

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
November 25, 2012

Early Morning Service in the Season of Creation

The SABBATH TRANSFORMATION



Introduction to Theme: Sabbath is not static but transforming – our gift from a gracious creator... made for us and for fullness of life.

This is the day that the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it. **This is a day to find rest and refreshment and new life.** The Sabbath day is a holy day, consecrated by the Creator as a gift to us – God made Sabbath for us, not we for the Sabbath. We are called to honour and preserve it. **The Sabbath day is set apart, a day of rest to remember what God has given us and what God has done for us.** Together, let us keep the Sabbath.

Hymn: Arise, shine you light has come

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Prayer of Confession: *O Lord of the Sabbath, in your concern for our welfare you have given us this holy day, an opportunity to rest from the weariness of our work and to remember your works in our world and our lives, a time to worship you with our brothers and sisters. On this day you raised your Son, Jesus Christ, from the grave, and on this day you poured out your Holy Spirit on the church. We give you thanks for this holy day. We confess that we have often distorted it to fit our purposes. It has been hard for us to lay our work down. We have sought rest for our bodies but not our spirits. We have failed to remember your mighty and gracious works for us. We have sought recreation instead of worship. Even when we have come to worship, our hearts are sometimes far from you. Forgive us in your mercy, and grant us new hearts. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen*

Sharing the Peace:

Luke 4:16,18-19, 21 *When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read... "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." ...Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

Questions for the conversation

1. How do you understand the good news of Jesus' ministry? Where or when in your life have you had the most success in living this way? What are the greatest challenges for you?

2. Recall some insights from this past week's reflections on the themes of discernment, doing God's will, being "the light of the world," and being in right relationships with others, creation and the Creator. Who can you talk to about these?

3. What would be your first step to live in right relationship with the rest of creation? What issues might you raise at a church meeting when seeking to follow in the footsteps of Jesus?

Hebrews 4:9-13 So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labours as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs. Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

Creating a Meditation:

Sit back and take a deep breath. Think about the goodness of God's creation. Think about how you are an integral part of that creation, about how much God loves you, just as you are. Rejoice in the rest God promises. Stop for a moment to pray. Ask God to help you in those areas of your life where you do not find rest and peace. Discern what you need to do in order to live with more faith in, and obedience to, the Creator.

Hymn: Be still and know **64**

Invitation: The Lord of the Sabbath welcomes you to this meal of remembrance – remember the Sabbath day - remembrance of his sacrifice. **For this is the table where God intends us to find rest, restoration and new life; this is the time that Christ can renew us.**

The observation of the Sabbath was part of God's laws given to Moses. As the writer of the letter to the Hebrews urges, we must "make every effort" to obey the Sabbath way of living.

Sabbath-living was challenging for the Hebrews. And Sabbath-living is certainly challenging for us.

It hardly seems practical or acceptable to "cease" our work. We need to earn money. We must acquire and care for our possessions. We have dependents to look after. We have agendas full of appointments. The details of our busy lives are endless.

However, the concept of Sabbath is meant to define *how* we do our living as much as *what* we live doing. The tradition of Sabbath calls us to embrace a way of life in which we can be holy, living according to God's ways of justice and care for all humanity and creation. In Sabbath-living our way of living is different: we live *in* the world but not *of* the world. We become part of the ongoing re-created world where God reigns.

By living the Sabbath, we are choosing to obey God. In obeying God, we find freedom and rest.

But what does this mean for our practical, everyday life? We cannot simply respond individually. It requires a community of support and mutual challenge. It is often difficult to understand "the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Under the scrutiny of the word of God and through the encouragement of the Christian community, we move forward — both as individuals and as communities.

Hymn: Jesus remember me

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Prayer of Thanksgiving: *The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise. Glorify the Lord with me. Let us together praise His name.* (we continue in prayer) *And so, as we gather at the Lord's table, we recognise the Spirit's Presence among us, and we open our hearts to the Spirit's influence. (Silence) Gracious God, we come knowing that we depend on you for life and truth and love. We come knowing that you welcome us with open and accepting arms. We come ready to meet with you, and be changed by the encounter. By your word and Spirit, O God, sanctify these your own gifts of bread and wine, that the bread which we break may be to us communion in the body of Christ, and the cup of blessing*

which we bless may **be communion in the blood of Christ** *Come,*
holy Spirit, come.

Communion

Prayer following communion

God of Sabbath and sacred seasons. **Renew our hearts and minds**
God of leisure and the Lord's day. **Renew our hearts and minds**
God of transformation **Renew our hearts and minds**

Hymn: Now to Christ who loved us

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