

**WELCOME TO...**

**The Presbyterian Church of  
Saint David  
December 29 2013**

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**Gathering:** Praise is our cry, O Holy One of Israel, for you have come among us and borne our burdens. Give us open hearts, that we might embrace our suffering sisters and brothers, and welcome Jesus in the hospitality we show to exiles. Amen.

**Carol: Born in the night**

**137**

**Prayers to Ponder:** *Pause, my children, in this space between Christmas parties, and those of the New Year, between gift unwrapping and cleaning up, between longing and thanksgiving, between endings and beginnings, between dismay and joy, between Sacred and ordinary...*

**We pause and remember Whose we are, and Whose we will always be. We pause and remember in Whose name we pray, and Whose love we seek, and hold, and give away.**

*Pause and pray that all may see the world with the eyes of wonder of the newborn Christ, with the loving heart of God's act of self-giving. Pause and pray that we may all treat one another with the honour and adoration Mary and Joseph, shepherds and wise ones, angels and all the heavenly choir showed to the tiny child. In the name of Christ, we pray for every person, living now, gone before, or yet to come, in every nation on earth:*

**Hymn:** In Bethlehem a newborn boy (1-3)

**140**

**Matthew 2:13-23** Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned

from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more." When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

Hymn: In Bethlehem a newborn boy (4-5) 140

### Questions for reflection

1. Why do you think the church tells this tragic story right in the midst of Christmas joy?
2. What have been the "Egypts," the places of refuge and safety, in your life?
3. What is the "Nazareth" of your life, the unexpected home?
4. When have you had to change plans, to re-route your itinerary, to make a new life in a new place?
5. In what ways is God calling you to new places in your life of faith?

**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 table. This is the feast that God has ordained for all, the sacrament 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.*

**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*

Hymn: Jesus remember me

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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: Hark the Herald

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If you choose, you can be instruments of hope in the world. **We so choose, so we go to spread the hope and promise of a coming child.**

If you choose, you can counter the voices of anxiety and despair in the world. **We so choose, so we sing songs of hope because the world can be changed**

If you choose, you can fight against the fear that freezes the heart of many. **We so choose, so we will tell of the love that conquers fear, the love of a child in a manger.**

The choice is ours to make, how we live into the possibilities of Christmas, **the beauty is that we do not live out the choice by our own strength.**

Go with God, who feeds our hopes and quiets our fears  
**Always and everywhere. Amen.**