

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of  
Saint David  
APRIL 28<sup>st</sup> 2013  
MISSION AWARENESS SUNDAY



**The acts of the early church**

With the death and resurrection of Jesus, the early church formed around the apostles now filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and began a ministry which continues to this day. As we follow the early church we find our own foundation and the basis of our faith.

*Gracious God, Yours is the gift of creation, the rebirth of spring. Yours is the grace that makes all things new. Yours is the Word that speaks a spring of water to slake our thirst. Yours is the urgency that challenges us to mission. Open our minds to the mind of Christ. Open our lips, and we will sing ALLELUIA with sun and moon, with mountain and hill, with all creatures of land and sea. Together we will sing awe to your splendour. Amen.*

Hymn: Come sing O church in joy

767

Prayer of Confession: **My Heavenly Father, I thank You, through Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, that You kept me safe from all evil and danger last night. Save me, I pray, today as well, from every evil and sin, so that all I do and the way that I live will please you. I put myself in your care, body and soul and all that I have. Let Your holy Angels be with me, so that the evil enemy will not gain power over me. Amen** (*Luther's morning prayer*)

Assurance of Pardon: *Answer us in the day of trouble, O God, so that we may lift up the cup of salvation in the presence of your people, giving thanks for all your goodness to us; through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

Hymn: God forgave my sin

774

Scripture: Acts 11: 1-18 Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' But I replied, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But a second time the voice answered from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' This happened three times; then everything was pulled up

again to heaven. At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

#### **WE NEVER DID IT THAT WAY BEFORE**

"The book of Acts is organized to depict the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome. Chapter 11 appears mid-way through this advance, explaining how key figures such as Peter came to accept Gentiles as part of the Jesus movement. Peter's vision is first narrated in Acts 10. After the Gentile Cornelius has a vision in which an angel instructs him to contact Peter, Peter himself experiences a vision in which unclean animals are offered for food. The two men meet and recount their visions, leading Peter to conclude that "God shows no partiality" (10:34), and the Holy Spirit comes upon all those gathered. In chapter 11, Peter recounts the vision to those skeptical of including Gentiles, and they are persuaded by his testimony. In Acts 10-11, Peter's willingness to change his mind about food prompts him to change his mind about people. His vision, the Holy Spirit, and his encounter with Cornelius allow him to discern the interconnectedness of all creation: "what God has called clean, you must not call profane" (11:9). Might changing our own views of food help us do the same? *Julia O'Brian*

#### **Invitation:**

The table is now prepared for us - we all have a place no matter our caste or creed or colour.

**We are invited to share in the feast of God's presence, celebrating here and now all that is meant by being alive.**

The Spirit of God moves in every corner of the world in every age and through all time, calling all people to renew their hope and joy.

**At this table we come together as the guests of Jesus.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *The Lord is here. God's spirit is with us. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise.*

(Continue in thanksgiving) *O God, giver of all that is good,*

**Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. May they be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other**

#### **Communion**

**Prayer after Communion** *Gracious God, you have called us to be the Church of Jesus Christ. Keep us one in faith and service; breaking bread together and telling the good news to the world; that all may believe you are love, turn to your ways, and live to your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

Our sending prayer:

I am no longer my own but yours, put me to what you will Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to Your pleasure and disposal And now glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, You are mine and I am yours. So be it. And this covenant now made on earth, let it be satisfied in heaven. Amen (John Wesley)