

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
September 15, 2013

Early Morning Service

Illustration by artist Albrecht Dürer in *Stultifera navis* (Ship of fools)



"SHIP OF FOOLS"

The foolish say, "There is no God! We are alone, on our own."

We gather to declare the glory of God in our lives.

The foolish say, "It is your life; you are accountable to no one."

We gather, strengthened by the Spirit, trusting that Christ dwells in our hearts.

The foolish say, "Everything I have is mine; I owe nothing to anyone."

We gather to praise the One who calls us to serve in love.

Hymn: The foolish in their hearts

7

Prayer of Confession: *Life-giving Presence of God, you have always been amongst us and lived within us all the time, but we have been blinded and deafened by so many fears and anxious imaginings. Even as our view of life and living has been distorted by ugliness and evil, still the light of God's love is shining forth, offering enlightenment to our understanding of God's ways; offering empowerment to us so we can accept that Holy God's reign is indeed evolving amongst us; and offering us the reassurance that God's ruling ways have always been to protect, support and care for needy and marginalised people. Regardless of what "the fools" of this world say about God's presence or absence, we will trust in God's gracious mercy, so that in God's time— God's ways will overcome. Amen.*

Assurance of Pardon: *The final folly of the foolish is to think that what is seen is all there is. God gives us a grander vision of the universe filled with love and grace. Never forget the gift of God's redeeming grace.*

Hymn: What a friend (vs. 1-2)

746

Focus Reading Psalm 14

Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their actions are evil; not one of them does good!

The Lord looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God.

But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!

Will those who do evil never learn? They eat up my people like bread and wouldn't think of praying to the Lord.

Terror will grip them, for God is with those who obey him.

The wicked frustrate the plans of the oppressed, but the Lord will protect his people.

Who will come from Mount Zion to rescue Israel?

When the Lord restores his people, Jacob will shout with joy, and Israel will rejoice.

Hymn: What a friend (vs. 3-4)

746

Food for thought for God's fools

*The **ship of fools** is an allegory that has long been a fixture in Western literature and art. The allegory depicts a vessel populated by human inhabitants who are deranged, frivolous, or oblivious passengers aboard a ship without a pilot, and seemingly ignorant of their own direction. This concept makes up the framework of the 15th century book *Ship of Fools* (1494) by Sebastian Brant. An entire fleet sets off from Basel to the paradise of fools. In literary and artistic compositions of the 15th and 16th centuries, the cultural motif of the ship of fools also served to parody the 'ark of salvation' as the Catholic Church was styled.*

“Society seems to be very negative about faith and belief in God and that underlines their own attitudes, and acts as a confirmation that they are right! It must be wonderful to be so certain that you are right! Whereas, we believers are called to be vulnerable, and to accept the Mystery that is God – and to cling to our faith that this is God's own world, and that God's reign will be the opposite of what many people experience daily. We are called to be vulnerable and accept the Mystery that is God.” (© 2013 Joan Stott – “The Timeless Psalms” RCL Psalms Year C. Used with permission)

Hymn: I come with joy (verses 1-2)

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Prayer of Thanksgiving: *Pour out your Holy Spirit on all gathered here, **that we might be your light in the world.** Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine, **that we might be infused with the gift of your nourishing guidance.** Transform us with your nourishing*

grace, even as we eat of this bread and drink of this wine.

*Transfigure us to be your presence in the world, even as we are **redeemed and reclaimed by your great love.** By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at the heavenly banquet. Through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honour and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever more.* (Continue in prayer)

Hymn: I come with joy (verses 3-5)

530

Communion

Prayer following communion

Hymn: Lead me Lord

575

Give us strength, courage and love to sink into a deeper silence with you, into moments of meaning, to glimpses of your glory. Lead us to the place of your presence; entwine our lives with yours. We want to be with you.

**We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
in the name of Christ. Amen.**

*Ship of fools on a cruel sea, ship of fools sail away from me.
It was later than I thought when I first believed you,
Now I cannot share your laughter, ship of fools. (Grateful Dead)*