

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of Saint David
Early Morning Service April 22, 2012

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



United in the Reign of Christ

*To the one who conquers I will give a place
with me on my throne (Revelation 3:21)*

Today we come to the end of our reflections based on the Week of prayer theme - we celebrate the Reign of Christ. Christ's victory enables us to look into the future with hope. This victory overcomes all that keeps us from sharing fullness of life with him and with each other. Christians know that unity among us is above all a gift of God. It is a share in Christ's glorious victory over all that divides.

Gathering: We enter this place with thanksgiving because we know that the Lord to whom we belong is our Shepherd and our Sovereign. **We rejoice over the steadfast love and faithfulness of God enduring forever—to all generations.** Come, let us worship God with praise and joy, and thanksgiving in our hearts.
Hymn: Rejoice the Lord is king (1-2) 267

Prayer of Confession: *God, Loving Father, Son and Spirit, we come. Yet we know we come with doubts and fears. We know we come in ignorance. We know we have failed you, your creation and your people, in many ways. Trusting in your love, we turn again to you. As we open our hearts to your mercy and forgiveness, grant us your peace. **Accept these prayers, accept our worship, accept us, through your love.** God searches for the lost, and finds us; God invites the hungry to the table, and feeds us; God sends Jesus, and frees us from death's prison; God forgives all who sin, and heals us with mercy and grace. Thanks be to God. **Amen.***

Words for reflection: I Chronicles 29:10-13 It is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all Psalm 21:1-7 You set a crown of fine gold on his head
Revelation 3:19b-22 To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne
John 12:23-26 Whoever serves me, the Father will honour

Commentary: Jesus Christ is the first born from the dead. He has humbled Himself and been exalted. Christ is not covetous of his victory, but shares his reign and exaltation with all people. David's hymn, born of the joy of the king and the people before the Temple was built, expresses the truth that everything happens by grace. Even an earthly monarch can be an image of the reign of God, *in whose hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.* The king's psalm of thanksgiving continues this idea. Christian tradition also gives it a Messianic sense; Christ is the true King, full of blessing and life, the perfect presence of God

among people. In a certain sense this image can also refer to people. Are not human beings the crowning achievement of creation? Does not God want us to become 'co-heirs with His Son' and 'members of His royal household'?

The letters in the Book of Revelation to the seven local churches constitute a message to the Church in all times and places. Those who admit Christ into their homes will all be invited to share with him in the banquet of eternal life. The promise regarding sitting on thrones, previously announced to the Twelve, is now extended to all who are victorious. *Where I am, there will my servant be also.* We can link Jesus' *I am* to the unutterable Name of God. The servant of Jesus, whom the Father honours, will be where his Lord is, who has sat on the right hand of the Father in order to reign. Christians are aware that unity among them, even if requiring human effort, is above all a gift of God. It is a share in Christ's victory over sin, death and the evil which causes division. Our participation in Christ's victory reaches its fullness in heaven. Our common witness to the Gospel should show the world a God who not limit or overpower us. We should announce in a way that is credible, to the people of our day and age, that Christ's victory overcomes all that keeps us from sharing fullness of life with Him and with each other

Hymn: Rejoice the Lord is king (3-5)

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Prayer (together) Almighty God, Ruler of All, teach us to contemplate the mystery of your glory. Grant that we may accept your gifts with humility and respect each person's dignity. May Your Holy Spirit strengthen us for the spiritual battles which lie ahead, so that united in Christ we may reign with Him in glory. Grant this through Him who humbled Himself and was exalted, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

Questions for reflection

1. In what ways do false humility and a desire for earthly glory manifest themselves in our lives?
2. How do we express together our faith in the Reign of Christ?
3. How do we live out our hope in the coming reign of God?

Invitation *We gather at the table as invited guests. May we hear again the challenge to be your disciples. May we hear again the message of this one who brings good news. May we hear again the invitation to come to you, "all you who are weary and heavy laden." May we hear again eternal words of hope which tell us that however dark the world becomes the darkness cannot ever overcome the radiant light of this holy one, Jesus. May we hear again those simple words: "Come, follow me," and may we come, just as we are, and know again the depth of your grace and love for us. Give us the power to bring news of the victory of Christ to the peoples of the world as did those early fishermen. Give us the power to provide the same kind of they brought to theirs. Let us all be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus.*

Hymn: Hallelujah, sing to Jesus

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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: Here is bread, here is wine

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Communion

Prayer following communion:

Hymn: Now to Christ who loved us

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"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain."

Praise to the Lord, who leads us into unity! Changed by the Servant Christ, **Send us and together we will go!** Changed through patient waiting for the Lord, **Send us and together we will go!** 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 the Risen Lord, **Send us and together we will go!** 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: He is Lord

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