

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David

THANKSGIVING October 07, 2012

Early Morning Service in the Season of Creation

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.



Introduction to Theme: Do we take our food for granted? Almost certainly yes, in an age when convenience shopping in large supermarkets has become the norm and the alienation of urban consumers from the growing of their food is almost complete. Throughout the Old and New Testaments food and eating together are part of worship and faith. In the Passover meal, in the story of Ruth gathering grain from the fields after the harvest has been collected, in the dietary rules of the Old Testament the connection between land, food and faith is very clear. The central role of bread and wine in this communion service recognises the central role of food and social interaction in the Christian gospel. In Genesis and throughout the Bible food is described as a gift from God but when we are shopping in a supermarket the items on the shelves appear to be more like commodities than gifts. We need to understand that food is not just a cheap commodity but also a gift.

(Silence to consider our response)

Hymn: To bless the earth

806

Prayer: *O God, in your Son Jesus Christ you richly bless us with all that we need, bread from the earth and the bread of heaven, which gives life to the world.*

Grant us one thing more: grateful hearts to sing your praise, in this world and the world to come. Amen.

Exodus 18: **When is enough enough?:** 13 In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14 When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. 16 This is what the Lord has commanded: "Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents.' " 17 The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. 18 But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed.

Quiet reflection and consideration of the statements following.

- we believe that God, as Creator, provides food for all, and not just for some;
- we believe that God, as Redeemer, summons us to a life of gratitude, of sharing, and of hospitality;
- we believe that God, as Sustainer, enables us to act with courage and determination, even in the face of apathy and selfishness.

Hymn: For all your goodness, God 804
 Prayer of Confession: *Generous God, you fill the earth to overflowing with food for all and to spare; we bless you for your generous providing, food to sustain us all our days. Forgive us, that in our selfishness and greed we have thought so often only of our own table, and not of our neighbour's, and have hoarded to ourselves that which you intended for everyone. Redeemer God, you visit the earth in Jesus and show us how to live a life of God-worship; we bless you for your redeeming love, trusting us to follow you in thankfulness, in sharing, and in hospitality. Forgive us, that in our stuttering and stumbling we make excuses, and limp along behind you, too often, unwilling to hold our neighbour's hand. Sustainer God, in the power of the Spirit you show us a vision of how things can be if only we would let you loose to re-order the world as you made it to be. Forgive us, that in our cowardice and confusion we have turned inward and failed to see how we can work with you to make all things new. God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, fill us with life anew; inspire us to lives of gratitude, and of hard, determined action, so that, in our own homes and in the world for which Jesus was content to die, there may be enough food for each, and life abundant for all; so that when He comes again, in His glory, we will be welcomed into His joy as those who, in feeding the hungry, fed Him. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Acts 4: 32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. 33 With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.

Quiet reflection

Hymn: Come you thankful people 803

Invitation Come to this table not because you must, but because you may, not because you are strong, but because you are weak. Come, not because any goodness of your own gives you right to come, but because you need mercy and help. Come because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more. Come, because He loved you and gave Himself for you. Come and meet the Risen Christ, for we are His Body. **This is the table where God intends us to be nourished; this is the time when Christ can make us new.** So come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, for a better life, for a fairer world. **Jesus Christ, who has sat at our tables, now invites us to be guests at his.** The Sacrament of Bread and Wine – where God comes to meet us in the ordinary things of the earth that God has made holy – wheat and grapes, food and drink for our souls and for our bodies, grown in the soil, watered by the rain, ripened by the sun, fashioned by human hands so that the divine purpose may once again be fulfilled.

Communion Hymn: Be present at our table Lord 456
Liturgy at the table (Eat this bread 527) *Distribution*
 Response to the sacrament Hallelujah 294

In gratitude, in deep gratitude for this moment, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to you. Send us out to live as changed people because we have shared the Living Bread and cannot remain the same. Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us. Amen.

Meister Eckhart, the medieval mystic: “If the only prayer you ever said was 'thank-you', you would have said all the prayers. **We go in peace to serve Christ and live lives of gratitude!**”

Hymn: Now to Christ who loved us 554

