

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of  
**Saint David**  
November 30, 2014



*The coming of our Lord is near, And we wait with hope filled hearts,  
Draw close, God's beloved son, Teach us the wonder of your  
all-embracing love.*

Hymn: Emmanuel, Emmanuel

114

**Prayer of Confession** *Creator God, You created the earth, whole and  
round; You created us to be whole people.*

**But we have become fragmented, cracked and broken.  
We have been broken by false promises, lost relationships,  
shattered trust. We have become cracked with the experience  
of systemic sin: prejudice, oppression and fear. *We have become  
fragmented, building up walls instead of lending hands.* Forgive us when  
we have done the breaking, heal us where we have been hurt.  
*Let Your light shine through our cracks and scars so that we might bring light  
to the world, showing that in You we are made whole. In You we find  
healing. In You we find renewed life. Help us to forgive, to  
love, to mend. Amen.***

**Declaration of Forgiveness** *God is the Potter, we are the Clay.  
When we are cracked and broken, God helps to bring us back together.  
Sometimes we don't feel the same afterwards, but God uses every piece,  
and offers us the newness of life to begin again. Amen.*

Hymn: Let us hope when hope seems hopeless (1-2) 792

**Isaiah 64:1-9** *O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so  
that the mountains would quake at your presence as when fire kindles  
brushwood and the fire causes water to boil  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.  
You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.  
Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;*

*we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity for ever. Now consider, we are all your people.*

**A different perspective:** Isaiah seems filled with both dread and hope: writing in the midst of, and out of, the suffering of God's own people, Israel. Where are you, God? Why don't you act to fix this awful situation we find ourselves in? Why don't you "come down" and make things right?"

Advent is also about the nearness of God, our hope to experience God, right here, "down" here, on earth, God's radiance and power and love. While the commentaries on these Advent texts from the Hebrew Scriptures necessarily speak of hopelessness and repentance and doubt, Nora Gallagher takes a different route, a gentler but unsentimental route to the same conclusion. She draws on Esther de Waal's description of Celtic Christianity, "a practice in which ordinary people in their daily lives took the tasks that lay to hand but treated them sacramentally, as pointing to a greater reality which lay beyond them. It is an approach to life which we have been in danger of losing, this sense of allowing the extraordinary to break in on the ordinary." Patricia De Jong writes in this same spirit: "At Advent, God's people summon the courage and the spiritual strength to remember that the holy breaks into the daily." As we begin a new year in the church, we look ahead with hope and expectation, knowing that God is near in every difficulty and heartache, and yet also far ahead of us, calling us forward into the bright new day of justice, healing, and peace for which our hearts long. (Excerpts from Katherine Huey)

Hymn: Let us hope when hope seems hopeless (3) 792

**A quiet meditation:** In your mind pick up a lump of clay and mold it in your hands. Think about the creation of the world - the touch of God's hands on the very substance of the universe. As you change the appearance of the clay with the touch of your hands, think how the world you live in has touched and changed you... Think of how your hands have touched other people - in love, in anger, in sorrow and in joy... Think of the things and people who have touched your life and molded you into the person you are today... (silence)

Invitation prayer: *Come, all you who are hungry, who thirst for a deeper faith, for a life that counts, a heart that longs to love and serve. Jesus, who has sat at our tables, now invites us to be his guests. Thanks be to God. Who is it that you seek? We seek the Lord our God. Do you seek Him with all your heart? Amen. Lord, have mercy. Do you seek Him with all your soul? Amen. Lord, have mercy. Do you seek Him with all your mind? Amen. Lord, have mercy. Do you seek Him with all your strength? Amen. Christ, have mercy.*

Hymn: Here is bread, here is wine

546

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:

### Celebrating the Sacrament

**Prayer after Communion** *Look, Lord, on an empty vessel that needs to be filled. In faith I am weak—strengthen me. In love I am cold—warm me and make me fervent so that my love may go out to my neighbour. I doubt and am unable to trust you completely. Lord, strengthen my faith and trust in you. You are all the treasure I possess. I am poor, you are rich, and you came to have mercy on the poor. I am a sinner, you are goodness. From you I can receive goodness, but I can give you nothing. Therefore I shall stay with you. (Martin Luther)*

Hymn: O Come, O come, Emmanuel

122

*May God... Take the clay of our lives and shape it to love  
Take the clay of the church and shape it to grace  
Take the clay of the world and shape it to peace  
Take the clay of today and shape it to hope  
And then breathe spirit into all again. For ever and ever. Amen*