

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of Saint David
Early Morning Service March 11, 2012

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



Changed by the Suffering Servant
Christ suffered for us (cf. 1 Peter 2:21)

This day calls us to reflect on the suffering of Christ. Following Christ the Suffering Servant, Christians are called to solidarity with all who suffer. The closer we come to the cross of Christ the closer we come to one another.

Gathering: *The cross is the sign of victory. And so we call: we worship You, O Lord! We worship You, O Lord! For Your cross – the cathedral of truth and the court of mercy. We worship You, O Lord! For your cross – the tree of life and the throne of grace. We worship You, O Lord! For your cross – the sign of compassion and the sign of hope. We worship You, O Lord! Lord, you died on the cross to gather into one the*

dispersed children of God. May the contemplation of your cross transform our understanding of suffering, for You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: Hail our once-rejected Jesus 353

Prayer of Confession: **Forgive us our selfish concerns with earthly things and our failure to acknowledge your glory in the face of Jesus Christ, for that blindness to the wonder of your presence that causes us to live our lives from day to day without knowing you. Have mercy on us, give us grace to discern the suffering servant Lord in the midst of our lives, to worship and serve you in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

Hymn: Lord O Lord our God 713

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

Words for reflection: Isaiah 53:3-11 The man of sorrows accustomed to suffering. Psalm 22: 12-24 He did not despise the affliction of the of the afflicted. 1Peter 2:21-25 Christ suffered for us. Luke 24:25-27 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things?

Hymn: Man of sorrows, wondrous name 210

Reflection: The divine paradox is that God can change tragedy and disaster into victory. God transforms all our sufferings and misfortunes, and the enormity of history's pain, into a resurrection that encompasses the whole world. While appearing to be defeated, God is nevertheless the true Victory whom no one and nothing can overcome. Isaiah's moving prophecy about the suffering Servant of the Lord was completely fulfilled in Christ. After suffering enormous agony, the Man of Sorrows *shall see His offspring*. We are that offspring, born from the Saviour's suffering. In this way we are made one family in Christ. One can say that Psalm 22 is not only about Jesus, but also for Jesus. The Saviour himself prayed this psalm on the cross, when he used its desolate opening words: *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* Yet in the second part of the psalm the lamentation, the imploring full of pain, changes into praise of God for His works. The apostle

Peter is *a witness of the sufferings of Christ* (1 Pt 5,1), which he presents to us as an example: it is to this suffering for the sake of love we are called. Jesus did not curse God, but submitted to the One who judges righteously. Christ's wounds have healed us, and returned us all to the one Shepherd. Only in the light of the presence of the Lord and the word does the divine purpose of the Messiah's sufferings become clear. Just as for the disciples on the way to Emmaus, Jesus is our constant companion on the stony road of life, stirring our hearts and opening our eyes to the mysterious plan of salvation. Christians experience suffering as a result of humanity's fragile condition; we recognise this suffering in social injustice and situations of persecution. The power of the cross draws us into unity. Here we encounter Christ's suffering as the source of compassion for and solidarity with the entire human family. As one contemporary theologian puts it: the closer we come to the cross of Christ, the closer we come to one another. The witness of Christians together in situations of suffering assumes remarkable credibility. In our shared solidarity with all who suffer we learn from the crucified suffering servant the lessons of self-emptying, letting go and self-sacrifice. These are the gifts we need from the Spirit on our way to unity in Him.

A prayer to guide us: **Come to us now, Lord, reign in our hearts, Be for us now and always our guide. Bring us together, may we be one. Bind us together as the people of God. Lord, be for us the truth and the way, fulfill the Father's plan and make us one! Come, be our life and give us your peace, May we be one in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Questions for reflection:

1. How can our faith help us in our response to long-lasting suffering?
2. What areas of human suffering are unnoticed and belittled today?
3. How can Christians bear witness together to the power of the cross?

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 humanity.

Hymn: Broken for me (vs. 1-2) 550

Prayer of Thanksgiving, concluding with...

*Pour out your Holy Spirit on all gathered here, that we might be your light in the world. **Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine, that we might be infused with the gift of your nourishing guidance.***

Hymn: Broken for me (vs. 3-4) 550

Communion

Prayer following communion: *We thank you, gracious God, for your gracious gifts. We pray that through these same gifts you will preserve us in faith in you, unite us in your love, and confirm us in the hope of everlasting life, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Hymn: Now to Christ who loved us 554

Dismissal Blessing

Changed by the Suffering Servant -

Send us and together we will go!

Changed by the Lord's victory over evil -

Send us and together we will go!

Changed by the peace of Christ -

Send us and together we will go!

Changed by God's steadfast love -

Send us and together we will go!

Hymn: There is a redeemer 358

