

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
April 17, 2016

THE LIVING POWER OF THE RESURRECTION



Call to Worship: *Day by day, God leads us: to the deep, deep pools of peace, to the green, lush lawns of grace. Day by day, Jesus calls us: to pour out ourselves in service, to anoint the stranger with hope. Day by day, the Holy Spirit shows us: the community we could be, the family we are called to become.*

Hymn: The first one ever

664

Opening Prayer: *Healing God, we come before you broken, yet seeking wholeness, isolated, yet seeking community, overwhelmed, yet seeking simplicity, shamed, yet seeking grace: God, we yearn for the healing you promise. God of Justice, we come before you selfish, yet seeking a generous heart, arrogant, yet seeking humility, responsible for injustices, yet seeking forgiveness: God, we yearn for the justice you promise. God of Peace, we come before you afraid, yet seeking assurance, agitated, yet seeking serenity, angry, yet seeking a forgiving heart: God, we yearn for the peace you promise. Knowing that through Christ all things are made new, we come to this communion table to be recreated through the bread and cup, and to be renewed in our faith and commitment. God, we submit ourselves to renewal through you. This we pray through Jesus the Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.* Silence is kept
Assurance of Pardon: *.. Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

Acts 9:36-43 Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Hymn: Woman in the Night

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We imagine the earliest Christians listening, and like us, being amazed, and eager to hear what happens next in this exciting and inspiring account of the Adventures of the Apostles. Here we are, in the Easter season, with resurrection on our minds. However, like those earliest Christians, including Luke himself, we more likely hear in this story of the raising of the saintly widow Dorcas/Tabitha (many scholars note the elegant meaning of her name in both Aramaic and Greek: "Gazelle") the echoes of other stories from both the Old and New Testaments: most dramatically, the raising of the daughter of Jairus. Luke had described that miracle in his Gospel (8:40-56) but must have also known about it from the Gospel of Mark, whose account so closely parallels this one that even the name of the dead person differs by only one letter: Talitha/Tabitha. That's probably not an accident, because the story happens the same way, the command is the same, and the results are the same, as well.

Again, Luke's point is clear: Peter, and the other disciples, the early church, are continuing the work of Jesus. (It helps us better understand the term, "Body of Christ," to describe the church.) However, Carl Holladay takes us back even further, recalling the ancient story about Elijah raising a widow's son from the dead, which puts Peter in a direct line stretching back to the Old Testament prophets (*Preaching through the Christian Year C*). We might ask ourselves, then, the following questions: Is the church continuing the work of Jesus today? Is the church acting like the ancient prophets, our ancestors in faith? Would those who hear about us, and those who watch what we do, hear and feel echoes from the story of Christ? Would they recognize us as prophets, filled with the power of the Spirit?

Hymn: O I know the Lord's laid his hands on me 579

Thought for the day:

"The gospel looks out over a world characterized by death, illness, and loss and yet declares that eternal life is the new order of the day, that Jesus himself embodies and assures us of the promise that death will not have the last word and that no boundary can ever cleave us apart from one another."

*Joseph Harvard suggests that the story gives us reason to hope even when we think that there is no possibility of restoration: he says that we live in a "Humpty Dumpty" world in which we are convinced that things can not be put back together again, but the book of Acts tells a different story, about people "empowered to 'turn the world upside down' (17:6)" (Feasting on the Word Year C, Vol. 2). This interesting image is in counterpoint to Richard Swanson's frequent image of God "turning the world right-side-up" (see his *Provoking the Gospel* series). In either case, the world is not as it should be, and God is at work, often through us, putting it right again. Doing that might indeed turn it upside down from where it is now, and all of that is, mysteriously, grounds for hope. Robert Wall uses a powerful phrase to describe what underlay the request of the widows for Peter's help: they lived and moved out of "an optimism of grace" (Feasting on the Word Year C, Vol. 2).*

Invitation: *In the name of Jesus Christ I invite all to his table with reverence, faith, and thanksgiving. Eat and drink for your strengthening that you may grow in grace and be blessed with all spiritual blessings. We do so remembering that we, although many, are one body in him.*

Hymn: You satisfy the hungry heart (1-2) 538

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *Rejoice in the Lord always. Shout out his name. For God is with us. Our God is with us. The God of resurrection and new life, in whom alone we trust. Rejoice in the Lord always Shout out his name* (we continue in prayer) *Pour out your Spirit upon the gifts of remembrance and the people who gather. Come, Holy Spirit, upon us and what we do here that these your gifts of bread and wine may be for us the body and blood of Christ so that we may bring life, hope, and love to your entire world. Answer us in the day of trouble, O God, so that we may lift up the cup of salvation in the presence of your people, giving thanks for all your goodness to us; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.*

Hymn: You satisfy the hungry heart (3-5) 538

Communion

Following communion *When the world seems to be crumbling around you, remember who you are: Resurrection people with Easter in our*

hearts. *When despair would seem to squelch all hope, believe in who you have become: Resurrection people with Easter in our hearts. When it is hard to persevere against all odds, trust in God who names you:*

Resurrection people with Easter in our hearts. *As we follow Christ into the world, may God help us remember who we are . . .*

resurrection people with Easter in our hearts.

Hymn: Go now in peace

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The cross, we will take it. The bread, we will break it. The pain, we will bear it. The joy, we will share it. The Gospel, we will live it. The love, we will give it. The light, we will cherish it. The darkness, God shall perish it!

Anniversary Sunday April 24

Human Sexuality Study April 19th (6:30) and April 23 (10 am)