

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David

November 02, 2014

Gathering: *Servants and friends of Christ, accept the service with which you have been entrusted. Do not neglect the gift that is in you. Present yourselves to God as approved workers, ever faithful to the Spirit of God. Remember always that Jesus called you friends as well as servants. Attend to prayer, for without God you can do nothing. Spirit of the living God, in every age you have appointed leaders to tell your power, justice, and love. We thank you for brothers and sisters in faith committed to leading and guiding us in your ways and faithful to your words. We give thanks for the evidences of your Holy Spirit that we and our children experience in the community of faith. We commend ourselves and our sisters and brothers to your constant love and guidance. Amen.*



Hymn: Brother, sister let me serve you (1-4) **635**

Prayer: *Lord Jesus you reached out to those on the edge of your society, lepers and sinners - people whom others considered unclean.*

Forgive us when we fail to meet your challenge to identify with those whom society would call worthless.

You showed us that the journey of discipleship is a journey into servanthood and powerlessness.

Forgive us for being tempted to pursue power and to favour competition over compassion.

You, Lord, saw the good in everyone and showed us exactly what it means to be the servant of all, while too often we see others as rivals

in the race for success, influence and popularity.

"Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

Imprint these words on our hearts and put your living Spirit within us, we pray, so that we serve others and you with wisdom, understanding, love and compassion. Amen.

~ written by Moira Laidlaw

Hymn: Brother, sister let me serve you (5-6) **635**

Listening to the scriptures; Matthew 23:1-12

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have people call them rabbi. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father--the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted."

Commentary It was no longer business-as-usual for the Pharisees and scribes, and they don't seem to know what to do about it. They're offended by Jesus' parables that seem to be aimed right at them for their refusal to accept the reign of God as he

experiences it. Jesus uses this teaching moment to instruct his followers about the way they are to live, as humble servant-leaders and servant-teachers. They must not imitate the example they see before them in the Pharisees and scribes. In fact, the rest of this chapter is a long list of "woes" upon those "blind guides" as Jesus recites their offenses and then ends with a deep lament over the failure of Jerusalem to recognize and accept what God was doing in its midst. . . . Like a contemporary Christian wearing a two-pound cross or sporting a bumper sticker on the car reading 'My God Is Alive, Sorry About Yours,' the question can be raised: Is this faith or flash, praise or pomp?" (Kate Matthews Huey)

Focus Questions

1. How would you have reacted to Jesus, if you were a Pharisee?
2. How do self-esteem and humility relate to each other?
3. What are burdens laid on the people today by religion?
4. What value do you see in the "trappings" of religion?
5. How do you react to "bumper-sticker" theology?

Hymn: In loving Partnership (1-2)

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Prayers of the People

God of power and might, wisdom and justice, through you authority is rightly administered, laws are enacted, and judgment is decreed. Assist with your spirit of counsel and strength the Prime Minister and other government leaders in this country in times of crisis and confusion. May they always seek the ways of righteousness, justice and mercy. Grant that they may be enabled by your powerful protection to lead our country with honesty and integrity. We lift up our hearts, O Lord, in intercession for all who carry civic and political responsibilities. Grant that, putting aside all merely selfish ambition, they may seek to be the instruments of your will and carry out your purpose for the welfare of your people; and may they both seek and see your glory in happier human lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, watch over those who are leaders in your Church. Keep them faithful to their vocation and to the proclamation of your message. Teach them to recognize and interpret the signs of the times. Strengthen them with the gifts of the Spirit, and help them to serve others, especially the poor and lowly. Give them a vivid sense of your presence in the world and a knowledge of how to show it to others.

Hymn: In loving Partnership (3-4)

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Invitation: *This is the table, not of the Church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love God and for those who want to love God more. So, come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, because it is Christ who invites you. It is our Lord's will that those who want to find God should meet God here.*" (from *Invitation from 'a Celtic Eucharist'*) *Are you ready to accept this gracious invitation? We are ready! Jesus said: "I am the bread of life. All who come to me shall not hunger, and all who believe in me shall never be thirsty. We are hungry and thirsty. O Lamb of God, we come! We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took his authority as the Christ and offered the bread in thanksgiving and said . . . "Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance. In the same way, and by the same authority, Jesus offered the cup in thanksgiving and said, "Take, drink. This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it in remembrance of me." Come, Holy Spirit. Come. Open our eyes to the mystery of Christ's presence in these ordinary things in these our ordinary lives. May they be for us the very essence of the living Christ in our midst. Through the broken bread . . . We participate in the Body of Christ. Through the cup of blessing . . . We participate in the new life Christ gives. These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God! Come, for all things are ready!*

Hymn: Eat this bread

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Communion

Words of Institution

Prayer after Communion *Thanks be to you, uniting God, for your love and mercy and forgiveness in Christ. May the blessings of this table strengthen our faith, increase our generosity and unify our hearts, for we pray in the name of Jesus, the Risen One. Amen.*

Hymn: For the bread

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