

WELCOME TO...



FAITH AND DOUBT:

We may have trusted in God from childhood; or our faith may have come later in life. Faith may come suddenly or only after a struggle to believe.

**The Presbyterian Church of Saint David
Early Morning Service January 22, 2012
In Search of Living Faith**

Silent Preparation for Worship: Reflect on the statement from Living Faith:

*Faith is a response
to God's presence in the midst of life.
It says "yes" to the God who is here.*

Gathering hymn: Let us hope

792

One person's prayer: *I don't even know what to say, God, I am so confused. I am caught in the midst of a crisis of faith, so uncertain and doubtful. I am going through a difficult time in what touches the depth of my belief. I am almost tempted to give in to impatience and despair. Something within me cries out for you, yet you seem not to be there.*

I have broken away from many childhood beliefs. *I decided to let me faith pass through the filter of my personal experience. Suddenly, I found myself too far from you, from security and certainty. If I still turn to you, God, it is because I have not yet lost the hope of finding an exit door for my spiritual anguish. I begin to realize that by myself I will not be able to overcome life's ambiguities and contradictions. I know the mystery of you continues, and that my faith-existence is a challenge to be embraced. The light of your occasional shadowy presence makes me see that my crisis comes from the depth of my maturity, from the depth of my faith.*

The irony, God; there is a crisis of doubt only because there is faith. Open my heart, God, to the right attitude when confronted with questions of my faith. Amen.

Sung response: Lord, have mercy

336

Passing the Peace Let us share the peace of the Lord with one another. **The peace of the Lord be with you.**

Our Prayer: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith.

Our journey to understanding: Mark 9: 20 And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21 Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 It has often

cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us." **23** Jesus said to him, "If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." **24** Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

(Paul Tillich's, Dynamics of Faith) "If doubt appears, it should not be considered as the negation of faith, but as an element which was always and will always be present in the act of faith. Existential doubt and faith are poles of the same reality, the state of ultimate concern." "...Every act of faith recognizes that there may be a possibility for doubt."

Affirmation (of doubt!):

We are not always certain that God is with us. At times God calls us to live in this world without experiencing the divine presence, often discerning God's nearness only as we look back. At other times God seems absent in order that our faith may be tested. Through such struggle we mature in faith. God may also chasten and strengthen us through the hard circumstances of life.

Hymn: Lord of all hopefulness (1-2) **748**
Our journey to understanding continues: Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Try this: (from The Message) The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see.

Hymn: Lord of all hopefulness (3-4) **748**

Affirmation (of faith):

Faith is a gift of God constantly renewed in Word and Sacrament and in the shared life of God's people. It is trust in God, involves personal repentance of sin, acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour, and commitment to him as Lord. It includes assent to the truth of the Gospel. By faith we receive the very life of God into our lives and joyfully discover that God knows, loves, and pardons us.

Hymn: We come as guests **524**

Invitation Come, for all things are now ready. Come to the table and share with all in need: the gift of healing for those in pain, the gift of forgiveness for those in sin, the gift of assurance for those in doubt, and the gift of hope for those in tears.

May we who share these gifts share Christ with one another and all our community.

Hymn: All who hunger gather gladly **534**

Thanksgiving (ending with...) Come, Holy Spirit. Come. Open our eyes to the mystery of Christ's presence in these ordinary things in these our ordinary lives. May they be for us the very essence of the living Christ in our midst. Through the broken bread . . . **we participate in the Body of Christ.** Through the cup of blessing . . . **we participate in the new life Christ gives.** These are the gifts of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!** Come, for all things are ready!

Hymn: May the Lord bless **553**

Dismissal: *The peace of Christ be with you. And also with you.* *May this eternal truth be always on our hearts that the God who breathed this world into being placed stars into the heavens and designed a butterfly's wing* *Is the God who entrusted his life to the care of ordinary people became vulnerable that we might know how strong is the power of Love... a mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp... a mystery so beautiful it is impossible to ignore.*

Consider coming to Coffee and Conversation tonight at 7 pm where we explore the beliefs of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax