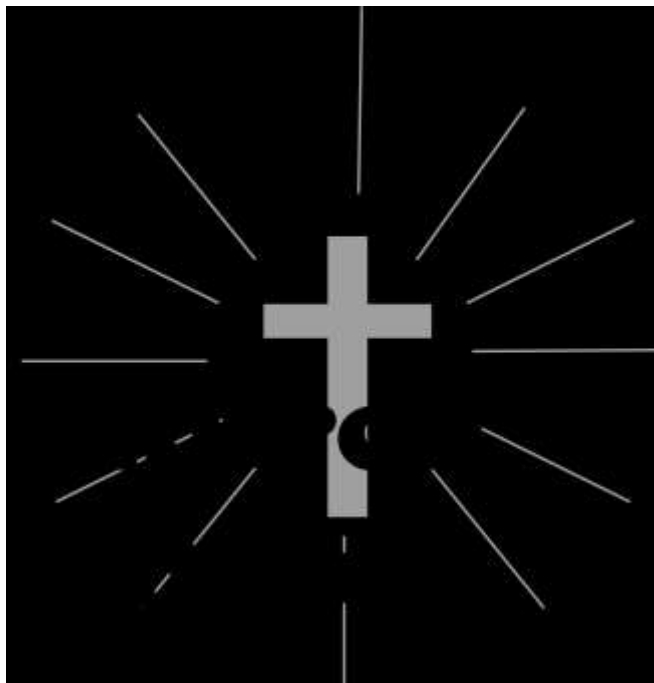


WELCOME TO...  
The Presbyterian Church of  
**Saint David**

April 19, 2015

MISSION AWARENESS SUNDAY



Gathering: *We, whose journeys are always beginning, We, whose mission always awaits us, We, whose visions are bent on loving, We gather here this morning. We gather in these moments to drink from a common cup and share a common loaf. We come to renew our mission and rehearse our message.*

Hymn: Called as Partners (1-2)

587

**Confession:** *Merciful God, the words in Isaiah about not knowing you, and not hearing about you, resonate within us as we link them with the words of Paul - "woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel!" We know that one of the greatest challenges today is to communicate the gospel so that people really hear it. Yet so often our persistence in clinging to old and familiar traditions, practices, and language, block people from hearing and experiencing the good news of Jesus Christ. Woe to us all if we persist in proclaiming the gospel in words and ways which put people down rather than build them up. Forgive us, O God, for clinging to the use of language which excludes people from hearing the great good news about Jesus. (silent confession) Woe to us all if we forget that proclamation of the gospel goes hand in hand with the belief that the hopes and dreams of the downtrodden and powerless can be transformed into reality when we risk stepping out in faith. Forgive us, O God, if our zeal for mission and evangelism is shaped by the state of our finances rather than the promptings of the Holy Spirit. (silent confession) And now, our gracious God, strengthen us with the Holy Spirit to do all for the sake of the gospel, so that we and all those to whom it is proclaimed may share in its blessings. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen*

Hymn: Called as Partners (3-4)

587

**A MISSION AFFIRMATION**

As God sent Christ to us, so Christ sends us into the world.  
We are here to proclaim Christ in word and deed.  
Mission is evangelism, the offer of salvation to all people in the power of the Holy Spirit, to be received through faith in Christ. It asks people to repent of their sins, to trust Christ, to be baptized, and to enter a life honouring Jesus as Lord.  
Mission is service, a call to help people in need and to permeate all of life with the compassion of God.

**Mark 16** 14 Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those

who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. ... 19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

**Reflection: "Go to the people. Live among them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build on what they have."**

Our Celtic forbearers were credited with creating a mission model that was radically different than the church had used throughout the Roman Empire.

George Hunter 3 in his work *'Celtic Evangelism'* wrote concerning this approach to mission: "Understanding the target populations and the life of the common people was indispensable. These bearers of the good news quickly learned that the people were more responsive when they knew they were understood and that, when seekers were welcomed into the fellowship, the faith was "more caught than taught." p. 56.

We have been floundering in the Presbyterian tradition for a century on the 'how' of mission – the methods of modern evangelists often leave us cold and yet we cannot find our own authentic voice with which to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We create interesting sounding approaches like "Face to face evangelism" but ever-so-often in such an encounter we get tongue tied as if we had nothing meaning to say. We express ourselves through 'Service Evangelism' as first proposed by one of my Princeton Professors, Richard Armstrong, but often don't make the necessary connection between the "Service" and the "Evangelism – the sharing of the Good News". So, what is the future of "Mission" in the future.

Hymn: Let us talents and tongues employ

563

**Invitation:** *God is with us. Here in this place; at this time of sacred refreshment and renewal. Called in grace and gifted in love.*

*Here we find bread for the journey. And wine to make us glad.*

**Hymn:** For the bread (1-2) 549

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *Let us bless the bread that gives itself to us with its terrible weight, its infinite grace. Let us bless the cup poured out for us with a love that drenches, that makes us anew. Let us gather around these gifts simply given and deeply blessed. And when we are finished let us go bearing the bread, carrying the cup, laying the table within a hungry world. We come to the Table where, by the presence of the Spirit, bread becomes the grace we need, the cup offers us the hope for which we long.*

**Taking them up, you transfigure them into that sacred meal of love which strengthens us in Christ. Amen.**

**Hymn:** For the bread (3) 549

### Communion

**Prayer following communion:** Most gracious God, source of all blessing, we give you thanks for inviting us to share this meal as your family. Strengthen us to be a blessing to one another and to all people, glorifying you in everything we do and say, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Hymn:** For the bread (4) 549

Benediction: *Christ has no body now on earth but ours, No hands but ours, no feet but ours. Ours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion looks out to the world, Ours are the feet with which Christ goes about doing good and ours are the hands with which Christ blesses us now. Love be in my countenance, Benevolence in my mind, Compassion in my heart, and my life a sacrament of your grace.*