

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David

September 18th, 2016



Is there no balm in Gilead
Is there no physician there?

Prelude

Call to Worship: *Let us focus on God's presence. In the midst of a world where people hunger and thirst ... Come worship a God who feeds the hungry. In the midst of a world where people are abused and oppressed ... Come worship a God who calls for compassion and justice. In the midst of a world filled with wars and rumours of war ... Come worship a God who desires nothing less than peace for the world. In the midst of a world of spiritual emptiness ... Come worship a God who gives life meaning. Come, let*

us worship the Lord, whose grace and love know no end!

Hymn: There is a Balm in Gilead (1-2) **747**

Opening Prayer: *Lord of goodness and grace, guard and guide us in our time of worship and wonder. Help us ponder the mystery and the marvel of the world and our place in your purpose and plan. Open our eyes to see beyond the obvious to the heart of what you wish for us.*

Hymn: There is a Balm in Gilead (3) **747**

Confession: *Lord, we would follow you wherever you might lead. Lord, we would follow you. Forgive us when we stumble and when we stray. Forgive us when, distracted we lose our way. Be the one to whom we turn, whose hand we hold, the Shepherd who leads us safely to the fold. Lord, we would follow you wherever you might lead. Lord, we would follow you.*

Assurance: *Friends, when we are lost, all is not lost. God is seeking us, ready to turn our lives around, gathering us in to the people of God. Let us rejoice in God's mercy! Amen.*

Hymn: For the Healing of the Nations (1-2) **736**

Jeremiah 8:18-9:1 My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick. Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: "Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?" ("Why have they provoked me to anger with their images, with their foreign idols?") "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored? O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!

Hymn: For the Healing of the Nations (3-4) **736**

"The phrase "balm in Gilead" probably refers to a resin from balsam trees that was used in medicine and perfumes. In ancient times it was known as "balsam of Mecca." ... the prophet says that Israel is looking for a balm to help with their problems, but in each case it lacks the power to bring about the

desired healing. Jeremiah's reference is similar to a common phrase today, "You are just putting a band aid on the problem." Jeremiah's intent is opposite the spiritual hymn. Beware of the balm in Gilead for it is not enough. Don't settle for half measures, for a more radical transformation is needed. This passage speaks to us when we are looking for easy and painless solutions to big problems...I believe there is a balm in Gilead. When I sing the spiritual hymn with my congregation I can feel it soothing my spiritual wounds and restoring me to faith and hope, just like aloe salve soothes a burn.

I still believe Jesus is the answer for the wounds of the world and for my own wounds. He is my Way, my Truth, and my Life. The Balm in Gilead I receive is a marvelous gift and it keeps me going every day. At the same time Jeremiah reminds me that life is not about sitting around waiting for my medicine. Band aids and half-measures will not bring the cure we need. Jesus heals me for a reason. I'm called to love in return with all my heart, soul and mind, to extend love to my neighbour in gratitude...I know of no other way, no other healing balm, that helps me meet the daily challenges. So I listen to the spiritual and will try to sing it every day this week: 'Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain; but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.'"

Hymn: We lay our broken world (1,5-6)

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Brokenness - day of salvation (summer and harvest is past) - do we now need to learn to live with brokenness? Brokenness - day of salvation (summer and harvest is past) - do we now need to learn to live with brokenness?

When relationship is broken- when anyone is hurting, we all hurt- even God cannot thrive in brokenness - Is there no Balm in Gilead?

- Not for the Syrians killed in the chemical weapons attacks
- Not for the 6 million who died in the Holocaust
- Not for the 1/2 to 1 million Tutsis in Rwanda
- Not for the countless aboriginal Canadians
- The Balm of Gilead is the transformation of the world- of ourselves

- **Invitation:** *This is the table, not of the Church, but of God. It is to be made ready for those who love God and who want to love God more. So, come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been for a long time, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, not because I invite you: it is God's table, and it is God's will that you who want God should meet God here. **All are invited and all are welcome.** Come, for the meal is ready!*
- Hymn: Here is bread, here is wine (1-2) 546
- Prayer of Thanksgiving: *May the one God be with you! **And also with you! Lift your hearts to the One who heals them. We offer our hearts to be filled with the balm of Gilead. Sing praises to our God who would fill us with springs of joy. Glad songs of thanksgiving are proclaimed to the One who delivers us to new life.*** (we continue in prayer) *Come to us, Spirit of our Lord of love, and let the bread and wine before us bear your life to our life, nourish us with his vision of hope, and unite us in one body of peace. **And when all time is gone, when eternity is upon us, we will join our sisters and brothers from far and wide, in singing forever your glory and wonder,***
- **God in Community, Holy in One.** All honour and glory be yours, O God, now and forever. **Amen.**
- Hymn: Here is bread, here is wine (3) 546
- **Communion**
- **Following communion** *God, you are the source of wisdom, justice, love and peace: **Give us in our present need the light of your wisdom, the courage of your justice, the patience of your love and the assurance of your peace. Amen.***
- Hymn: Be still and know 64
- *The God of salvation, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth, offers forgiveness to each of us through the one sent in human form. **We are grateful that over and over we are given the chance to begin again and that nothing we have done can separate us from God's love.***
 - *Postlude*