

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David

April 06, 2014

FROM DEATH TO LIFE



Gathering: *Holy God, Creator of Life, you call us out of our tomb and places of death, offering us the grace of new life. When we see nothing but death and despair, you surprise us with resurrection and life. Call us out of our graves and fill us with your spirit of life, compassion, and peace, In the name of Jesus, your anointed one, we pray. Amen.*

Hymn: Sing a new song

422

Confession: *Hear our prayers, O Lord, for we are in pain. We are ill. We are dying. Unbind us from expectations. Give us strength to live through disappointments. Grant us courage to overcome obstacles. Fill us with your presence and make us living carriers of your love to others who need it. Hear our prayers, O Lord, for those we have named. (silence.) Hear our prayers, O Lord, for those we have not named, the stories we cannot tell and the woes we do not even know. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Hymn: O Christ you wept (vs. 1-2)

604

Scripture: **John 11: selected** Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ... After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ... When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.

The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Hymn: O Christ you wept (vs. 4) **604**

"Perhaps grief, anxiety, financial troubles, hatred, resentment, or a lack of faith has put us in our own tomb of despair. A long time ago, in a far-off land, Jesus stood outside that tomb and called out, "Lazarus, come out!" God is still speaking to us today, calling us out from our tombs of despair, denial, and death to new life, right now, right here. What are those tombs for you and your congregation? In what ways do you participate in what God is doing, today, in your midst, when God brings new life in the face of death? How are you "unbinding" and "letting go" those who have been put into such places of death? Perhaps there are some in your congregation standing around and watching, formulating their judgments and deciding what they'll believe and how much they'll believe it, or maybe they're moving to the center of what's happening, pulling back the "stuff" of death, the things that surround death, and releasing the new life that God has granted, the new life that lies just beneath the surface of what appears bleak and beyond hope. Perhaps there are some among us who are calculating the costs and the possible unpleasantness of giving ourselves over to the power of God, even, ironically, to healing and new life." (Karen Huey)

Invitation: *Tombs are opened, tears are shed and fullness of life is offered. Bread is blessed and broken. Jesus comes and sits at table with Martha and Mary and Lazarus and many friends. The wine is shared. And many believe in the one who is the resurrection and the life. Our meal of the bread and the wine is our opportunity to have our eyes open and find new life in him - we find communion with those far away, communion with those near and communion with those who came before us and will come after us. Friends in faith and love, we are invited to this communion meal. Come and celebrate together.*

Hymn: Come my way, my truth, my life **565**

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 life and new life made known to us through Jesus, which reassures and reconciles us to you, to ourselves and to one another.

As Christ is our resurrection and life, may we share life with others walking the path toward communion with you, the Holy Spirit and Jesus, our friend and brother

(Continue in prayer)

Communion

Prayer following communion:

Hymn: Sent forth by your blessing **775**