

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

September 27, 2015



***FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS***

*"No man is worth his salt who is not ready at all times to risk his body – to risk his well-being – to risk his life – in a great cause." – Theodore Roosevelt*

*The short story of Esther is full of all sorts of things we find in the most entertaining movies: irony and intrigue, a thickening plot, clever wits and evil villains, royal splendor and a weak ruler, and, of course, the hero who rises to the challenge and saves the day. Only this time, the hero is a heroine, and not at all a*

*likely one. We read, for example, in the first chapter, about the earlier queen, Vashti, who stood up to the king and paid the price for her disobedience: the king's legal experts and sages were appalled that her actions might cause the women of the kingdom to "look with contempt on their husbands," too (1:17). No wonder that Vashti was banished from the king's presence.*

Opening Prayer: *Loving God of power and justice and peace, in our broken world we seek a new order where there is courage to speak truth to power. We seek a new order where there is mutual support in church and community. We seek a new order where there is abundant time for healing. We seek a new order where there is peace and freedom for all.*

Hymn: Nothing can trouble

**617**

**Call to Reconciliation** *We've tried to stop, haven't we? All the foolishness which causes us to stumble, all the mistakes which hurt others, all the words of peace we might speak, but don't. Let us join our voices as we open our souls to that tender Heart who longs to forgive us, praying, When sin and death hover around us, like famished vultures, you fill us with new strength so they cannot feed on us; when our bitterness clamps tight around our hearts with its steel-like teeth, you pry us loose with your scarred hands so we might walk in faith with you; when we stack our hurts one on top of the another, like kindling wood, ready to set the match of our anger to the pile, you pour your spirit of forgiveness upon them, until they are soaked so thoroughly, nothing can ignite them. Our help, our hope, our life, our peace are truly found in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen! (Silence is kept)*  
*The good news is this: God loves the world so much as to make it a fit place to live; God loves us so much as to reshape us into people of faith. Like a cup of cold water, forgiveness revives us, restores us, gives us new life. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.*

Hymn: I'm gonna live so God can use me (1-2)

**648**

**Esther 7:1-6, 9-10** So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be

granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me - that is my petition - and the lives of my people -- that is my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king." Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

Hymn: I'm gonna live so God can use me (3-4) **648**  
 "Esther catches the eye of the King and soon becomes the first lady of the realm. She is Hebrew and, like the holocaust, her people are in danger. Genocide is a possibility. She has been able to pass for a non-Jew, but Mordecai her mentor calls her to task, asking her to consider whether God has brought her to the throne for "just a time as this." There is a divine movement running through history and her life, and she has the opportunity to respond to the call. She can say "no" and it appears she is a bit reluctant to come out of the closet, but like Jesus' mother Mary, she says yes to a risky and provocative invitation. She is not predetermined or compelled to declare herself; freedom is real here. She can choose safety, but she responds to the divine call to save her people and free the king from the influence of a ruthless, self-serving counselor. Esther risks everything to save her people. Her sense of self goes beyond personal well-being to embrace the well-being of the Hebrews. She is truly a person of stature who recognizes her vocation and the reality that her responsibility is for others as well as herself. She grows in stature, moving from self-interest and self-preservation to a sense of self that embraces the future of others. This is something to celebrate and emulate. The story of Esther begs the questions: *Whose daring risk-taking do we need to celebrate – both in the past and in the present? Where are we called to go beyond self-interest to embrace the well-being of others as significant to our survival and success?*

*What might we risk to save the lives of others? Whom are we obliged to take risks for their survival?*

Hymn: Jesus calls us here to meet him (1-2) **528**

**Affirmation at the Table:** *I believe that bread comes from grain that grows in the wind and the rain with the farmers' help far from the eyes of city folk. I believe that bread comes from love- the love of God, the love of the farmer, the love of the baker's hands, the love of those who bring it to me. I believe that bread can be and should be broken and shared and given to all persons until all have enough and then some. I believe that Jesus loved bread and took it and broke it and blessed it and fed his disciples and asked them to feed us forever. I believe enough in bread to want it from Jesus to want it to nurture me to want his life through it to want to give life through it. I believe that his body as bread feeds me and as part of his body. I want to be bread for others. I believe the Spirit will help me as well Jesus' people. Amen. ~ from Bread for the World Worship Aids II,*

Hymn: Jesus calls us here to meet him (3) **528**

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *The Lord is here. God's spirit is with us. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise. Maker of the fields, forests, and streams, your generous goodness comes to us new every day. By the movement of your Spirit over our waters, at our tables, and among our gatherings, help us to acknowledge your goodness, give thanks for your gifts, extend our table to the stranger, and care for the land and water we share on this good earth, through Jesus Christ, the fruitful vine, and our bread of life. (the prayer continues)*

Hymn: Jesus calls us here to meet him (4) **528**

### Communion

**Prayer following communion:** *Lord Jesus, many of us are waiting for you: the war-torn are waiting for peace, the hungry are waiting for bread. the refugees are waiting for a homeland, the sick are waiting for healers. At this table we have remembered and now we wait O Lord, come quickly, we pray. Amen.*

Hymn: Go now in Peace **622**