

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
September 29, 2013

Early Morning Service

"FAITH IN THE FUTURE"



PRESBYTERIANS SHARING SUNDAY

I know the plans I have for you says the Lord

Plans to prosper you and give you a future with hope. (Jer. 29)

"The threats do not wane, The dangers are not imagined, the power to undo is on the loose . . . And in the midst, you speak your word. It is your word that cuts the threat, that siphons off the danger, that tames the powers. You speak and all is made new. You speak your true self of abiding faithfulness, of durable presence, of long-standing reliability. You give yourself in the utterance of "fear not," and we do not fear. We do not fear, because you are with us, with us, and so safe, with us, and so free, with us, and so joyous. We diminish our lives in our feeble anxiety . . . and you veto our anxiety; We cheapen our neighbor with our frantic greed . . . and you nullify our greed with your satiation; We pollute our world in our lust for safety . . . and you detoxify our mess. Now come here and in Afghanistan, here and in Aurora, here and in Newtown, here and in Boston, here . . . and there . . . and there . . . and there. Override the fickleness of it all, And give us faith commensurate with your true, abiding self."

Prayer from the book Aved to Heaven, Rooted in Earth by Walter Brueggemann.

Hymn: Sing a new song unto the Lord

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Focus Reading Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of King Zedekiah of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah, where King Zedekiah of Judah had confined him. Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came to me: Hanamel son of your uncle Shallum is going to come to you and say, "Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours." Then my cousin Hanamel came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the Lord, and said to me, "Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself." **Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord.** And I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales. Then I took

the sealed deed of purchase, containing the terms and conditions, and the open copy; and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard. In their presence I charged Baruch, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, in order that they may last for a long time. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.

For Reflection and Conversation When the word of God comes to Jeremiah and tells him to buy the land, it also helps him to dare to see that there will be more than this impending desolation, more than the realization of his worst warnings, and that there will be life again, with God's people back on their own land, and the most ordinary of human transactions, including those of real estate, resuming once again. That's why Jeremiah orders his secretary, Baruch, whom we meet for the first time here but whose role bears further reflection, to copy and preserve these documents of sale not only for verification but for future generations who will read them and be inspired to hope in their own day. Even though Jeremiah himself wouldn't live to see this happen, he wants to make sure that his descendants would see in the good times the hand of God fulfilling ancient promises, and would, in the bad times, hold fast to those same promises of abiding, faithful love and compassion by a generous but demanding God. As Gary Peluso-Verdend puts it, the hope would live on, even if Jeremiah didn't (*New Proclamation Year C 2007*). And this message, and witness, are for us today, as well, Lisa Davison writes: "Looking forward instead of backward is a testament to our faith and trust in God's ultimate control and desire for a world filled with peace and justice" (*New Proclamation Year C 2010*).

Hymn: Seek ye first the kingdom of God

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Invitation *Come, for all things are now ready. Come to the table and share with all in need: the gift of healing for those in pain, the gift of forgiveness for those in sin, the gift of assurance for those in doubt, and the gift of hope for those in tears. May we who share these gifts share Christ with one another and all God's people.*

This is the table where God intends us to be nourished; this is the time when Christ can make us new. *So come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, for a better life, for a fairer world. Jesus Christ, who has sat at our tables, now invites us to be guests at his. 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: Break now the bread of Life (verses 1-2)

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Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:
Communion

Prayer following communion

Holy, gracious, God, Here at this table your promise of life is made tangible. We have rested in the depth of your love; We have tasted your nourishing, nurturing presence; We accept you into our bodies, into our lives. Together, at this table, you have offered us life. Together, by your grace, we accept the life you offer. And we give you thanks. (Joanna Harader)

Hymn: An Upper Room (verses 4)

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