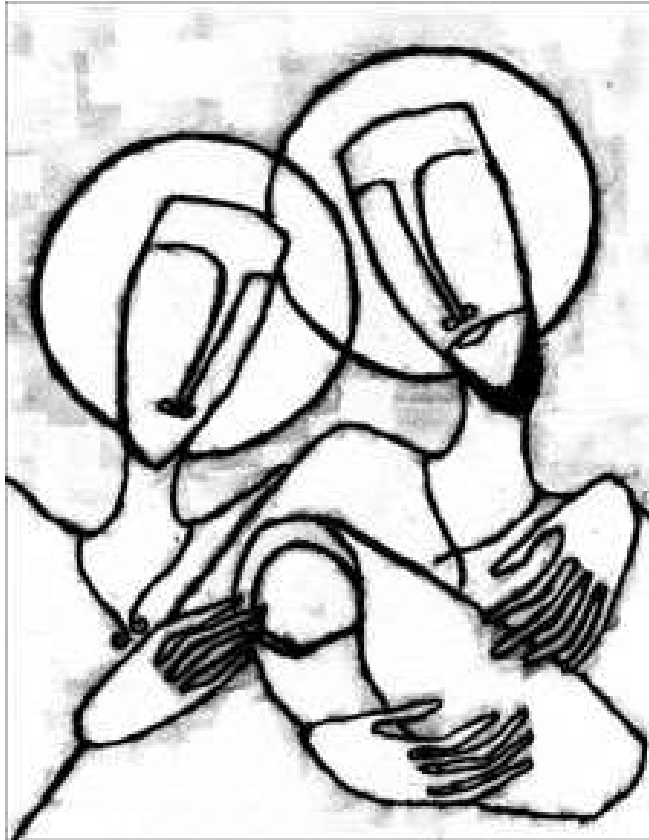


WELCOME TO...
The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
December 21, 2014



The coming of our Lord is near and we wait with love-filled hearts, Draw close, God's beloved son, Teach us the wonder of your all-embracing love. Greetings, favoured ones. The Lord is with you and intends to do great things through you. How can this be? We are ordinary, everyday people. Yet you have found favour through God, and the Holy Spirit will come upon you, guide you, and work through you to care for this world and people God loves so much. For nothing is impossible with God. Here am I, a servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word.

Hymn: Love Divine (1,2) **371**
Prayer: *We come into Your presence, God, as disciples of Jesus who called us to be his brothers and sisters. Plant deep within our hearts his spirit that we may know his love surrounds us here. Love is the doctrine of this church, the quest of truth its sacrament, and service is its prayer. To dwell together in peace, to seek knowledge in freedom, to serve humanity in fellowship, to the end that all souls shall grow into harmony with the Divine - thus do we covenant with each other and with God.*

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 *I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: 'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said: "I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people. I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him; my hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him. My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; and in my name his horn shall be exalted. I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!'"*

Hymn: Love Divine (3,4) **371**
Prayer: *God of Love, you who know our weakness so much more than we do ourselves, fill our hearts with the will to forgive and the grace to be forgiven. It is so hard for us to transcend our hurt, our anger and our pain, and sometimes we despair. Yet somewhere deep inside ourselves your loving and forgiving spirit is at work – help us, O help us to know it and receive it.*

Silence

Be assured that as we confess our sins and pledge to change our ways, we are forgiven.

I Luke 1:26-38 *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.*

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

A different perspective: If we were to list the miracles of Christmas we'd probably talk about virgin births angels, perhaps and stars that light the sky but perhaps there's another miracle: one of Mary saying 'yes' when God asked her to believe and Joseph saying 'yes' when God asked him to trust. They had to change everything about their lives and the birth of the Christ-child wasn't possible until they did. What does it mean for you to say 'yes' to this story? to believe that it might be possible for the darkness to be transformed to light and for peace to come in the world? Those who know the darkest of the world know the fragility of light; we hold our breath as the candles flicker we know they don't always last... the birth of Jesus doesn't make everything right but it shows us that the only way the darkness can be beaten is to say 'yes' to the birth of light... this is the season for miracles and we pray for one today.

Thought: I am favoured by God. Indeed, God wants to do great things through me.

One of those things may be: _____

Because the God of Mary and Jesus is still active, I believe God is still at work in the world, even through me. Therefore, though I do not always understand how and why God is at work, I can still answer, "Here am I, a servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your world."

Hymn: Although I speak

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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.*

Gathering around the table as we celebrate new life about to be born, we remember so many stories shared around tables; tables where bread is broken and cup is poured out, where families gather and generations share, where stories are remembered, refined, reshaped.

Hymn: Here is bread, here is wine

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Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Celebrating the Sacrament

Prayer after Communion *Infinite, intimate God, in this Eucharist we have celebrated your presence with us. May we grow in the divine life of Christ who humbly shared our human life. Fill us with love and send us out to share this good news with others. We ask this through Jesus Christ Emmanuel.*

Amen.

Hymn: Oh Come all ye faithful

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*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*