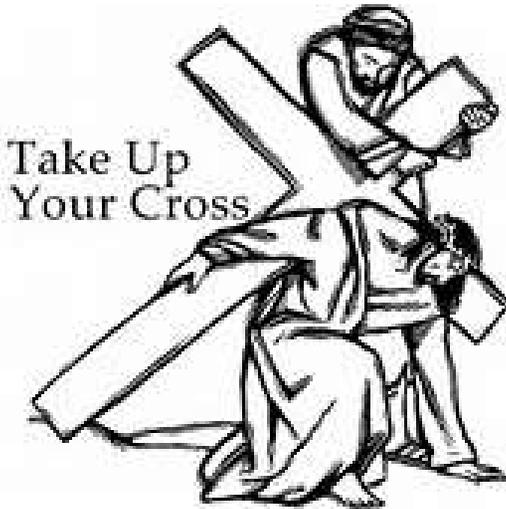


WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of
Saint David
September 10, 2017



Meditation: Sit quietly, breathing slowly, with your hands open on your lap in a receptive posture. Be aware of the Presence of kindness and compassion. Be aware that this is God with you, seeing you through eyes of love. Let your thoughts reflect on the meaning of the cross and how such meaning affects your life and journey of faith (silent meditation)

Hymn: Spirit of God (verse 1-3)

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We come to worship this morning from different places. O God, do not be far from us. We come to worship this morning for different reasons. O God, do not be far from us. We experience the presence of the Spirit in different ways. O God, do not be far from us. We hear Jesus' words with different ears. O God, do not be far from us. "Deny yourselves."

O God, do not be far from us. "Take up your cross." O God, do not be far from us. "Follow me." O God, we thank you for drawing near to us in this place, in our lives. Amen.

Hymn: Spirit of God (verse 4-5)

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God, we humble ourselves now in confession: We want to be followers of Jesus, but we do not always want to follow Jesus. We don't even want to listen when the conversation turns toward darkness and death. We prefer to indulge ourselves. We are eager to put down our crosses. We cling tightly to our lives. We grasp at worldly rewards. Holy and loving God, forgive all of our thoughts and actions that would protect us from the path of Christ.

Hymn: Take up your cross

(vs 1-2)

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Matthew 16:21-28

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?" "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Thoughts to guide us:

Jesus repeatedly taught that following him meant that one had to be willing to "pick up their cross daily and follow [him]" (Lk 9:23; 14:27). Picking up our cross is the centerpiece of following Jesus

because this was the centrepiece of what Jesus was all about. The thematic centrality of the cross is also illustrated in Jesus' teaching that to be considered a "child of your Father in heaven," one has to be willing to refuse to retaliate and instead "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5:44-5, cf., 38; Lk 6:27-35), for this is precisely the example that Jesus set when he refused to use his power to defend himself, choosing instead to die for his enemies rather than to crush them (Mt 26:51-3).

Along the same line, the cross is the thematic centre of all of Jesus' teachings that speak of the need for people to lose their life in order to find it (Mt 10:39; 16:25) and that associate greatness with humility, innocence and serving others (e.g., Mt 16:11-4; 23:11-2; Lk 18:15-7). In addition, Jesus takes the common understanding of power and turns it on its head by associating it with a willingness to sacrificially serve others (e.g., Mt 20:20-8).

A Prayer of Commitment: *Ephesians 5:1-2: "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."*

Today, Lord, I once again take up my cross and follow you. Shake me of my complacency; I want to live daily with an urgency to radically be the change you call me to be. Strip me of my comforts; may my love for you be a driving force to live with joyful surrender. Scratch out my schedule; I don't want my circumstances or timeline to influence my dedication and obedience to take up my cross and follow you. Here I am; Send Me. May your word pour out of me like water to the thirsty, and may my life be full of the fruit of the Spirit. All I am and have I give back to you with open hands knowing that all my needs you will meet as I go with you. Today I take up my cross and follow you. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Hymn: Take up your cross (vs 3-4) 211

Invitation: *Cross-bearing disciples are called to an obediently humble giving of self for the neighbour in which bearing and doing are brought into conformity and the whole of the law is fulfilled. This meal is meant for those who*

seek the way of the cross – strength for the journey, hope in Christ. Come!

Hymn: Here is bread: here is wine 546

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. God, you have provided all your people have needed down through the ages and in every circumstance... (Prayer continues) God we seek today that which we need to live faithful lives in your service. Spirit of the living God, as Jesus calls us to the way of the cross, call us anew to this table, hear us as we offer the words of Jesus... our Father...*

Hymn: Bread of the world in mercy broken 551

Communion

Prayer after Holy Communion: *Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, full of compassion and maker of peace, you lived in poverty and suffered persecution for the cause of justice. You chose the Cross as the path to glory to show us the way of salvation. May we receive the word of the Gospel joyfully and live by your example as heirs and citizens of your kingdom. Amen.*

Hymn: Take up your cross (vs 5) 211

