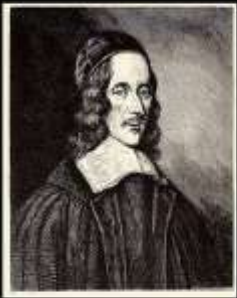


WELCOME TO...
The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
October 11, 2015



Thou hast given so much to me, Give one thing
more, - a grateful heart; Not thankful when it
pleaseth me, As if Thy blessings had spare days,
But such a heart whose pulse may be Thy praise.

(George Herbert)

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IN EVERYTHING, GIVE THANKS

Eternal God, the refuge and help of all your children, we praise you for all you have given us, for all you have done for us, for all that you are to us. In our weakness, you are strength, in our darkness, you are light, in our sorrow, you are comfort and peace. We cannot number your blessings, we cannot declare your love:

For all your blessings we bless you. May we live as in your presence, and love the things that you love, and serve you in our daily lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

~ written by St. Boniface (ca. 672-754)

Hymn: Give thanks for Life

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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: Let all things now living

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Matthew 6:25-33 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you - you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Walter Brueggemann, "The Liturgy of Abundance, the Myth of Scarcity: Consumerism and Religious Life," *Christian Century*, 116 (10), March 24, 1999. *The Bible starts out with a liturgy of abundance. Genesis I is a song of praise for God's generosity. It tells how well the world is ordered. It keeps saying, "It is good, it is good, it is good, it is very good." It declares that God blesses--that is, endows with vitality--the plants and the animals and the fish and the birds and humankind. And it pictures the creator as saying, "Be fruitful and multiply." In an orgy of fruitfulness, everything in its kind is to multiply the overflowing goodness that pours from God's creator spirit. And as you know, the creation ends in Sabbath. God is so overrun with fruitfulness that God says, "I've got to take a break from all this. I've got to get out of the office."*

And Israel celebrates God's abundance. Psalm 104, the longest creation poem, is a commentary on Genesis I. The psalmist surveys creation and names it all: the heavens and the earth, the waters and springs and streams and trees and birds and goats and wine and oil and bread and people and lions. This goes on for 23 verses and ends in the 24th with the psalmist's expression of awe and praise for God and God's creation. Verses 27 and 28 are something like a table prayer. They proclaim, "You give them all food in due season, you feed everybody." The psalm ends by picturing God as a great respirator. It says, "If you give your breath the world will live; if you ever stop breathing, the world will die." But the psalm makes clear that we don't need to worry. God is utterly, utterly reliable. The fruitfulness of the world is guaranteed. Psalm 150, the last psalm in the book, is an exuberant expression of amazement at God's goodness. It just says, "Praise Yahweh, praise Yahweh with lute, praise Yahweh with trumpet, praise, praise, praise." Together, these three scriptures proclaim that God's force of life is loose in the world. Genesis 1 affirms generosity and denies scarcity. Psalm 104 celebrates the buoyancy of creation and rejects anxiety. Psalm 150 enacts abandoning oneself to God and letting go of the need to have anything under control.

Later in Genesis God blesses Abraham, Sarah and their family. God tells them to be a blessing, to bless the people of all nations. Blessing is the force of well-being active in the world, and faith is the awareness that creation is the gift that keeps on giving. That awareness dominates Genesis until its 47th chapter. In that chapter Pharaoh dreams that there will be a famine in the land. So Pharaoh gets organized to administer, control and monopolize the food supply. Pharaoh introduces the principle of scarcity into the world economy. For the first time in the Bible, someone says, "There's not enough. Let's get everything." ...

It is, of course, easier to talk about these things than to live them. Many people both inside and outside of the church haven't a clue that Jesus is talking about the economy. We haven't taught them that he is. But we must begin to do so now, no matter how economically compromised we may feel. Our world absolutely requires this news. It has nothing to do with being ... liberals or conservatives, socialists or capitalists. It is much more elemental: the creation is infused with the Creator's generosity, and we can find practices, procedures and institutions that allow that generosity to work. Like the rich young man in Mark 10, we all have many possessions. Sharing our abundance may, as Jesus says, be impossible for mortals, but nothing is impossible for God. None of us knows what risks God's spirit may empower us to take. Our faith, ministry and hope at the turn of the millennium are that the Creator will empower us to trust his generosity, so that bread may abound.

Hymn: We come as guests invited (1) 524

Invitation to the Table: *This is the meal lovingly set. This is where bread and wine for bodily nourishment and spiritual hunger are given and received.*

This is food for the sinner and the saint, the rich and the poor, the weak and the strong. It is a blessing for the proud and the humble, the lost and the wise, the bold and meek. This is the meal lovingly set and all are welcome.

Hymn: We come as guests invited (2) 524

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: We come as guests invited (3) 524

Communion

Prayer following communion: *Help us rise in your resurrection power from this table where you, the Ruler of the Universe, have served us by your own hand, that we may extend your arms of peace to a world at war. This we ask through Christ, in Christ, with Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit.*

Hymn: Go now in Peace 622