**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, August 7, 2016, the Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Communion Sunday**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

Our worship is imperfect, our lives are found wanting,

But you, O Lord, are perfection, you complete us.

Make us whole, fill us with your Holy Communion,

So that we are nourished and filled,

With the knowledge that you are with us still.

And we may trust in your guidance,

As we step out as the reflection of your kingdom at hand,

This we humbly ask,

As the Body of Christ

With you as our head, Amen.

**Call to Confession**

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

**Responsive Reading** [**Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23**](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/revised-common-lectionary/2016/8/7/#psalm) **(please see bulletin)**

**Time Out for Teaching: Biblical Genres – Apocalypticism**

Today we hear a series of apocalyptic speech, calling for preparedness for a moment of unveiling. Apocalypticism is easily confused with eschatology, but apocalypticism merely means the unveiling or revealing of God. Whereas, eschatology is the last days, or the final word.

End times and Revelation do sometimes go hand in hand. Perhaps it is because whenever God is revealed to humankind there automatically comes a form of judgment, whether it is in the form of punishment or correction. We see an opportunity for correction offered to Israel in our reading from Isaiah today, and in that judgment and correction God reveals his character as one of righteous and just, on behalf of the widow and the orphan.

Luke’s reading today is also apocalyptic, promising that the Son of Man shall come whether we are ready or not, so it tells us we have to always be prepared, by being attentive and watchful for when it might be like someone sneaking into your house. So, He says, sell your possessions so you are unencumbered.

The word “apocalypse” actually means “revelation,” or a revealing of God to our human ears and eyes. I think that the more we spend paying attention to the world around us and what is revealed to us in Scripture, it turns out God is constantly trying to reveal Himself to us. So, look out!

**Old Testament Reading** [**Isaiah 1:1, 10-20**](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/revised-common-lectionary/2016/8/7/#first-reading)

1The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

10Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! 11What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. 12When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more; 13bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and calling of convocation-I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. 14Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them. 15When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. 16Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, 17learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

18Come now, let us argue it out, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. 19If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; 20but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

**Gospel Reading Luke 12:32-40**

32"Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

34For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

35"Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit;

36be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks.

37Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and *he* will come and serve them.

38If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

39"But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

40You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

**Sermon: “Soft Mouths”**

I admit it: I am an Olympics junkie. Especially the Summer Olympics, since I have always better understood those sports, especially the soccer, swimming, and volleyball. And this year is a particularly interesting year. The IOC recognizes for the first time in history, a non-geographic team: the Refugee Olympic Team. This team is comprised of displaced persons primarily from Syria, Congo, and the Sudan, and they have escaped far more terrifying trials than the Olympic trials. They are a reminder of why many of us love watching the Olympics – not only is it exciting to watch world-class athletes compete, it is also inspiring to learn of their personal stories of overcoming tragedy so that they can compete in the sport that they love.

With the support of many people in their lives, somehow they are able to work through their pain, and set aside the junk that keeps them from competing at their best.

The Scriptures call us to a similar kind of perseverance. The words of Isaiah and the words of Jesus are a revelation about what God requires of us. They call for us to be, in the words of Isaiah, “willing and obedient,” as we figure out for ourselves how to do what is right in the eyes of God. We too, when it comes to faith, are sort of refugees in our own way, for we seek safety in God’s arms from what causes us pain, but not only that, we have to endure as we pursue God’s highest calling.

Jesus tells his listeners to pay attention, be prepared for action, keep the lamps lit. Luke wrote these words down sometime soon after the fall of the Jerusalem Temple. It was a catastrophic moment in history, akin to the fall of the Twin Towers on 9/11. Their world was changed forever. It caused religious groups, such as the Pharisees to recoil, react by anxiously pulling away from the needs of the common people, tighten up their enforcement of God’s law. This movement led to the isolation and polarization of the average person in their own religion. Those first Christians were stuck in the middle of that. Things were upside down and sideways. Now, Jesus says, be ready. Now and especially right now, in light of the catastrophic events, be ready for when God comes to you, whether it be the end of days, or this just be one of those everyday moments when God speaks: be ready to listen! Not anxiously but calmly, filled with the kind of peace that God alone can give. Be ready, He says, for God wishes to give us the kingdom, and the kingdom is unfolding.

We have to be willing and obedient, prepared to listen for God who speaks to reveal the kingdom to us and this world. It may be a gradual unfolding, bit by bit, but that means we really have to pay attention. We can best see what God is up to if we are willing and obedient.

This special kind of preparedness, means being supple in God’s guiding hands. Horsemen call this having a “soft mouth.” That’s when they have a good horse who has been trained, and is willing and obedient, sensitive to the rider’s commands through subtle workings of the bit and bridle. Just as a great athlete is responsive to the instructions of her coach, a horse with a soft mouth allows itself to become one with its rider. Perhaps it was a refugee from past abuse, but now is softened to entrust itself to its rider.

So, can we be like the good horse, or a good athlete, ready to receive God’s revelation? We **can** be ready when we are supple in His hands, trusting in His love, open to His judgment and redirection. I thank God that there is a lot more to this life than what we see, and that God is always there, working to make Himself known. God wants us to live His kingdom life, and for us to reveal that kingdom in our actions and words. Let go of what prevents you from noticing God. Leave it all here at this table as we celebrate the revelation of Jesus’ self-offering for our salvation. Prepare to become one with Him today. Broken as we may be, poured as we may feel, let us be soft and willing in His hands. I’m not preaching this at you today; I pray it for us all. Amen.

**Service of Holy Communion**

**Invitation**

At this table, Jesus reveals to us the kind of God who loves us so much that He gave Himself for our sins. At this table, Jesus reveals to us that our God is with us and for us in every way, wishes to become one with the people whom He loves. This table is not Presbyterian, not Calvinist, not Reformed. It belongs to Jesus alone, and Jesus invites all persons who seek him to share in this holy meal, a sign of the heavenly banquet He promises.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving, Lord’s Prayer**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them unto the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe,
for your mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.
We give you thanks,
for you create with a word,
and you sustain all life with your own breath.
We give you thanks,
for your abundance is beyond our imagining,
providing enough for all—
enough food, enough water, enough time, enough love
for every person, for every creature, for every blade of grass and drop of water.
We give you thanks,
for when we have been unfaithful to you,
still you have always been faithful to us.
You have called us over and over,
even when we have turned our back on your way.
You walked among us in your Son,
living our life,
dying our death,
and rising to prove your power of love is greater.
Where still the powers of this world hold sway,
we pray for your grace to be known again this day.
Where there is hatred, make us your seeds of love.
Where there is illness, let your healing power flow free.
Where there is fear, make us beacons of your light.
Help us, O God, to reflect your glory into the world,
our every action and word rising from your love.
When we are tempted to keep silent in the face of injustice,
give us courage to speak out.
When we would prefer to explain things away,
give us courage to see what you would have us see.
When we are on the cusp of giving in to our own ideas about you,
reveal your true self to us again in the breaking of bread,
and nourish us in the life of your Spirit.
Here at your feast of life,
we join all those people who have been blamed for an abuser’s behavior,
all those children who learned not to cry,
all those men wondering if they are alone.
We break bread with people who have known heartache,
and with people who have caused it,
and join together in praying for your will to be done, not ours.
We break bread with those who have recently known grief and loss,

With those who are hungry,

Those who have no home.

As we come to your table,
surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
flawed and faithful each in their own ways,
remake us into your body yet again,
loving, serving, and caring for the world.
We pray these and all things in the name of the One who proves your faithfulness, Jesus the Christ, who taught us to pray together…

(the Lord’s Prayer)

**Words of Institution**

**Distribution of Elements**

**Prayer after Communion**

O God, you have so greatly loved us,

long sought us, and mercifully redeemed us.

Give us grace that in everything we may yield ourselves, our wills and our works,

a continual thank-offering to you;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen, you have fed us with spiritual food,