

**WELCOME TO...**

**The Presbyterian Church of  
Saint David**



**EASTER 7 May 28, 2017**

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*Why are we looking up to heaven? Christ has come; Christ has risen; Christ will come again. Why are we looking ahead to the future? The Holy Spirit is among us now. In our baptism, we have already died and risen with Christ. Why are we afraid of death and dying? God's love casts out our fear. Why are we afraid to follow Jesus? In Christ, we have the promise of new life now, eternal life to come. In Christ, we join our hearts to worship God, who has prepared for us to enter the reign of God.*

Hymn: King of Kings (3X)

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A time of Confession: *Merciful God forgive us for forgetting to stop and be still each day to bask in the warmth of your Son's unchanging presence with us – a presence that gives us strength for our daily tasks, that gives us peace which we can then share with others and that gives us the light of hope to shine upon our world. In the name of Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, we pray for mercy – silence-wash over us with your love so that we may begin again – help us to hear the Good News of Christ – that through him and because of him our sins are forgiven! Thanks be to God. Cleansed and renewed let us join together to say the Lord's Prayer... Our Father who art in heaven...*

Hymn: Crown him with many crowns (1-3)

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**Introduction to reading:** *The account of Jesus' ascending into heaven may be familiar but it's not always accessible to many of us in the church. The occurrences of the past weeks have been nothing less than astounding to the disciples (and to us, we hope), yet the question posed by them betrays an equally astounding lack of vision on their part. They are still hemmed in by the littleness of their aspirations and expectations, longing for the restoration of the Davidic monarchy and the glory of ancient Israel, the throwing off of Roman oppression and the raising up of their own nationalistic glory.*

**Acts 1:6-14**

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and

Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Hymn: Crown him with many crowns (4-5) 274

The Reformed theologian, Karl Barth, describes the Ascension as a change in the perspective from which Jesus shapes the world—no longer from the earth but from a more universal, timeless vantage point. Discuss. (June 18<sup>th</sup> we will explore the cosmic Jesus in relation to Trinity with Richard Rhor)

An ancient legend... tells of Jesus' ascension into heaven. Jesus is met... by the angel Gabriel... who asks... now that your work is finished... what plans have you made... to insure that the truth... you brought to earth... will spread throughout the world? Jesus answered... I called some fishermen... a tax-collector... and a few women... to walk along with me... as I did God's will. Yes... I know about them... said Gabriel... but what other plans have you made? Jesus replied... I taught Peter... James... and John... about the kingdom of God. I taught Thomas and Philip... about faith.

And all of them... were with me... as I healed and taught. Gabriel began to lose patience. Now all this is well and good... but surely you must have other plans, like a plan B or something... to make sure your work... was not in vain. Jesus... with a steady gaze on Gabriel... said... I have no other plans. I am depending on them.

Hymn: Let all the world in every corner sing 271

#### **Invitation:**

*Clap your hands! Shout for joy! Our Lord reigns on the throne of glory! We open our hearts to the ascended Lord, who sits on the throne of glory! O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.*

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. O God, giver of*

*all that is good, we thank you for the wonder of Ascension, that marvellous yet mysterious moment in the life of the Apostles which left them gazing heavenwards in confusion yet departing in joy. We thank you for the way that it brought the earthly ministry of Jesus to a fitting conclusion; signifying his oneness with you, and demonstrating your final seal of approval on all that he had done. We thank you that through his Ascension Jesus is now set free to be Lord of all: no longer bound to a particular place or time, but with us always - able to reach even to the ends of the earth.*

Hymn: Hallelujah, sing to Jesus (verses 3) 370

## **Communion**

### **Prayer after Holy Communion**

*Spirit of God our wise counsellor, our constant companion. Helps us to remember that you are always with us - in persecutions, and turmoil, and dread, in excitements, and joy and love, in the mundane and everyday... You are. Here.*

Hymn: Now to Christ who loved us 554

*Where did you go Jesus? Where did you go? We stand, necks craning back, looking heavenwards but we cannot see you Where did you go? Did you leave us? Listen, listen, listen for the breeze, listen for the breath, listen for the Holy Wind's whispered promise. We are not alone, we are not alone, we are never alone*