

WELCOME TO...
The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David

November 29, 2015

IN HOPE AGAINST HOPE

Call to worship: *The coming of our Lord is near, and we wait in joyful expectation, **Draw close, Lord Jesus Christ, shed your light on all that is filled with darkness.** The coming of our Lord is near, and we wait with hope filled hearts, **Draw close, God's beloved son, teach us the wonder of your all-embracing love.** The coming of our Lord is near, And we wait attentive to the signs of his coming, **Draw close, Lord Jesus Christ, God beyond imagining draw close** Amen*

waiting
waiting
waiting
waiting

Hymn: Oh come, Oh come (vs. 1-2)



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Prayer: *Guide us through this season with quiet, glad anticipation.*

Help us to pay attention to the poor and needy, and to the lonely among us. Give us a spirit of reflection, patience with each other, and hearts brimming with thanks. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: Oh come, Oh come (vs. 3-4)

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Scripture Luke 21:25-36 *"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

"So there have been many disappointments when again too much hope, even in the church, has been placed in what people in general, humanity, and we ourselves in particular can do. One of the things we should all have had thoroughly reinforced out of our experience in recent years, in so far as our hopes have been disappointed, is that *it is very easy to say* that our hope is founded on trust in God and not in humanity, but we are always inclined to imagine it is all our responsibility. We are recalled again and again to trust in **God alone**. When we do, blessings come in the most unexpected ways. It was the unexpected character of the coming of the Lord that Jesus spoke about in those parts of the gospel about the coming of the Kingdom such as we read this morning. We might say here it is, or there it is, or now is the time, but the Lord comes into our lives and into our world in ways that we do not expect. Especially when things look threatening, fearful, even overwhelming and hopeless, that is the very time when we can have hope. It was the Danish founder of existentialism, Kierkegaard who said, "We hope only when we cease to

hope". It is only when we see that all our human hopes have been built on false foundations that we can begin truly to trust in God. The visionaries of old knew that when the foundations are shaken it is time to expect great things. Jesus said, (Luke 21:26-28) *People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. {27} Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. {28} Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."* Is this visionary language of fear and hope helpful to you? How do you react to such imagery?

Hymn: Oh come, Oh come (vs. 5) 122

Advent in the Dark

We wait in the darkness, expectantly, longingly, anxiously, thoughtfully. The darkness is our friend. In the darkness of the womb, we have all been nurtured and protected. In the darkness of the womb the Christ-child was made ready for the journey into light. It is only in the darkness that we can see the splendour of the universe – blankets of stars, the solitary glowings of the planets. It was the darkness that allowed the Magi to find the star that guided them to where the Christ-child lay. In the darkness of the night, desert people find relief from the cruel relentless heat of the sun. In the blessed desert darkness Mary and Joseph were able to flee with the infant Jesus to safety in Egypt. In the darkness of sleep, we are soothed and restored, healed and renewed. In the darkness of sleep, dreams rise up. God spoke to Joseph and the wise men through dreams. God is speaking still. Sometimes in the solitude of the darkness our fears and concerns, our hopes and visions rise to the surface. We come face to face with ourselves and with the road that lies ahead of us. And in that same darkness we find companionship for the journey. In that same darkness we sometimes allow ourselves to wonder and worry whether the human race is going to survive. And then, in the darkness we know that you are with us, O God, yet still we await your coming. In the darkness that contains both our hopelessness and our hope, we watch for a sign of God's hope. For you are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

Hymn: Emmanuel 114

Invitation to the Table: *The Bread we break is the Bread of Life. The Cup we share is the Cup of Promise. These are gifts from God for the people of God.*

Come and eat. For all is now ready.

Hymn: Let us break bread together (1-2) 548

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. God of the blessed life... (continue in prayer) And now, in Christ, we dare ask: Give us courage to be your people, to show your hope, peace, joy and love this Advent season and to be a part of that waiting and watching community until the day when Christ comes again in peace and we sing your praise and glory forever. Pour out your Holy Spirit... we pray in Jesus name. Amen.*

Hymn: Let us break bread together (3) 548

Words of Institution

Hymn: Behold the lamb of God 525

Communion:

Prayer following communion: *O Emmanuel, hope of the nations and their Saviour: come and save us, Lord our God.*

Lord Jesus, come soon!

Hymn: For the bread which you have broken 549

Sending: *Lord Jesus Christ, we await your coming,*

We wait filled with hope,

Knowing your light will shine in the darkness.

We wait anticipating your peace,

Believing that one day it will fill our world.

We wait embracing your love,

May we reach out to share it with our neighbours.

We wait with joy,

Filling us with expectation of your birth.

Lord we wait,

Come soon and fill us with your life.