

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of Saint David
Early Morning Service April 01, 2012

We will all be changed by the Victory of our Lord Jesus Christ 1 Cor. 15:51-58



Changed by God's Steadfast Love

This is the victory, our faith (1 John 5:4)

On this day we concentrate our attention on God's steadfast love. The Paschal Mystery reveals this steadfast love, and calls us to a new way of faith. This faith overcomes fear and opens our hearts to the power of the Spirit. Such faith calls us to friendship with Christ, and so to one another.

Gathering: *To Him who alone is worthy of faith, we call: Amen – I believe!
Amen – I believe!*

In the one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen – I believe!

In the Son of God, who became human. Amen – I believe!

In His death, resurrection and ascension. Amen – I believe!

In the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen – I believe!

In Christ's coming again in glory. Amen – I believe!

That His grace is stronger than sin. Amen – I believe!

That love is more powerful than hatred and death. Amen – I believe!

*In the resurrection of the body and life without end in the kingdom. Amen –
I believe! Amen.*

Hymn: A New commandment

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Prayer of Confession: *With eager hearts and open hands, we welcome Jesus, until he refuses the power we offer him, choosing to become our servant. We pick up the faith we had laid on the ground before him, and put it back on the shelf where it belongs. Our pride keeps us from being able to follow him all the way to Calvary. Steadfast God, save us! Help us to let our fears, our doubts, our faithlessness slip from our lives to fall at your feet, so we may stand with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who comes in your name, in your glory, in your grace to save us.*

Hymn: Nothing can trouble

617

Absolution: *Christ hears our prayer and answers the deepest longings of our heart. Christ, have mercy on us and show us a new way.*

Sung response: Lord, have mercy

336

Passing the Peace *The peace of the Lord be with you always. And with your spirit. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.*

Words for reflection: Hab 3:17-19 God, the Lord is my strength

Ps 136:1-4.23-26 His steadfast love endures forever

1 Jn 5:1-6 This is the victory that conquers the world, our faith

Jn 15:9-17 No one has greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends

Reflection: In the Old Testament text, it is faith in God that keeps hope alive in spite of all failure. Habakkuk's lamentation turns to joy in God's fidelity that supplies strength in the face of despair.

Psalm 136 confirms that the memory of the marvellous deeds of God in Israel's history is a proof of God's steadfast love. Because of God's intervention, the people of Israel experienced extraordinary and surprising victories. Recalling God's great works of salvation is a source of joy, gratitude and hope, which believers have for centuries expressed in prayer, hymns of praise, and music. The epistle reminds us that *that which has been born of God* is what overcomes the world. This does not necessarily mean victories which can be measured by human standards. Victory in Christ involves a change of heart, perceiving earthly reality from the

perspective of eternity, and believing in the final victory over death. This victorious force is faith, the bestower and source of which is God. And its most perfect manifestation is love. In the words of the gospel, Christ assures His disciples of God's love, the final confirmation of which is the Saviour's death on the cross. At the same time, He invites and challenges them to show love to one another. Jesus' relationship to his disciples is based on love. He does not treat them merely as disciples, but calls them His friends. Their service of Christ consists in conforming their lives to the one commandment of love, resulting from internal conviction and faith. In a spirit of love, even when the progress on the way to full visible unity seems slow, we do not lose hope. God's steadfast love will enable us to overcome the greatest opponent and the deepest divisions. That is why *the victory that conquers the world is our faith and the transforming power of God's love.*

Prayer Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by Your Resurrection You have triumphed over death, and have become the Lord of life. Out of love for us You have chosen us to be Your friends. May the Holy Spirit unite us to You and to one other in the bonds of friendship, that we may faithfully serve You in this world as witnesses to Your steadfast love; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Questions for reflection

1. How should we express Christian love in contexts of different religions and philosophies?
2. What must we do to become more credible witnesses of God's steadfast love in a divided world?
3. How can Christ's followers more visibly support one another throughout the world?

Invitation *We gather at the table as invited guests.* **We come from many places, differing in age, differing in race, differing in orientation, politics and in many other ways.**

As we come together around the table we discover that our differences are not something that need divide but that our differences often are a blessing.

The more difference we bring, the more fully we experience the presence of the sacred in our midst.

So come, children of God, just as you are. Wherever you are on this journey of life, you are welcome here, here in this place, here in this community, here at this table. Come, children of God, come and let us remember together.

Hymn: We come as invited guests **524**

Prayer of Thanksgiving, concluding with...

Come, holy Spirit, come. Bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine.

Bless all of us in our eating and drinking that our eyes might be open, that we might recognize the risen Christ in our midst, indeed in one another. *Come, holy Spirit, come.*

Hymn: Now to Christ who loved us **554**

Communion

Prayer following communion: *Out of great love, God, who is rich in mercy, has made us alive together with Christ. Through Christ, God has shown us the immeasurable riches of grace.* **We go out into the world to be open channels of that love and vessels overflowing with that grace. Amen.**

Hymn: Live in Charity **501**

Dismissal Blessing

Changed by God's steadfast love -

Send us and together we will go!

Changed by the Good Shepherd -

Send us and together we will go!

United in the reign of Christ -

Send us and together we will go!

Hymn: The Lord bless you **832**