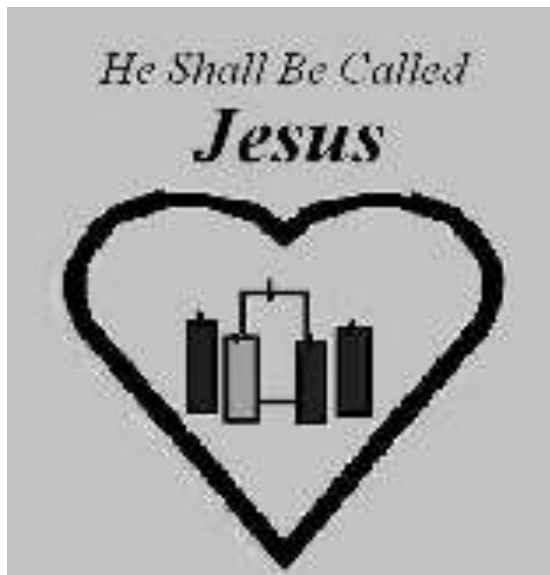


WELCOME TO...

**The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
December 23, 2012**

Early Morning Service in the Season of Advent



Introduction to Theme: Over the four Sundays of Advent this year we have focussed on the following four themes:

- Seeing beyond the horizon of humanity (Luke 21:25-36)
- John the Baptist: prepare the way of the Lord (Luke 3:1-6)
- Responding to prophetic voices (Luke 3:7-18)
- The child of promise (Luke 1:39-45)

This is how God showed love to us: He sent His one and only Son into the world so that we could have life through Him. 1 John 4:9

Gathering: *God comes! So don't let go of all the reasons to love. We will sing a song of Advent to the One who fills our lives with love. God comes! So don't stop lifting your prayers with thanksgiving. We will sing a song of Advent, to the One who hears our words and silence. God comes! So don't stop giving your hearts to God. We will sing a song of Advent to the One who graces us with a love we cannot begin to understand.*

Prayer of Confession: Every notion we have about power, success, wealth, and achievement, God takes and tosses out the window. More importantly, God comes to us, to upset our notion that we have to save ourselves. In Jesus, God comes to us, removing our sin, our failures, our expectations, so we might have new life.

We confess we are not the people you hope us to be, Advent God. The very ones you favour, we too often ignore or ridicule. The ones you knock off their pedestals, we admire and emulate. We are so focused on having more and more, we risk being sent away empty.

Forgive us, Mighty God, and look with grace upon us. We would live secure in your love; we would be the ones of peace for our world, we would seek to do your will, as did Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Silence is kept
Even now—yes, even in this very moment, God comes to us, bringing hope, bringing forgiveness, bringing grace as freely offered gifts to us.

May we open our hearts to the God who is with us, and receive the gifts which have been offered to us. Thanks be to God. Amen

Hymn: Of eternal love begotten 163

Micah 5:2-5a But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

Hymn: This is a story full of love (1-2,4)

504

Luke 1:39-45, (46-55) In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Creating a Conversation:

- "If you want to have power you have to give up love; if you want to love you have to give up power." (see also Phil. 2)
- What would you sing in a Magnificat of your own?

Hymn: O Little Town

164

Invitation: *In company with all believers in every time and beyond time, we come to this table to know the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread. This is the Lord's supper of love. This is the love that God has ordained for all, the love that unites us because it is the essence of God. We come by Jesus' invitation to this holy supper so full of mystery. We come to be one with each other, to taste the essence of heaven in community.*

Magnificat

(inspired by Luke 1: 46-55)

*"How I rejoice in God my Saviour!
For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,
and now all generations will call me blessed."* Luke 1:46-57

Blessed?
They call me blessed?
Well, I'd like to know what part of blessed
I'm failing to understand.
Is it blessed to have pregnancy sickness all day every day?
Is it blessed to have fingers so swollen
I couldn't wear my ring – even if I had one?
Is it blessed to be gossiped about on street corners
and have folk turn their backs on me
when I walk down the street?
Is it blessed to be so bone wearying tired?
Is it blessed to have no one believe me
when I tell them about the angel?
Is it blessed to want so much to do God's will
when it causes so much grief?
Blessed – so this is what it feels like!

Hymn: Jesus remember me

206

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *Lord Jesus Christ you give us contentment and life. You are the One who gives us nourishment. We open our hearts to taste the offering of life you bring. God be with us! Let us lift up our hearts. We lift our hearts to God. Let us give God thanks and praise.*

(concluding with...)

Come, Holy Spirit, come! Bless our food, and bless our drink.

Bless all of us in our eating and drinking at this table that our eyes may be opened, and we may recognize the risen Christ in our midst, and in each other,

Communion

Prayer following communion

Hymn: May God's love

582

I believe that God chooses the meek and the poor
to shame the proud and the rich.

I believe in the incarnate Word,
leaping in a woman's womb, cradled in poverty.

I believe in Jesus, true son of Mary, true Son of God,
who came among us in weakness,
that we might come to know the profound strength
available to common people
who turn to God in trust and with love