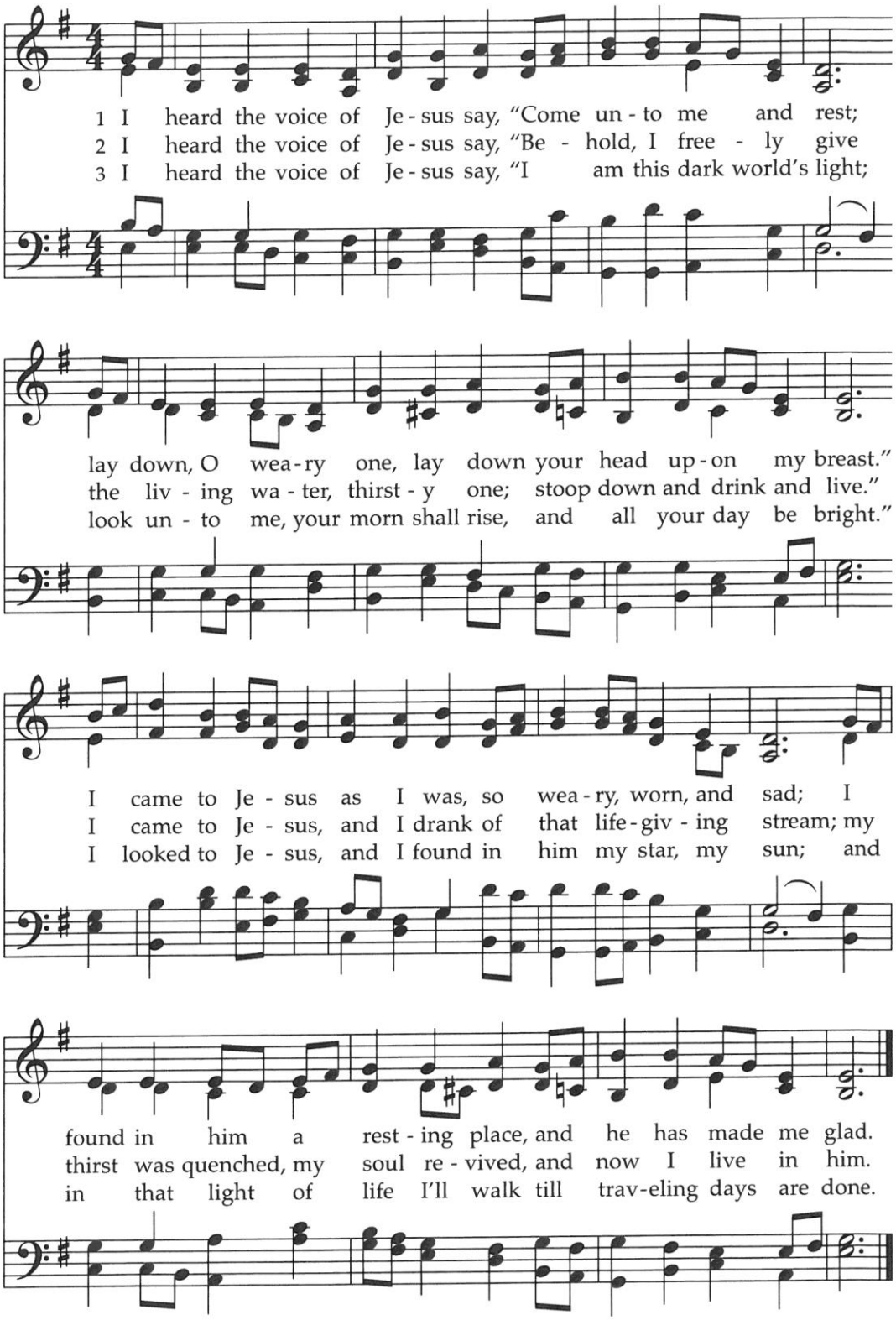
Job Listings

Minister of Music Search: As we begin our search for FPC's next Minister of Music, the search committee wants to hear from you! Please take a few minutes to complete the following survey (QR code) which invites you to reflect on your experience of music at First Pres and share your hopes for its future. Your responses will guide and inform our search, conversations, and decisions. Thanks in advance for your participation.

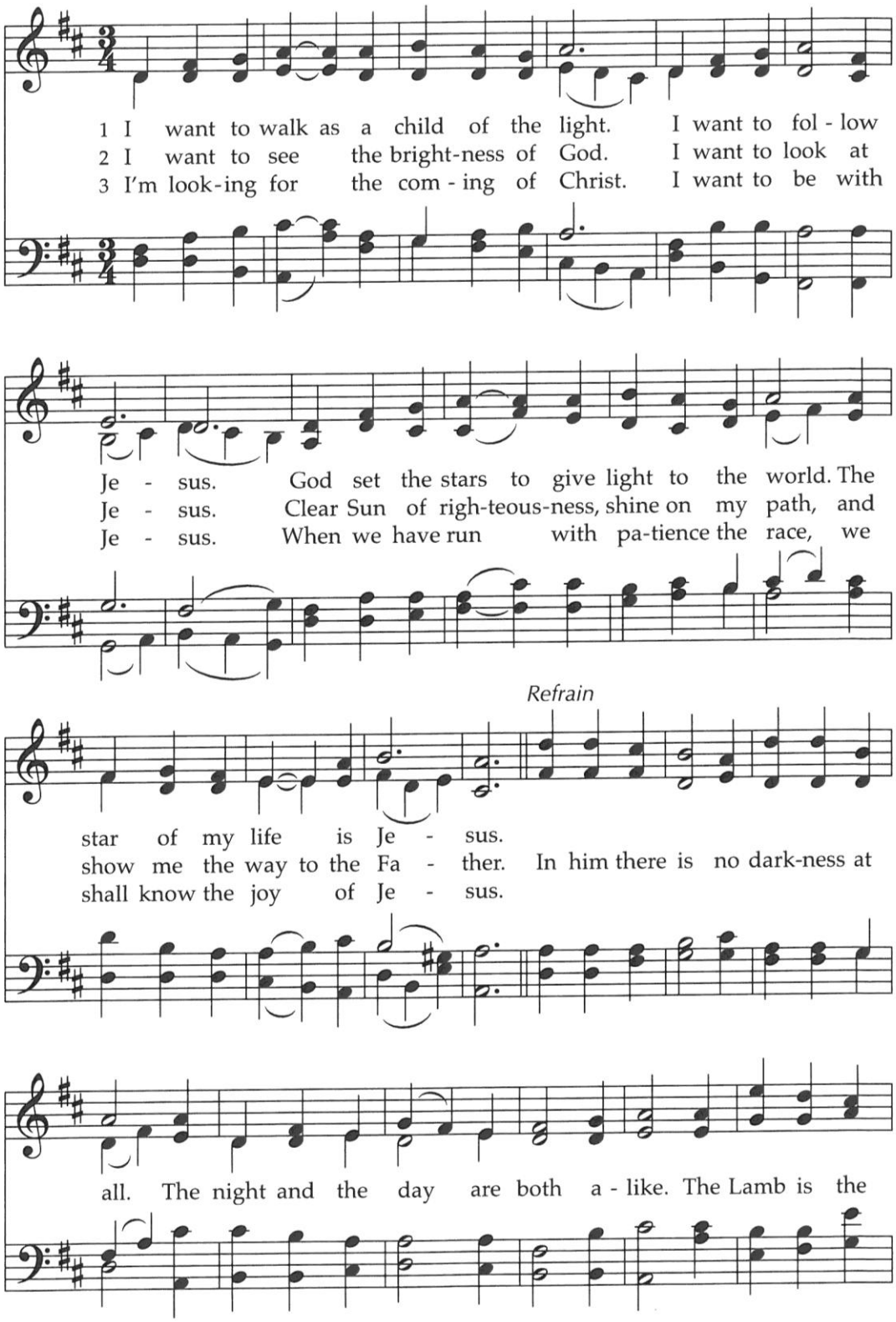
Seeking a Communications Associate: FPC is now seeking a skilled addition to our administrative team whose primary duty will be to support our mission by utilizing all aspects of communicating with our congregation as well as the greater community. Full benefits and salary commensurate with experience will be provided. Successful candidates will be proficient in social media/digital platforms

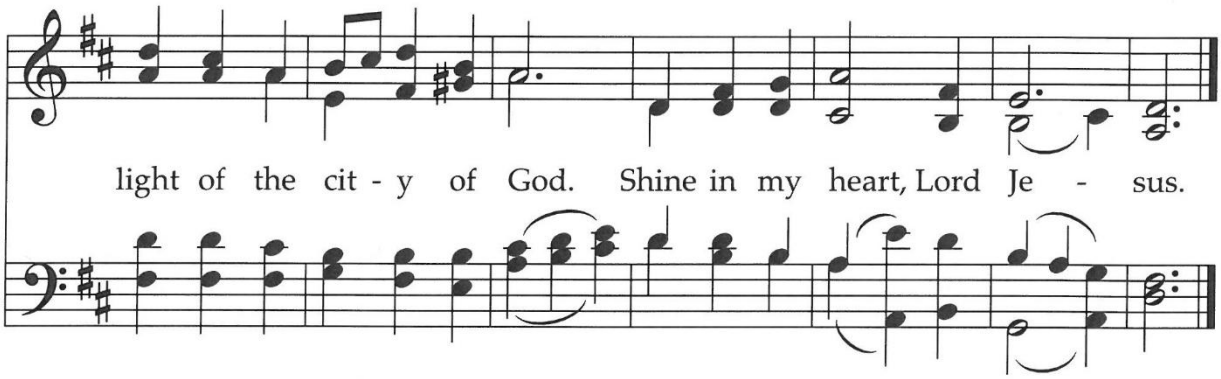
and able to manage an array of communications for our active church. FPC members, their family members and/or close church friends should not apply but if you know of others who might be interested, encourage them to visit http://firstpres-durham.org/2026/02/recruiting-for-church-communications-associate for more details and send their cover letter/resume/references to adminsearch@firstpres-durham.org.

182 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say



377 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light




light of the cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

This Week at a Glance!

Later Today

Following Worship
Children's Music: ages 3-5 (room 205), ages 6-11 (choir room)
Fellowship Committee (Wilson Parlor)

5:00 PM Youth Group: Trivia Night with Families

Monday, March 16

9:00 AM Walk in Ministry

1:30 PM Worship Planning (Pastor's Office)

4:30 PM Yoga (Watts-Hill Hall)

Tuesday, March 17

5:00 PM Finance & Investment Committee (Daye Meeting Room)

7:00 PM Somethings Prayer Service (Sanctuary)

Wednesday, March 18

1:00 PM All Staff Meeting (Daye Meeting Room)

7:00 PM Chancel Choir (Choir Room)

Thursday, March 19

9:00 AM Walk in Ministry

Friday, March 20

10:30 AM Yoga (Room 201)

4:00 PM New Hope Presbytery Youth Retreat Departs (FPC Raleigh)

Saturday, March 21

8:00 AM Spring Workday

6:00 PM First Friends (Home of Barbara Buckley & Scott Randell)

Sunday, March 22
Fifth Sunday in Lent

9:45 AM Faith Formation (Classes available for adults, youth and children)

11:00 AM Worship: Lenten Service of Scripture and Song

Following Worship
Children's Music: ages 3-5 (Room 205), ages 6-11 (Choir Room)
Diaconate (Watts-Hill Hall)
Meaning in the Middle Lunch (Daye Meeting Room)

2:00 PM New Hope Presbytery Youth Retreat Returns (FPC Raleigh)

5:00 PM Youth Group Hangout (The Parlour)

CHURCH STAFF

Tom Bloom, Business Administrator
Lenore Champion, Children's Ministry Director
Vernon Cooper, Sexton
Mindy Douglas, Pastor/Head of Staff
Susan Dunlap, Parish Associate
Omar Guess, Sr., Sunday Morning Sexton

Joseph Harvard, Pastor Emeritus
Esther Hethcox, Associate Pastor
Sybil King, Administrative Assistant
Kathy Parkins, Minister of Music
John Weicher, Associate Pastor

For more information about First Presbyterian Church, email the church office: office@firstpres-durham.org or visit our website: https://firstpres-durham.org.

305 EAST MAIN STREET DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27701 919.682.5511 ORGANIZED 1871