**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**February 28, 2016 Third Sunday in Lent**

**11:00 a.m.**

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

**Call to Worship**  (see bulletin)

**Opening Prayer**

Lord, we turn ourselves to you, heart, mind, soul and strength.

As your children, we seek you, some of us today in great need of your presence.

Some of us today in joy and thanksgiving.

Some of us hurried, worried about what we must do when this time of worship is over.

Slow us down O Lord, that we be attuned to your presence in this place.

That we may hear the word you have for us,

That we make this time in you our priority.

Let everything else that awaits us stay still until we leave here,

So we can still our hearts and listen to you. In Jesus our Savior we pray, Amen.

**\*Opening Hymn**

**Call to Confession**

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

O Lord, You have been our help. In the shadow of Your wings we sing for joy. Our souls cling to you. Your hands hold onto us. We are reminded of Your forgiveness and Your mercy. We are reminded that in You we have new life. Amen.

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 63:1-8** (see bulletin)

**Prayers of the People**

(silence)

Lord, you have been our refuge and our strength, a dwelling place for all generations. For this we give you thanks. We seek your refuge when we are in times of trouble, as we feel the waves of change tossing us about like a ship at sea. Stabilize us, O God, and grant us some peace, that we may find a moment of freedom to make adjustments to the changes around us.

For those who have been enduring difficulties this week, we especially request this peace. Give each one some room to contemplate your extraordinary providence for them. Comfort each person in their fears and uncertainties. Place your wise counsel in their hearts.

For this community which is not the same community we once knew, and is not the community in which this church was first planted 110 years ago. Grant our congregation your vision for this church, as we build our lives here together. That we may be able to continue providing a place a worship, a place where hope can be found, a place of joy and fellowship.

We lift our thanksgivings for the joys we have. For the daily rising of the sun and moon reminds us of your precious gift of grace that comes with each passing day. The gift of life that enjoins our hearts with one another in friendship, thus reminding us of your friendship and strength.

Thank you for walking with us through both the valleys and along the mountaintops of our lives. Please teach us to do the same for one another and others, as you first taught your apostles to do. Send us from this place when it is time, that we may bear your light to the world. This we ask in the unending name of Jesus Christ, for whom every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess Lord. As your children we are confident to pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven...Amen."

**Time Out for Teaching: Approaches to Prayer**

**Romans 8:26 says,** "...the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." Have you ever considered what that means?

The Spirit helps us in our weakness...

That very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words...

You might say that prayer is our attempts to attune to the conversation already going on within our hearts with God.

We usually think of prayer as our speaking to God, telling God all our problems, asking for what we want. But you might also say that as we grow more and more intimate with God, we find it is a two way street, a communion and conversation. The existentialist theologian Soren Kierkegaard once wrote, "A man prayed, and at first he thought that prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet until in the end he realized that prayer was listening."

God is not, as one author said, our "cosmic bellhop," whom we give our spiritual shopping list.

God is a freely-acting being, whose will is all unto His own.

We have to listen as much as we speak when we pray. For a true conversation to happen, just like approaching a good friend, we have to be ready for the give and take.

Let me ask you - I would like to know how you prefer to pray? What makes you feel most connected to God in conversation?

**Isaiah 55:1-9**

1Ho, everyone who thirsts,

come to the waters;

and you that have no money,

come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without price.

2Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,

and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,

and delight yourselves in rich food.

3Incline your ear, and come to me;

listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant,

my steadfast, sure love for David.

4See, I made him a witness to the peoples,

a leader and commander for the peoples.

5See, you shall call nations that you do not know,

and nations that do not know you shall run to you

because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,

for he has glorified you.

6Seek the LORD while he may be found,

call upon him while he is near;

7let the wicked forsake their way,

and the unrighteous their thoughts;

let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them,

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

9For as the heavens are higher than the earth,

so are my ways higher than your ways

and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**1 Corinthians 10:1-13**

1I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3and all ate the same spiritual food, 4and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. 5Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

6Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. 7Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." 8We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. 9We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. 10And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. 12So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. 13No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

**Luke 13:1-9**

1At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? 3No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. 4Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

6Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. 7So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' 8He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. 9If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

**Sermon "The Gift of Time" Rev. Amy Pospichal**

God has given us the gift of time. It began when God created the heavens and earth, as it says in Genesis. When the Lord set the lights in the sky, the sun and the moon, thus began the balance of day and night. We have subdivided that time so much into minutes and seconds and now even milliseconds. Scientists studying the speed of things need such precise measurements. I wonder what we have done to time, how this has affected our spirits.

What we do with our time seems increasingly distracted and compressed. You can blame technology if you want, but it's not just that. We are driven by many feelings that cause us to compress our time – be it our pride, our hope to impress our boss, the pressure to perform well for others, or just the fact we have many responsibilities and not enough help. In our effort to make Tucumcari great, there is often so much happening around town at once, it's simply impossible to do everything we want to do, and many of us feel pressure to cram it all in. For instance, last Saturday, we had the funeral for Gilbert Martinez, followed by a PW Meeting, and the next day Potluck Sunday. I skipped a meeting in Roswell that was also on Saturday. It took me a long time to realize this (since I'm a little slow), ago that Jesus is the only one in the world who can be everywhere at once! But when we wear multiple hats, you and I, so we try to be everywhere we think we're needed.

Let's face it, friends. We're not Jesus. And if we forget this, and behave like superheroes who can transcend time and space, we're guilty of idolatry. And we're guilty of something else, forgetting that God's creation - time - is a gift, not a curse.

Time we have is a gift from God, and not just for us to race about trying to accomplish everything we think we must do. For us believers, we might begin to see time as a chance to experience God's grace, God's generous providence for us who earnestly seek Him. Everywhere in our readings from the Psalm, through the Old and New Testaments, we see time provided to experience God's grace. Time spent in the Lord, as described by the Psalmist is like a satisfying rich feast, as he meditates on the Lord, and promises to bless Him as long as he lives. Time well-spent, in my opinion! Isaiah reminds us that now is the time when we really should seek God: "6Seek the LORD while he may be found / call upon him while he is near..." Now is the time when we should urgently and earnestly seek after the Lord, for today is a sacred gift.

But we have only so much time to seek God. As Luke reminds us in Jesus' parable of the fig tree. If we are not bearing fruit, then it's time to start – now. For we have been given a grace period, as the gardener has advised the landowner. But as you and I know, in order to bear fruit, we have to repent of our ways and turn to God. We have to repent of our idols, including that of thinking that it is us against the clock. We have to let go of some of that in order for us to devote some time for God, and for living richer spiritual lives through the church. Repentance is the key to living as Jesus wants us to live. Even Jesus took some time out from his busy ministry when he told his disciples, "Come away with me to a deserted place..." I promise you if you repent of your ways of forgetting that time is God's gift to you, you won't regret your decision. Our joy in Christ shall be akin to a sumptuous feast, the Psalmist and Isaiah tell us. And we will feel like the richest people in the world.

What might it look like if we were to see time as a gift from God? Our priorities would shift. God, church and family would be at the top of our agenda. Serving those in need would be at the top of our schedule. We would embrace a Sabbath, by making time for God. Marie Klug writes: "Each moment we live is a precious Gift from God because time is important to mankind, not measured in years, decades, but every moment of every day touches someone else’s life in some way: a neighbor, a telephone call, a word, or an expression of politeness in a store, dignity in one’s workplace...a small prayer to God..."

Pope Francis once said “Our life is made of time and time is God’s gift, and it is therefore important to make use of it by performing good and fruitful actions. ...Among the many things to do in our daily routine, one of the priorities should be reminding ourselves of our Creator who allows us to live...”

As the parable of the fig tree shows us, God has given us the gift of time, time to bear fruit, time to repent and receive grace. Thank goodness for the gardener, who suggested, "give it one more year." Friends, we have time. Dedicate a portion of it to seek out God's grace. Amen.

**\*Apostles’ Creed P 12 red hymnal**

**\*Closing Hymn**

**\*Benediction**

**This Week at First Presbyterian**

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|  |  |
| MWF @ 9AM | Exercise, Eat & Pray |
| Tuesdays @ noon  Sunday: | High Noon Yoga  9:30AM Adult Sunday School  11:00AM Worship |

**VISITORS – WELCOME**

**Thank you** for worshiping with us today. If you like, please leave your name and address in the friendship folders at the end of the pew. Please come back soon!

**THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

* ***If you are thinking of joining our church***, you can contact any of the Elders: Wayne or Sharon Huffman, Betty Faye Ragan, Kenna McKenzie, Julie Sursa or Ron Wilmot. You can also contact Amy at 575-708-0860. You can join by Confession of Faith, Reaffirmation of Faith or by Letter of Transfer from another church.
* Tired of seeing your name on the ***Prayer List***? Let us know if you feel it’s time to come off of the list.
* Adult Sunday School is at 9:30AM in the Library. See you in the library next Sunday!

**PRAYER REQUESTS FOR COMFORT AND HEALING**

Dr. John and Cheryl Faith

Shay – requested by Julie Sursa

Jim Enriquez & family

Emma Lowther, Lou Sims’ great niece – ongoing heart trouble

Dot Vogel

Sacia Malone – Pancreas problems

Jo Priddy – in nursing home in Albuquerque

Bob McClelland – at Quail Ridge

Tom Morris - at Quail Ridge

Bruce White (cousin of Theresa Goldston) – recovering from heart attack

Amber Varsallona – knee problems

Misty, Lynn and Jim Hudson’s daughter-in-law, who is showing signs of improvement

Myra (daughter of Amber’s friend) – heart problems

Frances Agnew - Amber's aunt, hospitalized with infection

Clifford and Molly Kenyon (Ft. Sumner) daughter Reagan fighting cancer

Tom Anderson – cancer

Matthew Story - court proceedings concerning his children

Gloria (Teresa Gallegos-Brake’s sister) - recovering

Teresa and Betty - grieving the loss of their brother, Gilbert

Angie Garcia - hospice