



"Let the Little Children Come" by Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

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Memorial Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

4th Sunday in Lent

March 15, 2026

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

Unwritten Agreement

We have this unwritten agreement,
us members of humanity.

When the toddler at the coffee shop runs round the corner,
when her mom, at the register, looks up in panic,
we, the adults in the room, will pledge,
with quick smiles and silent head nods, to keep watch.

We will lean out of our seats.

We will put down our phones.

We will stand at the ready
to scoop up,
to offer words of comfort,
to make silly faces,
to keep an eye on the door.
And we will do this,
because we cannot ignore the instinct to care.
We will do this,
because we cannot ignore the child right in front of us.
We will do this,
because love always includes the least of these.

Prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

PRELUDE La fille aux cheveux de lin C. Debussy

BRINGING THE LIGHT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

God loves the field mouse.

God loves the crows that take flight when church bells ring.

God loves the baby, cooing in the back pew.

God loves the child who rocks and claps.

God loves the one with wrinkled hands and soft eyes.

God loves the bumblebees and the tabby cats.

God loves those who walk, crawl, and roll.

**God loves the giant oaks and the evergreens,
standing strong over all of us.**

God loves the young, the impressionable, and the earnest.

There is no bit of creation that God does not love.

So let us worship this good-news God!

Amen.

*SONG OF PRAISE O Worship the King, All Glorious Above! Hymnal, No. 41

*CONFESSION AND PARDON

God said, "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them."

Holy God, we confess, we have mistreated the immigrants in our land.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

We confess, we have clung to guns and war more than we have pursued peace.

God said, "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow."

We confess, we have hoarded our resources and failed to care for our neighbors.

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them."

We confess, we have gatekept the good news in unfair ways.

(Time for silent reflection)

Fortunately for all of us, God also said,

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name; you are mine."

**By God's grace, despite our sin and shortcomings,
we are redeemed, claimed, forgiven, and loved.**

May this good news change our lives!

Amen.

*THE PEACE

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

*SONG OF RESPONSE Dear Lord and Father of Mankind Hymnal, No. 169
Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways;
re clothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

MISSION MOMENT Charlotte Lovett

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

SCRIPTURE READING Page No. 800
Matthew 19:13-15
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM The Lord is My Shepherd

SCRIPTURE READING Page No. 158
Deuteronomy 24:17-22
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE Protection and Care for the Vulnerable Tracy L. Evans

*SONG OF FAITH See the Precious Children Bulletin p. 7

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
It sounds like welcome
and feels like home.
It sounds like laughter
and feels like mercy.
It sounds like love
and feels like a seat at the table,
so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
I have seen it alive in the world.
And even when my heart aches,
even when wars rage,
even when mercy feels out of reach,
I remember the one who
welcomed the children
and led with nonviolence.
I remember the one who
cared for the vulnerable**

**and inspired those around him.
I remember that the good news really is good news,
for I have seen it alive in the world.
Thanks be to God! Amen.**

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS/PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

Hymnal, p. 35

*Please pray the Lord's Prayer
in the language and wording most familiar to you.*

THE OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

Give Thanks

Hymnal, No. 647

Give thanks with a grateful heart;
give thanks to the Holy One;
give thanks because we're given Jesus Christ, the Son. (Repeat)

And now let the weak say, "We are strong";
let the poor say, "We are rich
because of what the Lord has done for us!" (Repeat)

Give thanks. Give thanks.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*SENDING SONG

We Are Marching in the Light of God

Hymnal, No. 853

*BLESSING AND CHARGE

*POSTLUDE

Toccatà in E Minor

J. Pachelbel

*Please rise in body or spirit.

We invite anyone who wishes to consider membership in this church to contact the pastor or a member of the session. Membership in this church is a step made by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith or transfer of church letter.

Lectionary Readings for March 22: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45.

The Food & Shelter items for March are reusable water bottles and ready to eat foods.
Please place your donations in the box by the church information table.

See the Precious Children

BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7 D (“As We Gather at Your Table”)

Words: Anna Strickland (2025)

Music: B. F. White (1844)



See the pre-cious chil - dren seat - ed on the lap of Christ our Lord
See the pre-cious wi - dowed wo - men glean-ing har-vests from the field
See the pre-cious for - eign stran - gers as they car - ry all they own
See the pre-cious dis - poss - essed ones ask - ing for some food to eat
See the pre-cious world im - pov - erished by our ma - lice and our greed



Called the great - est in the king - dom, held so gent - ly and a - dored They
Then re - turn - ing to their kit - chen to pre - pare their dai - ly meal They
To a land that's full of dan - gers for the pow - er - less and prone They
Sleep - ing un - der star - ry heav - ens, dai - ly liv - ing on the streets They
Hu - mans, a - ni - mals, and pla - net cry - ing out for some re - lief We're



are pre-cious in the sight of God who made each ti - ny toe In their
are pre-cious in the sight of God who holds their bro - ken hearts In their
are pre-cious in the sight of God who made their home - land, too In their
are pre-cious in the sight of God who loves them as a child In their
all pre-cious in the sight of God who made each ho - ly thing In our



weak - ness they're held by love as each day they learn and grow
sor - row they're held by love that re - deems each fra - gile part
jour - ney they're held by love as they start each day a - new
hun - ger they're held by love as they guard their hu - man pride
liv - ing we're held by love as we care for ev - ery being

Let the Little Children Come

by Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell , Inspired by Matthew 19:13-15, 11"x14" Acrylic, gold leaf, pen on paper

For my little niece, Angelina, whose art rests at the heart of this composition, and in whose joy we glimpse the Kingdom of God—alongside her sisters, Angelika and Ariana.

At the center of this work is a drawing made by my five-year-old niece, Angelina. I watched her joyfully scribble it in under three minutes, churning out drawing after drawing and handing each one to me with an eager smile. In this piece, she first drew a self-portrait (her wearing a crown), then graciously decided to include me (taking some creative liberties in giving me a third arm!).

I imagine the scene in Matthew 19: toddlers wailing, little ones slipping from their parents' arms, parents offering apologetic glances toward the frowning disciples as the scene around Jesus grows increasingly disorderly and loud. Those of us who've participated in group infant baptisms and baby dedications (when one cries, the chain reaction begins!), have led children's sermon moments with restless kids squirming about, or had the joy of watching our little ones participate in a kids' choir performance that goes delightfully rogue, can easily relate.

The disciples, feeling the weight of being seen as serious leaders alongside their rabbi, Jesus, may have tried to preserve a sense of reverence by shooing away the parents bringing their children to him. Yet here, Jesus reorients his disciples (and us) away from the illusion of control and reminds us that it is the joyful, unruly, sincere presence of a child to whom the kingdom truly belongs. Just a chapter earlier, in Matthew 18, Jesus tells his followers that unless they become like little children, they will not even enter the kingdom. Surely the disciples thought Jesus couldn't mean that literally—right?

While I've been busy making art, Angelina has been busy being an artist. I surely could learn a thing or two from her about inheriting the kingdom. —Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell

Look

Contemplate the gold shapes in the image. What do they represent to you?