

Sunday, 15 March 2026 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

This morning is the fourth Sunday in the season of Lent, a period of 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter. The six Sundays in Lent are not counted in the 40 days. To read more about the season of Lent:

<https://pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/theology-worship/worship/christian-year/season-lent>

Prelude

The ELPC Ringers rehearse weekly on Tuesdays at 6 PM in Dr. Ed's office. Handbells were first brought to the United States from England by Margaret Shurcliff in 1902. The ELPC Ringers's handbells are a 4-octave set of bells manufactured by the Schulmerich company from Hatfield, PA.

Processional Hymn

See the Precious Children is from our Lenten devotional materials, *Tell Me Something Good*. It is set to the familiar tune BEACH SPRING, a tune from *The Sacred Harp*, 1844. The tune is included with three different hymn texts in our *Glory to God Hymnal* at #490, 498, and 716.

Offertory Anthem

Kurt Bestor (b. 1958) was a missionary in Serbia during the 1970s. Here he witnessed the effects of war and bigotry had on the Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian children. He wrote *Prayer of the Children* as a way of expressing how these innocent children might be feeling during this difficult period. Originally written for soloist with piano accompaniment, it was later arranged for chorus, as heard this morning. This choral arrangement has been sung following many national tragedies and school shootings. Bestor later dedicated the song to the victims of the Sandy Hook shooting in December 2012.

Recessional Hymn

The hymn text *Go, My Children, with My Blessing* was written by Jaroslav J. Vajda (1919-2008) in 1983. Vajda was made a Fellow of The Hymn Society at the Annual Conference of The Hymn Society in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, in 1988. He was born in Lorain, Ohio, where his father was a Lutheran pastor. As a pastor himself, he served in many Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Churches, including in nearby Tarentum, PA from 1953-1963.

Benediction Response

Hold On has been sung at many of the demonstrations in Minneapolis recently and the song has spread across the country. Songwriter Heidi Wilson says:

“It is January 2026, and the people of Minneapolis are inspiring us with what it looks like to really take care of one another in the face of escalating ICE raids and authoritarian violence. They are walking kids to school, delivering food to neighbors, standing on street corners in rapid response. And they are singing. I am humbled and moved that this song is useful to folks right now.”