

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David

March 16, 2014



IN THE NIGHT

Gathering: *We come, reborn in the Spirit, to celebrate our new birth from above. Touch our hearts; make them signs of your love for all men. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen*

Hymn: Christ's is the world

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Holy Spirit of God, invisible like the wind, we do not see you moving among us, but the effect we see - come to our hearts: that we may be renewed and reborn. Open our minds: that we may perceive your kingdom. Lift up our eyes to where the cross of Christ stands for our healing: so may we believe, and in believing not die but have eternal life; through him who in your love for us you sent into the world, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

~ written by Michael Saward

Scripture: John 3:1-17 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted

up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

Hymn: Amazing Grace 670

"I'd like to say a word in defense of Nicodemus. Throughout the Gospels, we read about people who came to Jesus in great need. Sometimes they needed to be healed, sometimes they needed to be fed (remember those loaves and fishes on the hillside?), and sometimes they needed to be forgiven, or even just accepted. Their defenses were down, and most but not all of them were outsiders, powerless and uneducated, with nothing to lose if they admit how hungry they were for God. I believe that Nicodemus was hungry, too. His hunger may not show so easily; he may have been afraid to admit that he was spiritually hungry, but his questions reveal the deep longing he had for the truth that is life, his hunger for new life." (Kathryn Huey)

A prayer to help us when we search in the night

Birth us all anew, O God.

Hear us and help us on our journey.

Help us to grow up again,

to accept not only earthly things but heavenly things,

to lift up your Son and be lifted up ourselves,

to let your Spirit move us beyond our understanding.

God of Nicodemus and all of us,

hear us and help us

even as surely as the Spirit blows among us,

all for the sake of your dear Son, Amen

Invitation: *Come, you welcomed and blessed come, all who hunger and thirst. Jesus calls us to dine as friends, come, God's feast of welcome awaits us.*

Hymn: The son of God proclaim (1-3) 558

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.*

Loving and gracious God who surrounds creation with abundant love, we give thanks and blessings to you. We bless you for your love, made known to us through Jesus, which reassures and reconciles us to you, to ourselves and to one another. Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

(Continue in prayer) By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to the world, Come, Holy Spirit, upon us and what we do here that these your gifts of bread and wine may be for us the body and blood of Christ so that we may bring life, hope, and love to all your world. Through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honour and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever more. (Our Father...)

Hymn: You satisfy the hungry heart (3-5) 538

Communion

Prayer following communion: **Loving God, your word of life gives us a new birth. May we receive it with open hearts, share it with one another, live it with joy, and express it in love. In the spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Closing Reflection "The answer was right there, that night, right there in front of Nicodemus. In every loving, grace-filled moment of our lives, in the life of this church striving to be the Body of Christ in a world that is hungry both physically and spiritually, the answer is right there, in front of us. May we have eyes to see and hearts to love, and to understand. Amen."

Hymn: Now let us from this table rise 556