

WELCOME TO...  
The Presbyterian Church of  
**Saint David**

January 04, 2014



***Call to Worship***

*Let us sing... Praise be to God!*

*Who dared to take on human flesh and dwell among us.*

**Praise be to God!**

*Who did not turn back in the face of evil and death.*

**Praise be to God!**

*Who continues to dance through our lives even now.*

**Let all that have breath sing praise to God.**

*~ copyright by Katherine Hawker*

Hymn: Your word, O God (1-2)

**508**

Prayer: *Merciful God, how many John the Baptists, how many prophets of*

*your light, have we ignored because they were not what we were looking for?*

**How many times have we ignored voices crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord."**

*How many times have we breathed a sigh of relief, and turned our backs on your messengers, because they did not speak the message we expected to hear?*

**Help us hear anew, the cry of those who would lead us to Christ. Tune our ears to your heralds, that we might also testify to your light. Amen.**

Words of Assurance: **(1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)** *May the God of peace sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls us is faithful. It is the Lord who will do this.*

Hymn: Your word, O God (3-4)

**508**

Searching the Scriptures **John 1: 10-18**

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.] He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Hymn: Thanks to God (1-3)

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**A different perspective:** John begins his story long before human history begins, at the very dawn of creation. In this "overture" to his Gospel, he lays out the very themes he will develop later on. The transcendent beauty and lofty theology in John's Prologue may seem too immense, too high-flown, for us to comprehend, but that is, after all, the point of this text: that the transcendent, beyond-words God took on flesh, came to us, found us, sought us out, took on our own existence, with its pains, its sorrows, its vulnerability and its joys. Stephen Bauman says it especially well: "God," he writes, "is embedded with us in the human predicament." In fact, scholars love to say that the Word "pitched a tent" in our midst, a down-to-earth image for such a hard-to-grasp concept (the Greek word is tabernacled). In any case, Fred Craddock eloquently sums up "the bottom line" of what John is saying here about God and that human predicament: "Whatever else John 1:14 means, it does state without question the depth, the intensity, and the pursuit of God's love for the world." What difference would it make if we thought of ourselves, the whole world, as "pursued" by God's love? (as in Francis Thompson's 'Hound of Heaven')

### Going Deeper:

Barbara Brown Taylor develops the theme of bringing a word to life, a word that each one of us "has a gift for bringing to life," whether that word is compassion, justice, generosity, patience, or love. "Until someone acts upon these words," she observes, "they remain abstract concepts--very good ideas that few people have ever seen. The moment someone acts on them, the words become flesh. They live among us, so we can see their glory." Taylor makes the same observation about congregations, who "embody words as well."

Hymn: Thanks to God (4-5)

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Invitation: *Jesus said; I am the light of the world. Follow me and you will never live in darkness but will have the light that gives life. **Jesus said; I am the vine and you are the branches. When you are joined with me and I with you, the harvest is sure to be abundant.** Jesus said; I am the bread that gives life. Come to me and you will never be hungry.*

Hymn: Break now the bread of life

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Great Prayer of Thanksgiving: *(concludes with...)* *Pour out your Holy Spirit on all gathered here, that we might be your light in the world. **Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine, that we might be infused with the gift of your nourishing guidance.** Transform us with your nourishing grace, even as we eat of this bread and drink of this wine.*

### Celebrating the Sacrament

**Prayer after Communion:** (together) **Gracious God, we give you thanks for satisfying our hungry hearts with this holy meal shared in the Spirit with Jesus, your Son, our Lord. Strengthened and refreshed, we go from here to reveal your love and your righteousness in the world . This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Hymn: For the bread (1 and 4)

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*Lord, you have welcomed us, Healed us, restored us, Fed us and empowered us. **Send us out to live and work to your glory. Send us out to reveal your presence. Send us out to declare your love. Send us out to proclaim your goodness. This day and always. Amen.** Grace mercy and peace, from the Creator, Saviour and Counsellor, will be with you now and ever more. Amen!*