

WELCOME TO...  
The Presbyterian Church of  
**Saint David**  
December 20, 2015



## WHAT DOES “LOVE” LOOK LIKE

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*

Hymn: Of eternal love begotten 163

Prayer: *Holy God, you promised to do great things for us and with us, yet we do not trust you. You extend your mercy to us and offer it to others through us, yet we do not trust you. You lift up the humble, you fill the hungry with good things, and yet we still do not trust you.*

*Forgive us, and help us to trust in the promises you have given us. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

Assurance of Pardon: *Be assured that God’s love is sufficient, we have been given all that we need. God hears our cries, and comes to save us. Through Christ we may lay aside our sins; through Christ, we know we are safe.*

Hymn: May God’s love (3-4) 582

**Crosby Stills, Nash and Young:**

**Carry on, love is coming, love is coming to us all.**

Where are you going now my love? Where will you be tomorrow?  
Will you bring me happiness? Will you bring me sorrow? Oh, the  
questions of a thousand dreams, what you do and what you see...

**Scripture Luke 1:46-55 Mary’s Song of Praise**

<sup>46</sup> *And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.*

*Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.*

*He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.*

*He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.’*

The blessedness that Mary celebrates stands in stark contrast to our culture's attitude. By our standards she does not look at all blessed. God has chosen her to be the mother of the messiah, but in practical terms what does that mean for her? She is not from a family that can afford expensive food or clothing. She is a nobody, a peasant girl from a small village. Her friends and neighbors see her as a disgrace because she is unmarried and pregnant (see Joseph's initial reaction to her pregnancy in Matthew 1:19). Furthermore, as she will soon learn from Simeon if she hasn't perceived it already, being the mother of the messiah is scarcely an unmixed blessing. She will bear the unspeakable grief of watching as her son is rejected, shamed, and crucified: "This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel ... and a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:34-35). Despite all this, Mary praises God for honouring her.

Hymn: May God's love (3-4) 582

**Devotional: A Love Like That** He couldn't do anything for himself. Born with cerebral palsy, he sat in the wheel chair loving every second of the Christmas musical. He faces challenges that I can't even imagine. His body wrecked by a disease with no cure. He sat in the back of the auditorium, perhaps wanting not to distract. And sitting next to him was a proud mother, I couldn't help stealing a glance throughout that evening, to see her stroking his hair, wiping his mouth and smiling all the while. She adored him.

I had to meet this amazing mother. She was a single mom. How do you do this all by yourself?" I asked. "He's my life. He's the greatest blessing that ever happened to me," she said. This two-person family had an eternal affect on me. I received a glimpse of the love God has for me. Despite my constant battles with sin and personal rebellion, God loves me like that. No doubt you've already heard the familiar words of "O Holy Night" this year. Don't miss the truth of the final verse: *Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love and His gospel is peace.* If you want to know how to love one another, look at the love that sent Jesus to earth to live a life of love and pay the price for all of our sins. It's all about love. This isn't a love of fancy words and impossible tasks. This is a love that says, "I am willing to love you no matter what." We can love because He first loved us.

**Invitation to the Table:** *In company with all believers in every time and beyond time, we come to this table to know the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread. This is the Lord's supper of love. This is the love that God has ordained for all, the love that unites us because it is the essence of God. We come by Jesus' invitation to this holy supper so full of mystery. We come to be one with each other, to taste the essence of heaven in community.*

Hymn: This is a story full of love (1-3) 504

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 justice, grace, mercy, peace, and love, and to be a part of your transformation of our world 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: This is a story full of love (4-6) 504

**Words of Institution**

Hymn: Behold the lamb of God 525

**Communion:**

**Prayer following communion:** *The bread has been broken, the cup has been poured, the meal has been shared. Gracious God, we give thanks for bread for the journey, for your wisdom guiding us along the way. May there be friends to share the road as we dare to believe that you walk beside on the journey of life. Amen.*

Hymn: Now to Christ who loved us 554

Sending: *Never put your faith in worldly status, and never underestimate your heavenly importance. My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. Let your trust in the coming of Christ soar within you like wings of joy. Go out into the world and serve one another as those who bear the image of God. My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. Grace, mercy and peace, from God our Creator, through Jesus our Saviour, in the community created in the Holy Spirit, be with you this day and evermore. Amen!*

