

**Invitation:** *The bread and wine we're about to share joins us to the people throughout history and across the world who have come to this meal in search of life and have found God's mercy..*

Hymn: This is the three-fold truth (1-2) 365

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *The Lord be with you: **And also with you. May we open our hearts. May we know your presence. It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every- where to give thanks to you, God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.*** (we continue in prayer) *Come to us, Spirit of our Lord Jesus and fill us anew. **Holy, holy, holy are you, God who forms our hearts. All creation finds refuge in your tender care. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who sets us free by your truth! Hosanna in the highest!***

### Communion

**Following communion:** *Lord Jesus Christ, grace is evident at this table... and we gather to partake of that grace. Salvation is celebrated at this table... and we gather to celebrate that salvation. As we leave this table may we be messengers this week of your grace and salvation. **You are the Lord forevermore. Amen.***

Hymn: This is the three-fold truth (3-4) 365  
*God sends us out with encouragement and a challenge: **Lead lives worthy of God's reign and glory. We desire to live as God intends; we will work and rest in God's care. Live in faithfulness to one another and to God who calls you forth in his service. The Word of God is at work in us; in him we witness and are more than conquerors. Blessed are all who seek their strength in God alone, happy are they who live the gospel. May God be praised in all we do and say; may we be gentle apostles and courageous disciples.***

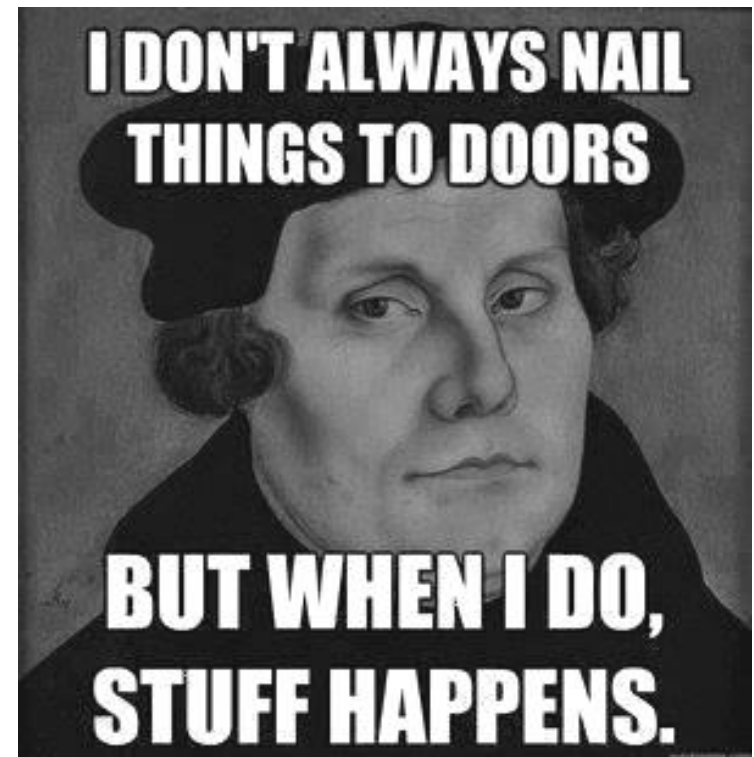
Postlude

# WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of

# Saint David

October 30, 2016



Call to Worship: *Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, Let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Amen*

Hymn: We will tell each generation (1-2)

46

Opening Prayer: *Gracious God, we pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth and peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in need, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

Hymn: We will tell each generation (3-4) **46**

Confession: *When we want to be a church ever-reforming, yet cling to comfortable ways: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us! When we want to honor your “still speaking voice”, but are fearful of insights which challenge old assumptions: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us! When we want to live into Jesus’ dream of oneness, but fail to listen to voices of difference: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us! Through Christ, God forgives us our failings, and continues to call us into a community of mutual love and forgiveness. Let us celebrate this mercy of God by greeting each other with a sign of Christ’s peace.*

Hymn: A mighty Fortress (1-2) **315**

**Scripture: John 8:31-36** <sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, ‘If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; <sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.’ <sup>33</sup> They answered him, ‘We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, “You will be made free?”’ <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there for ever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Jesus’ words to these new believers begin in verse 31. Living in Jesus’ way leads to truth, which in turn leads to freedom. The religious authorities are puzzled by Jesus’ teaching and claim that because they are descendants of Abraham, they are already free. They claim they have never been slaves, neglecting to recall the time of slavery in Egypt or the Babylonian exile. In John, the

writer uses the phrase “very truly I tell you” (v. 34) to signal that a new teaching is to follow. In verses 34–36, Jesus addresses the group’s misunderstanding of freedom with the new teaching that everyone who sins is not free and is a slave to sin. Jesus teaches that slavery is not limited to an economic reality, but also is an inward state of being. Even those who claim freedom through Abraham are not as free as they think.

Through Jesus, the Son, we are given a permanent place in the house of God. True freedom comes through Jesus the Christ, not any human ancestor. True freedom comes not from one’s heritage, but as a gift from God. Truth for the Jews involved their identity in Abraham; Jesus’ truth involves identity in God. The leaders of the Reformation emphasized the gospel teaching that true freedom is not related to ethnic distinctions or social class. Only Jesus the Christ can free us from slavery to sin, and does so through the truth of the gospel. Martin Luther felt that the heart of gospel truth is summed up in Romans 3:19–28. All people fall short in their relationship with God, but God offers forgiveness of sins through Christ. We are justified – put right with God – by the gift of God’s grace, through faith in Christ. The Hebrew exiles in Babylon blamed the slavery of exile on their ancestors who had disregarded God’s law. In Jeremiah 31:31–34, the prophet envisions a future time when the ability to know God and God’s truth will be a gift from God, written on each heart. Psalm 46 is the inspiration behind Luther’s classic Reformation hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” The words of the psalmist, and the words of Luther, call disciples to place their hope in God alone. Scripture calls us to live with God’s law on our hearts, to let our faith determine how we act. Jesus invites us to open our hearts to receive God’s gifts of grace and salvation – to claim our freedom in Christ.

- What in the church today needs to be reformed by God’s grace?
- What might you and your church do differently through the reforming, restoring power of the Holy Spirit?

Hymn: A mighty Fortress (4) **315**