

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
January 31, 2016



No [person] is excluded from calling upon God, the gate of salvation is set open unto all: neither is there any other thing which keeps us back from entering in, save only our unbelief.

John Calvin

Gathering: *God of grace upon grace, you give us in an abundance the means of grace whereby we might come to you – a word to guide us, a prayer to strengthen us, a sacrament to full us. We thank you for every gift in abundance. Fill us now so we might have an extravagance to offer to others. We ask this in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever. Amen.*

Hymn: All creatures of our God and king (1-3)

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Lord of all creation, we worship you this day with great adoration, As a people chosen by you to bear witness to your Kingdom.

Enlightened by the Spirit, we acknowledge that all are invited to participate in this Kingdom, “For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,

abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.” (Psalm 86:5)

We see throughout the Bible you often champion those who reside at the fringes of

society, Just as you called Israel out of slavery in Egypt; just as Jesus dined with the outcast. Open our haughty hearts that we may see the plight of those considered “worthless;” Remind us that you see us all as your children; no one is beyond the reach of your redeeming love. Inspire us to seek justice for excluded peoples, whether that includes us or our neighbours; Show us how to extend your compassion to all who call upon your name. We seek your guidance in gathering those excluded, those whom the world labels “others;” We listen when you say, “If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you.” (John 15:18) Preserve us from passing judgment upon others on the basis of colour, sexual orientation, or class; And grant that we may keep your Church open to all who seek your Name. Amen.

Hymn: All creatures of our God and king (1-3)

433

Prayer of Confession Wise and wonderful Creator of infinite variety, Forgive our petty striving to squeeze You and Your creation into our conventions. God of mercy and compassion for the oppressed, the excluded, the ignored, Forgive the many ways we pass judgment on others different from ourselves. Though You created us with wondrous diversity, We have tried to restrict one another into limited ways of being and doing, and we are all the losers. Forgive us and heal us of our racism, heterosexism, classism, sexism and all other evils that keep us from appreciating your abundant, manifold creation. Amen.

Silence is kept

Assurance of Pardon:

A reading from scripture: Luke 4: ²⁴ And he said, ‘Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s home town. ²⁵ But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶ yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷ There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.’ ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

Comments by Bob Cornwall: The references to Elijah and Elisha would fit with Luke's overall vision of the gospel moving from Judaism into the Gentile world. Luke's audience was likely composed of Gentile Christians. It seems to represent the growing tension between Jewish and Gentile Christian communities. In the book of Acts, Luke tells us that when Paul encounters resistance in the synagogues he moved to Gentile communities (Acts 13:44-47). In this particular case Jesus tells the home crowd that their resistance to the Gospel allows for the Gospel to go elsewhere, to places that are more receptive to the message of Jubilee. To illustrate his point, Jesus mentions two specific instances. The first example is that of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath. Why did Elijah go to this foreign woman to seek refuge? Weren't there any widows in Israel who could minister to him (but of course that's the point; he was *persona non grata* in Israel). So Elijah sought refuge in the land of the enemy, bringing blessing to a Gentile. The second is like unto it—Naaman the Syrian general came to Elisha to seek healing from his leprosy. Why did this leper experience cleansing when the lepers of Israel did not? And the people got angry, really angry, so angry they wanted to kill Jesus.

As we listen to this encounter, and Jesus' provocative sermon, do we hear something familiar? Do we hear in the exchange that which is occurring now around us?

Hymn: You are holy, you are whole

828

Prayer of the Day *God, source of all life, we pray:* **Fulfill your promise and bless us with your presence. Without you we cannot live as a new creation. Only you lead us into the truth.**

Only you broaden our horizon and our heart so that we can accept each other with empathy and without prejudice - whatever our culture and tradition, our gender, our sexual orientation, or our age and education may be. Each day transform us so that we may become more human, more friendly towards our neighbour and all your creation. Make us co-workers and partners In your work of love and liberation.

May evil be overcome with good in us and around us. May your will prevail. For your endless mercy hear our prayers. Accept the grateful praise of your name. Amen.

*There you go again, God, moving to the margins,
taking love to the outcast and the alien,
breaking through the barriers we've constructed from our
prejudice, a light that shines into the world's dark corners;
unfettered by our selfishness, unhindered by our blindness,
there you go, defying our expectations,
surprising us with the wideness of your grace.
There you go again, God, slipping through our fingers,
escaping from the boxes put around you,
crossing fences of theology we build to hold you prisoner,
a wind that blows beyond our closed horizons;
uncaptured by our doctrines, unbounded by our dogmas,
there you go, defying our expectations,
surprising us with the freedom of your grace.
There you go again, God, calling us to a journey,
prodding us to leave our shells of comfort,
bidding us to examine the rigid shelters of our thinking,
a voice that reaches deep within our souls;
undiscouraged by our stubbornness, patient in our fearfulness,
there you go, defying our expectations,
surprising us with the closeness of your grace.*

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Invitation: *Christ invites us all to this Holy Feast. As we gather this morning, we remember our sisters and brothers from every time zone around the globe. As today's sunlight inches across land and sea Christians gather to celebrate their place in God's family. All are invited and all are welcome. Come, for the meal is ready!*

Hymn: O holy Father

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Great Prayer of Thanksgiving *May the Spirit of the Lord be upon you!*
And also upon you!

Offer your hearts to the One who proclaims God's grace.

Our hearts are open to God, who brings us good news.

Join in declaring the glory of God to all the world.

Day to day, our lips proclaim the wonders of our God.

(we continue in prayer) Pour out your Spirit upon the gifts of remembrance and the people who come from the four corners of life. And when you gather us together at the Feast to come, when we sit down at the Table with

our sisters and brothers, we will bow our heads and worship you forever.

Amen

Hymn: Eat this bread

527

Communion

Prayer following communion (together)

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your spirit to give ourselves for others. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Hymn: For the bread (vs 4)

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Let us in faith receive the Divine word that challenges us Lord help us strive wholeheartedly under the promptings of our faith to work in the building of a world ruled by love. Enable us to walk steadfast towards the indescribable future that you promise to all who possess a growing faith in you.



INCLUSivity

Go in peace and confidence in the Lord. Thanks be to God