

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David

February 19, 2017



“The wizard [of Oz] says look inside yourself and find self. God says look inside yourself and find [the Holy Spirit]. The first will get you to Kansas. The latter will get you to heaven. Take your pick.”
— Max Lucado

Gathering: *Holy Spirit, The Consoler, Spirit of Truth, You who are present everywhere and fill the universe...* **Source of life: Come and take up your dwelling in us. Cleanse us. And, in your love, lead us to Salvation. Amen.**

Hymn: O breath of life (1-2) **384**

Prayer to begin worship: *Loving God, Lord of the Church, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed: we have not loved you with all our heart or served you with all our strength; we have been blind to the vision of a renewed world and deaf to your call to costly discipleship; we have been indifferent to the suffering of others and unwilling to forgive one another. In your mercy, Lord, pardon and restore us, that together in the ministry of Christ we may serve you with joy all the days of our life. Amen.*

Hymn: O breath of life (3-4) **384**

Scripture: **1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23** According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their craftiness', and again, 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.'* So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future - all belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Commentary: Paul is not, at this point, discussing God's presence with each individual believer. Rather, Paul's focus is communal. It is the community of faith, "you together," that is the holy place of God's presence and glory. This is the third image that Paul has

used in chapter 3 to describe the community of the church forming a single reality: field, building, and now temple. This is a reminder that authentically Christian spirituality is rooted in life together as the community of God's people, and rooted in the working of God within those very real human relationships. It is a surprise - and a gracious one - that Paul says such a thing to the Corinthian congregation. Even these messed-up Corinthians, these people of "flesh," these babies in faith (3:1), are still the temple, the inner sanctuary. God dwells in their midst, in the fellowship and faith that they share. This promise provides hope in the face of the church's very human faults and struggles... The people and things of the world (including the leaders the Corinthians are fighting over, and the brothers and sisters they are fighting with) are not there to advance our individual agendas, and they are not there to be exploited and used. They are there as recipients of God's redeeming love. That love is the shape of the temple we are called to be, fitted to the foundation of Jesus himself. (Brian Peterson)

Hymn: Spirit of the Living God **400**

"Those in whom the Spirit comes to live are God's new Temple. They are, individually and corporately, places where heaven and earth meet."

N.T. Wright, Simply Christian

Note: We need to be aware of the special role that the temple played in the lives of the Jewish people. Following its return from captivity in Babylon, Israel rebuilt its destroyed temple. This building received a special emphasis in the lives of the Jews. It was the center of Israel's worship. The Jews believed the Holy of Holies (the innermost sanctum) contained the very presence of God. Only on Yom Kippur-once a year-was the high priest allowed to enter this space and offer a sacrifice for the sins of the nation. Paul's identification of the community with the temple was a real eye-opener. This church, heavily divided by conflict, is identified as God's temple (note the present tense language): "For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple" (3:17). One can hardly imagine a bigger contrast between the reality of Corinth and the holiness of God! But Paul does not compromise. Corinth is holy because God's spirit dwells in it. Holiness is not Corinth's possession. It is a gift that has been given to it by Christ. (Mark Tranvik)

Invitation: *Here at this Table of love, where we share the broken bread and pass the cup of grace which has been blessed by your Spirit, we learn how to be your people. We learn how to work for justice, and to share from our abundance; we will not bear a grudge, or seek revenge when we are hurt; we will not tell lies about others, but love them as deeply as we love ourselves.*

Hymn: Lord I want to be a Christian in my heart (1-2) **571**

Prayer of Thanksgiving: *The Lord is here. God's spirit is with us. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise. Holy and Loving God, we give thanks that we, who have walked in darkness, are surrounded by your great light. We are thankful for the teachings of Jesus which open a new way for us to be in relationship with others – neighbours and friends and enemies alike. We are grateful for the new commandment which points us to the love of Jesus Christ. We are thankful for this community that shares your love and light with the world. With all the host of heaven we sing the song of salvation. Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.* (Continue in prayer) *Through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honour and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever more. (Our Father...)*

Communion

Prayer following communion:

Hymn: Lord I want to be a Christian in my heart (3-4) **571**

Benediction: Go now, knowing that you are God's holy temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you. **Therefore, we will love our enemies, pray for those who persecute us, give generously to all who need our help, and be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect, and may God give us all things in Christ;** May Christ Jesus be the foundation of all you are and do; And may the Spirit fill you with delight in all God's ways. We go now in peace to love and serve the Lord, **In the name of Christ. Amen.**