

WELCOME TO...

**The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
June 16, 2013**

Early Morning Service

Finding faith in the strangest places



Hymn: Drop, drop, slow tears

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Prayer of Confession:
Assurance of Pardon

Focus Reading Luke 7:36 ff. One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him – that she is a sinner." Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "speak." "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.

Hymn: A Prophet woman (vs. 1-2) 588

“Of course, the real twist can be for us, reading the text today. We love the intruder woman and want to identify with her, right? Sometimes it's hard to find the character we connect with most closely in a story from the Bible. In the prodigal son story, for example, when we take the side of the older brother who has been working hard and doing the right thing all along and has a right to feel outrage at a party being thrown for his good-for-nothing brother, we forget that we probably resemble the prodigal son much more than the righteous older brother. But in this story and in the church, we may find ourselves behaving more like the Pharisee than the open-hearted woman returning in gratitude, even though we find ourselves judging him in our own hearts. Ironically, it's the woman in this story who has both power and freedom: she does what she wants to do, from the bottom of her heart, and she is free of worry about what people think about the propriety of her actions. Rebecca J. Kruger Gaudino sees in her humility an awareness of God's presence that we should all strive to achieve: "From this foundational principle that reorients our lives from self to divine Presence, all the other principles flow: how we bear ourselves, how we speak, how we live in community, and to what degree we may reveal ourselves to others. In all things, we live out of the humility that comes in recognizing God's presence among us" (*New Proclamation Year C 2007*).

Simon, unfortunately, wasn't in tune with God's presence in the midst of his party, in the grace experienced by this woman forgiven, the wisdom and tender love of Jesus, who accepted her gratitude, and his own need for God's mercy and understanding, which were available to him in the person of Jesus, right there before his eyes. Instead, his eyes were clouded by judgment and he missed a golden opportunity for grace. So where do we stand, as a church, in this story? And with whom do we stand? Are we missing something as we work hard to draw lines and pass judgment? What about our hospitality? Are there lines drawn there, or is everyone really, truly welcome, even if they upset the schedule and didn't make it onto the guest list? Are we so busy with the tasks of hospitality (making coffee, setting things up) that we forget the heart of hospitality, and neglect to look at each person, where they are, recognize them as a child of God (even if they are a "fellow sinner") and extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to them?"

Hymn: A Prophet woman (vs. 3-4) 588

Invitation *Come, for all things are now ready. There is a place in God's heart, there is a place at Christ's table, there is a place here and in every welcoming church for all people.*

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.

Hymn: Broken for me (1-2) 550

Great Thanksgiving

Liturgy at the table Broken for me (3-4) 550

Distribution

Response to the sacrament Hallelujah 532

We give you thanks, O God, for calling us together and for sustaining us with this holy meal. This place is sacred, this time is sacred, and in this place and this time we have shared a mystery. May we in every place and time recognize the sacredness of life and may we accept the mystery as we accept your love – with joyful faith and eternal hope. In Christ's name. Amen.

Hymn: Now to Christ who loved us 554