

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
June 26, 2016

Early Morning Service

CHRIST HAS SET US FREE

“Christ frees us not only from the law, but from the sinful self. Freed from self, we are free to serve the neighbour, to “become slaves to one another” through love.



To serve “through love” means that serving is done not to meet the demands of the law or even to feel good about ourselves. It is completely focused on the needs of the neighbour.”

Hymn: When Israel was in Egypt’s land (1-3) 708

A Prayer for Today: *Here in the company of the neighbour whom we know and the stranger in our midst, and the self from whom we turn, we ask to love as Jesus loved. Make this the place and time, good Lord, when heaven and earth merge into one, and we in word and flesh can grasp that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither male nor female. Lord, we believe that you hear our prayer and will be faithful to your promise to answer us. When our*

eyes open again, may they do so not to end our devotions, but to expect your Kingdom, for Jesus’ sake.

Hymn: When Israel was in Egypt’s land (4-5) 708

Prayer of Confession: *We do not want you to know how our lives do not proclaim your good news, God of all hearts. But you have heard the words we have spoken which injure those we love.*

You see how insistent we can be in clinging to the ways we have always lived, rather than walking your new paths. We have trouble believing that when our souls are empty and our hearts have only a small portion of love, that you can do miracles in and through us.

So, what we need to know is that you do indeed forgive us, and still love us.
God of comfort, let your grace shower us and end the drought of fear and doubt in our lives, so we can believe the good news which comes to us through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Silence is kept

Assurance of Pardon

Focus Reading Galatians 5:1, 13-25 For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery,

enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

Paul offers a radically different understanding of freedom. The freedom Christ gives is not freedom for self-indulgence but freedom *from* self *for* service to others. It is the freedom in which life in community flourishes “*We knew freedom would come, because if God be for us, who could be against us? We knew that we had sisters and brothers out there, most of whom we would never meet this side of death, who were praying for us, loving us, caring for us, upholding us, supporting us. And we have won a spectacular victory over injustice and oppression, and our sisters and brothers in other parts of the world have a large part in the victory. Without them we would not have made it... God calls us to be His partners to work for a new kind of society, a society where people count, where people matter more than things, more than profits, where human life is not just respected but positively revered, where people will be secure and not suffer from the fear of hunger, from ignorance, from disease, where human rights will be respected and protected; where there will be more gentleness, more caring, more sharing, more compassion, more laughter, where there is peace and not war, where we won’t spend horrendous amounts on budgets of death when a small fraction of those obscene amounts would ensure that God’s Children everywhere had a clean supply of water, proper sanitation, enough to eat, a secure and decent home and proper education and affordable health care.*” (words of Bishop Desmond Tutu, from: *Ecumenism*, p. 13, June 2000).

Hymn: We are marching **639**

Invitation *Come, for all things are now ready. Come to the table and share with all in need: the gift of healing for those in pain, the gift of forgiveness for those in sin, the gift of assurance for those in doubt, and the*

gift of hope for those in tears. May we who share these gifts share Christ with one another and all God’s people.

This is the table where God intends us to be nourished; this is the time when Christ can make us new. *So come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, for a better life, for a fairer world. Jesus Christ, who has sat at our tables, now invites us to be guests at his. The Sacrament of Bread and Wine – where God comes to meet us in the ordinary things of the earth that God has made holy – wheat and grapes, food and drink for our souls and for our bodies, grown in the soil, watered by the rain, ripened by the sun, fashioned by human hands so that the divine purpose may once again be fulfilled.*

Great prayer of Thanksgiving

Hymn Jesus, we are gathered **514**

Communion

Response to the sacrament Hallelujah **532**

May the everlasting God shield you, east and west and wherever you go. And the blessing of God be upon us. The blessing of the God of life. The blessing of Christ be upon us. The blessing of the Christ of love. The blessing of the Spirit be upon us. The blessing of the Spirit of grace. The blessing of the Trinity be upon us. Now and forevermore. Amen.

Hymn: May the Lord bless you **553**

