**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**April 17, 2016 Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**11:00 a.m.**

**Rev. Amy Pospichal, Pastor Marjorie Gene McKenzie, Accompanist**

**Prelude**

**Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.**

**I can feel His mighty power and His grace.**

**I can feel the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face.**

**Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.**

**Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.**

**Call to Worship**

God invites us to come in and go out and find pasture:

**to come into the kingdom, into abundant life, into the light;**

**to go out to serve, out to live our faith, out to be the Body of Christ.**

Christ calls us to hear his voice

**and so we come to listen and seek and follow.**

We stand at the threshold of God’s future,

**the Spirit stands at the door and knocks.**

Come, let us worship.

**Opening Prayer**

**\*Opening Hymn**

**Call to Confession**

It is tempting to gloss over our sin and focus on our strengths, but God calls us to focus on the strength of Christ, not ourselves. God, who is faithful and just, offers us a new way to live, and so we join together to confess our faults and failings. Let us pray.

**Prayer of Confession**

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

**But, O Lord, we are consumed with wanting more.**

He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

**But, O Lord, other pastures seem greener. The waters aren’t always still. Our souls still thirst.**

He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.

**O Lord, we long to be led by you, though we may complain along the path.**

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff– they comfort me.

**And yet, O God, we do sometimes fear. May we feel your presence, your comfort and your forgiveness anew.**

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

**O God, sometimes we refuse to sit down at your table. Forgive us and help us to see your overflowing mercy.**

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

**Forgive us, God, and lead us into your house.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, in the name of the Jesus Christ, you and I are forgiven!
**Thanks be to God! Amen!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

 **Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen, Amen.**

**Psalm 148**

**Pastoral Prayer (responsive)**

Hear us, gracious Lord: **come and be our help!**

We give you praise, O Lord, for lifting us up

from the waters of despair into the dawning of hope.

In Jesus Christ, you have triumphed over all life’s foes;

in his love, we have been healed.

Raise up those who dwell in the pit today,

who face illness or adversity,

those who long for health and success,

especially \_\_\_\_\_\_.

Hear us, gracious Lord: come and be our help!

Hear the voices of your faithful ones

who acknowledge your favor in their lives,

and receive our praises for your gifts to your people,

(especially \_\_\_\_\_).

Sustain those who rejoice today.

Hear us, gracious Lord: come and be our help!

Come especially to those who face death today,

and give your comfort to all who mourn.

You who raised Jesus Christ from the grave,

work your healing even in the midst of loss and grief.

(We pray especially for \_\_\_\_\_.)

Hear us, gracious Lord: come and be our help!

Open our eyes, transform our vision;

turn our mourning into dancing;

take off our mourning and clothe us again with joy,

that everything we do might become your praise,

now and forever.

Hear us, gracious Lord: come and be our help!

Hear us, Holy One, for we pray in the name of the risen Christ, as we say now together…

**Offering**

**Time Out for Teaching:**

**Hymn**

**Prayer for Illumination**

Holy God,

remove the stones that block the portals of our minds…

shine your light so that it may take over the darkness within…

and fill our thoughts with your perfect vision for creation

so we may go, and tell, and be, and do.

Amen.

**Revelation 7:9-17**

9After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. 10They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

13Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" 14I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. 16They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; 17for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

**John 10:22-30**

22 At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; 26 but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. 30 The Father and I are one."

**Sermon "Walking On Sunshine" Rev. Amy Pospichal**

 "I used to think maybe you loved me, but now I'm sure..."

 Those are the words to what may be the happiest pop song ever recorded in the 1980s. For my taste, perhaps a little TOO cheerful... But it was a big hit from the British pop band, Katrina and the Waves. She sings of how happy she is that this person loves her. She had suspected that this person loved her, but now that she's sure, she feels like she's "Walking on Sunshine." What a happiness she feels!

 When it comes to falling in love and then learning that you are loved back, it's one thing. How much more do we wish for that same certainty and joy about the Messiah, the Son of God!

We have probably all wondered before: how do you go from uncertainty to certainty about God? In today's Gospel reading, it seems like those speaking to Jesus in Solomon's Portico in the Temple, just don't quite grasp it. They demand he just tell them plainly that he is the Messiah. And Jesus responds, as if to say, "Haven't you been paying attention? What do you think I've been telling you all this time?"

 If Jesus had simply said to them, "Yes, I am the Messiah," what do you think would be their reaction? I have a feeling that they would still feel doubts in their hearts, wondering, "Is this guy for real? Or is he just a nut?"

 It was almost as if there was a veil or a brick wall preventing them from believing. Jesus had already done extraordinary signs heralding his arrival and these signs still aren't enough for them to believe. Ever since the beginning of John's Gospel, as Jesus elects and calls the disciples, and they begin to suspect he's the Messiah, he tells them, "Come and See..." This is Jesus' way of growing faith. It's an invitation to "come and see" for yourself. But seeing isn't everything -

 Seeing can lead to believing, but for us to have a firm faith that causes us to walk on Sonshine, we are also called to trust in Him. There are after all signs of God's love all around us at all times, but if we aren't paying attention, or we are having trust issues with God, then we aren't going to recognize the signs. Trusting Him is our part of the activity of faith. It's a relationship that takes work.

 For example, if you witness two people arguing, you might assume that they will never be friends again. But if they have trust in each other, the argument may be a way to work out a solution to their problems and they grow in their relationship. But if there is no trust, then the friendship may be in jeopardy.

 Placing our trust in God is an active process that can yield spiritual rewards, drawing us into a deeper personal relationship to our Creator. It is far more powerful than if we sit by, passively, expecting God to bring us every piece of evidence we demand. For if that's how we go about our faith in Jesus Christ, then we will never be satisfied. Faith and Trust these are all activities into which we are all called to participate.

 Guess what? When we make that step of trust towards faith, it becomes no longer just a nice idea we talk about. We become a glowing example of God's real presence in this world through His son the Messiah. No longer do we just think maybe He loves us, but we become more assured, and so do others.

 Here's something new going on in our church this year. The Presbyterian Women of Tucumcari have invested out of faith and assurance of their mission as God's disciples, $1005 in two of our 8th graders. This is an act of faith that they will raise a portion of funds too, and an act of faith that other portion will also materialize with God's help. That $1005 is in registration fees to send them to the Presbyterian Youth Triennium this July, a national youth conference. It will cost approximately another $1000 in travel expenses for both of them to go. It's an investment for this church to show, not just tell them, that God loves them. And the experience, I will bet, will help to grow their faith. And in helping their faith to grow, I also expect this will help to grow all of our faith. The money will come. But it's not just the money - it's the experience of coming and seeing that God loves them, personally.

 The majority of young people commit their lives to Christ, do so not so much in a church building on a Sunday morning, but when they are having such experiences as this one. My prayer is that between now and then that you might have some odd jobs for them to help them raise the money, and also lift them in prayer as they prepare for what I believe will be an awesome experience. And when they come back, I expect to get a report from them, so you and I will also get to hear what they will have "seen and heard."

 Friends, faith is an active project to which we are all called to participate in. It takes a little bit of trust from us, as God has already placed a great deal of trust in you. I already see some of you doing this, and surely you are reaping the spiritual rewards of a deeper relationship to God. Look around you will already see the signs of that love God is sharing with you. Thanks be to God for the signs! Alleluia! Amen.

**\*Closing Hymn**

**\*Benediction**