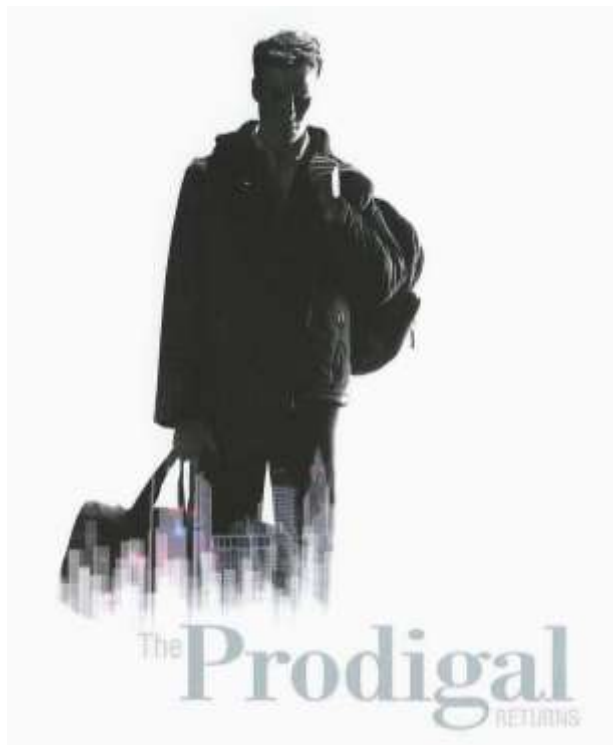


WELCOME TO...
The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
March 06, 2016



The return

Come, let us celebrate the forgiving, reconciling love of God. For once we were lost and felt so far away; now we have been found and welcomed home. Know that God's love is lavished upon you forever. We rejoice at the news of forgiveness and hope! Come, let us celebrate and praise the God of Love. AMEN!

Hymn: Amazing Grace (vs. 1-2) **670**

Prayer of Confession: *Amazing God, amazing grace the space between us is too great— this agonizing expanse between you and us: the rift we have created by demanding our share. The distance we have put between us as we flee to a far country. The resentment we hold when things don't seem fair. Our refusal to join your gracious party. Forgive each selfish request each step away each bitter thought each joyless rejection. Forgive us and run toward us with open arms.*

silence

Assurance of Pardon (from Hosea 6) *Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth.'*

Hymn: Amazing Grace (vs. 3-4) **670**

Prayer of the Day: *Gracious God, it was said of the Prodigal Son that he "came to himself."*

Help us to wake up to ourselves, and to you.

Set us free from the illusion of trying to be perfect so that we might be more fully human.

Help us not to chase after an imaginary life, and to find satisfaction in our real lives.

And turn us away from our self-rejection

so that we might see that Your arms open in welcome. Amen

Hymn: Amazing Grace (vs. 5-6) **670**

❖ **Scripture: Luke 15 (Prodigal – wastefully extravagant. Return to relationship--reconciliation--is a powerful theme in today's scripture, but this is not an easy homecoming. While "Welcome**

home" may sound all warm and fuzzy, the return home itself presents all sorts of challenges): "There was a man who had two sons.... Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"



Barbara Brown Taylor's delightful reflection on the older brother recalls what it felt like to be the oldest child herself, watching younger ones get away with so much more than she had: instead of the punishment, or at least discipline, the younger son so richly deserved, he got a party! It's just not fair, right? "What do you have to do to get a party around here?" Here she poignantly observes the ways that both sons are lost to the father, one to irresponsibility, and the other to self-righteousness. Taylor beautifully describes the love of the father who, like any good parent, gives his sons unconditional love instead of what they have coming to them. Taylor then suggests that we who imagine ourselves in the older brother's place will end up on that doorstep, too, struggling with our own self-righteousness, and will have to make the same difficult decision to join the party, or to stay out in the cold with our principles.... It's especially appropriate for us to reflect on this story as more than just a good illustration of one of Jesus' teachings, or a really effective comeback to the self-righteousness of the religious authorities. We're deeply into the season of Lent now, a time of reflection and self-examination (what we used to call "an examination of conscience" in the tradition in which I was raised). Where do we find ourselves in this story? How are we counted among "the lost"?

Invitation: *Come, you weary and restless, come, all who hunger and thirst. Jesus calls us to dine as friends, come, God's feast of welcome awaits us. Invite us again to your feast, fill us with your word and your Spirit, that we might go out in joy and come back in peace.*

Hymn: Bread of the world in mercy broken

551

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.* (we continue in prayer) *Come, Holy Spirit, come. Bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking that our eyes might be opened, that we might recognize the risen Christ in our midst indeed, in one another. Come, Holy Spirit, come.*

Communion

Hymn: Give us this day our daily bread

668

Prayer following communion *May we who have reached out our hands to receive this sacrament be strengthened in your service; we who have sung your praises tell of your glory and truth in our lives; we who have seen the greatness of your love see you face to face in your kingdom and come to worship you with all your saints for ever.*

Hymn: Lord Jesus you shall be my song (vs. 1 and 4)

665

Where Christ walks, We will follow. Where Christ stumbles, : We will stop. Where Christ cries, We will listen. Where Christ suffers, We will hurt. When Christ dies, We will bow our heads in sorrow. When Christ rises again in glory, We will share his endless joy. There is no other way. His is the only way. This is Lent, and into its wilderness God calls us. Come, brothers and sisters, Christ is heading for Jerusalem. And we must follow.

