**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**April 3, 2016 Second Sunday of Easter**

**11:00 a.m.**

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

**Prelude**

**Call to Worship (please see bulletin)**

**Opening Prayer**

Living God,

When our Risen Lord appeared to his disciples,

he greeted them in peace

and breathed the Holy Spirit upon them.

Breathe your Spirit upon us

 as we gather to welcome Christ

 with glad hearts and joyful voices.

Meet us here, we pray;

open our ears to hear you speaking

and our hearts to respond with joy.

Fashion us into an Easter people,

and send us out

to proclaim what we have seen and heard:

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! Amen.

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession (please see bulletin)**

**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 118:14-24 (please see bulletin)**

**Offering**

**Time Out for Teaching: What is the Resurrection?**

What is the resurrection?

In today's reading from the gospel, we have information on what resurrection means. First, it is not the same as a resuscitation. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, it was a restoration of his body before his death. He was brought back to life.

But resurrection is something else. None of us have had the experience nor met someone who can give us first-hand knowledge of this, except for the witness given us by the gospel writers, and perhaps Paul in his letter, who was visited by the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus.

So let's think of all the things that the disciples witnessed the Risen Christ do and maybe that can paint a picture for us:

He appeared on the water when they were in the boat

He appeared at the Garden Tomb to Mary Magdalene and he told her, "Don't touch me yet!"

He left his clothing behind when he came out of the tomb.

He came to the disciples where they hid behind locked doors.

There he allowed Thomas to touch his wounds which were still there.

He walked with two disciples who did not recognize him until the breaking of bread.

He cooked and ate fish with his disciples on the beach.

He continued to appear to and teach his believers until the day of his ascension.

These are just the things we know he did. There were things not recorded, but as John says at the end of his gospel, "These are written so that you shall believe."

Next week I would like to continue this discussion, and in the meantime, take a look at 1 Corinthians 15 to read Paul's description of a resurrection body. In fact, it also contains his account of Jesus' appearances to the disciples.

**Hymn #206 O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing! (vv 1-4)**

**Prayer for Illumination**

Holy God,

remove the walls in which we confine our hearts, walls we have built up to avoid believing. Show yourself anew to us, so we no longer hide but live out the kingdom

As your people of the resurrection,

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

Amen.

**Acts 5:27-32**

27When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, 28saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us." 29But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. 30The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. 31God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

**Revelation 1:4-8**

4John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, 5and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, 6and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7Look! He is coming with the clouds;

every eye will see him,

even those who pierced him;

and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

8"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

**Gospel John 20:19-31**

19When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

24But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

26A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." 28Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

30Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name

**Sermon "He IS Here!" Rev. Amy**  **Pospichal**

My parents and I shared a good chuckle this past week. We talked on the phone about our Easter Sundays and how we celebrated. Then my Dad report to me that on Easter, the local Methodist church had put up on their sign: “He is Risen. He is not here!” Does anyone else hear what the problem is with the sign? Just imagine that on a sign in front of a church. "He is not here!" Obviously someone reversed the order of the sentences. It sounds a lot better to word it just like it reads in the Gospel: "He is not here. He is risen!"

You’d better hope to find him HERE, in a church, at this table, in the people you meet. In fact, the good news about the resurrection is, He IS here! He can be found everywhere!

The message that “He is not here” was specifically about the tomb itself, a place for the dead. Jesus just as well could have hung a sign there, "Jesus was here!" For at his resurrection he begins to appear among the living. And he walks and talks, eats, teaches, breathes. He even can appear to persons hiding behind locked doors. Jesus is ubiquitous.

Say that word back to me: ubiquitous. To say that Jesus is ubiquitous means that he is now everywhere. Jesus is God. He can be wherever he is needed and there is never a place where he hasn’t been. Missionaries love this fact. You can trust that you will find him, even if you go to the deepest and furthest reaches of foreign territory and Jesus can already be found there. We say this about Jesus, I think we believe in it, but often we rely on the usual ways to experience him. When we come into a church with lots of friendly people about, with good music and reverent worship, it's easy to detect Jesus' presence. But if we are feeling down in the dumps about something, scared or angry, or we're among people we don't like, it's harder to feel his presence. But the good news is, He is with you even then. Jesus is Here. He is ubiquitous. Jesus is God.

Jesus, by his appearance behind locked doors where the disciples met, reveals that he is God. God with us and for us. It is Thomas, the skeptic of the bunch, who confesses when he finally touches his wounds, “My Lord and My God!” He isn't just saying, "My God" as an exclamation like some people do to take the Lord's name in vain. He is claiming Jesus as God. It means Jesus wasn’t just a person resuscitated like Lazarus, nor was he just a gifted speaker and healer. He is our Lord and our God. Our Master and the subject of our worship.

There are many reasons why this matters. Of course, the resurrection spells life eternal because in Jesus’ death, he bore the world's sin on a cross, and in His Resurrection, we can be assured that He is the Alpha and the Omega, having conquered death. But these stories of Jesus’ appearances also tells us he is ubiquitous. He IS here. In fact, Jesus is here right now.

At this communion table, we confess Jesus' presence, even though if our eyes fail to discern him in the bread and juice. We rely on the work of the Spirit to make it possible, to lift us to Jesus Christ, the host of this meal. As we ready our hearts to receive this holy meal, try to see with your heart and you can find Jesus, granting you his heavenly strength, as you find communion in his body.

Jesus can walk through walls. Sometimes, like Thomas, we put up walls in our hearts – walls built of doubt or anger or bitterness or grief, or just pure logic. He broke through the wall that Thomas made of doubt. Jesus can do the same for you and me, for everyone everywhere. He is our Lord and our God. Thanks be to God for this extraordinary Good News of Resurrection. Alleluia! Amen.

**Service of Holy Communion**

**Invitation to the Table**

On our Easter Journey, looking for the Resurrected Christ,

we first stop here at the Lord's table.
We were just here a week or so ago,
remembering how Jesus shared a meal with his disciples before he was arrested,
but he promises to meet us here again and again and again.
This is the table of our risen Lord,
the table where we remember how he gave of himself for us,
the table where we share the great feast of earth and heaven even now,
the table where we can expect to meet Jesus.

Where is Jesus?
He is here,
waiting for us,
inviting us to share this holy feast again
so that we might be strengthened to meet him again and again along the way.
So whoever you are,
wherever you have been,
come and celebrate this holy feast,
because Jesus is here
and invites us to join him in this feast which he has prepared.

**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you.
**And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts.
**We lift them up to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

This Easter Season, O God,
we can do nothing but sing your praise.
While you gave up your Son to death,
you did not let death have the last word.
In Christ you overcame the power of death,
raising him to new life
and destroying death once and for all.
All that you have said and all that you have done
lead us to this table,
to this celebration of new life.
We can do nothing but give you thanks and praise for the life you have given us and the life that lies ahead.
So with grateful hearts, we join with the choirs of earth and heaven to sing your praise:

**Holy, Holy Holy Lord, God of power and might**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory**

**Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!**

Awesome God, come among us by the power of your Spirit.
Show us the presence of the risen Christ as we celebrate this meal.
Receive the gifts we bring to this place,
and use them to make all things new even now, even here, even at this table.
Make this bread and this cup for us the body and blood of our resurrected Lord.
By your Spirit, unite us with the risen Jesus,
that we might see him here and everywhere we go
as we embody the gift of his resurrection in our lives and in our world.

Send your Spirit among us to renew all things.
We pray for renewal and strength for our community and for your Church.

(insert petitions)

Loving God,
help us to glimpse the risen Christ at work in our world.
Show us how to see and serve him in all those we meet,
and guide us in finding your new life along our journey each and every day.
Keep us faithful in your service
until the new life we see in him is visible for all the world
as we feast together once and for all in the joy of your eternal realm.
Through our risen Christ, who taught the apostles and in turn teach us to pray, "Our Father...Amen."

**Words of Institution**

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it,

And he gave it to his disciples saying,

"Take, eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When they finished eating, he took the cup and he gave it to his disciples, saying,

"Take this and drink of it, all of you. This is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

Friends, the table is set. The Lord beckons you to feast with Him.

**Distribution of the Elements**

**Prayer After Communion**

Risen Christ,
we have glimpsed you here as we have shared bread and cup.
So help us to see you risen, present, and at work in our world
and to join you in making all things new
until you come again in glory
and we feast again with you for all eternity.
Alleluia! Amen.

**\*Closing Hymn #262 RH "Thy Life Was Given For Me"**

**\*Benediction**