

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of Saint David  
Early Morning Service March 18, 2012

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



## Changed by the peace of the Risen Lord

*Jesus stood among them and said: Peace be with you! (Jn 20:19)*

Today we celebrate the peace of the Risen Lord. The Risen One is the great Victor over death and the world of darkness. He unites His disciples, who were paralysed with fear. He opens up before us new prospects of life and of acting for His coming kingdom. The Risen Lord unites and strengthens all believers. Peace and unity are the hallmarks of our transformation in the resurrection.

**Gathering:** *Almighty God, Through Jesus you say to us that whoever wishes to be first must become the least and the servant of all. We enter into your presence, knowing that your victory is won through the powerlessness of the cross. We come to pray for a peace that passes understanding. Teach us to accept humbly that this peace is a*

**gift of your Spirit;** *Through this gift, change and transform us and make us more like your Son Jesus Christ.*

Hymn: Safe in your hands (vs. 1-2)

**14**

Prayer of Confession: *Let us pray to the risen Lord for Christians and all people on earth: Grant us Your peace ! Grant us Your peace ! Grant the blessing of peace to the nations. Grant us Your peace ! Sustain those who are working for the visible unity of your church. Grant us Your peace ! Look upon those whom You have called to shepherd Your flock. Grant us Your peace ! Strengthen the love between spouses. Grant us Your peace ! Bring reconciliation within families, neighbourhoods and societies. Grant us Your peace ! Lord, stand in our midst and grant us unity and peace, You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.*

Hymn: Safe in your hands (vs.3-4)

**14**

**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:** Mal 4:5-6 He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and children to their parents  
Ps 133 How good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!  
Eph 2:14-20 To reconcile both groups to God in one body, putting to death hostility  
John 20:19-23 Jesus stood among them and said: Peace be with you!

Hymn: Make me a channel

**740**

**Reflection:** The final words of the last book of the Old Testament convey the promise that God will send the chosen one to establish harmony and respect in all households. Usually we fear strife between nations or unexpected aggression. But the prophet Malachi draws attention to one of the most difficult and enduring conflicts - the heartbreak in relations between parents and their offspring. This restoration of unity between parents and children is not possible without God's help – it is God's emissary who performs the miracle of transformation in people's hearts and relationships.

The psalm shows what great joy such unity among people can bring. The human beings were not created to be alone, and cannot

live contentedly in a hostile atmosphere. Happiness consists in living in a human community in harmony, peace, trust and understanding. The psalm refers to the goodness of living together as a blessing and undeserved gift from God. Living together in unity is not restricted to family members only – this is rather a declaration of the closeness between people who accept the peace of God.

The epistle tells us of the one whom the prophet Malachi announced. Jesus brings unity, because He has demolished the *wall of hostility* between people in His own body. Generally, a person's victory involves the downfall and shame of those who have been defeated, who prefer to withdraw. Jesus does not reject, or destroy, or humiliate; He puts an end to alienation, He transforms, heals and unites all, that they may become *members of God's household*.

The gospel recalls the gift of the risen Lord, given to His uncertain and terrified disciples. *Peace be with you* – that is Christ's greeting and also His gift. It is also an invitation to seek peace with God and establish new, lasting relationships within the human family and all of creation. Jesus has trampled down death and sin. By the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Risen Lord invites His disciples into His mission of bringing peace, healing and forgiveness to all the world. As long as Christians remain divided, the world will not be convinced of the full truth of the Gospel message that Christ has brought about one new humanity. Peace and unity are the hallmarks of this transformation. The Churches need to appropriate and witness to these gifts as members of the one household of God built upon the sure foundation of Jesus as the cornerstone.

## Prayer

### Questions for reflection

1. What forms of violence in our community can we as Christians confront together?
2. How do we experience hidden hostilities that affect our relationship to each other as Christian communities?
3. How can we learn to welcome each other as Christ welcomes us?

**Invitation** This is the table, not of the Church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love God and for those who want to love God more. So, come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, because it is Christ who invites you. It is our Lord's will that those who want to find God should meet God here. 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: Put peace into each other's hands (1-3) **560**

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: Put peace into each other's hands (4-5) **560**

### Communion

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

Hymn: Dona nobis pacem **735**

Dismissal Blessing

*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: May the God of hope go with us **726**