**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**February 7, 2016 Transfiguration Sunday**

**11:00 a.m.**

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

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Prelude**

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

**Opening Prayer**

**\*Opening Hymn Thine Is the Glory**

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession (Unison)**

**Holy God, you call us to faith, but so often we walk by sight:**

**We want fact to be truth and truth to be obvious.**

**We seek answers that resemble what already lies in our field of vision.**

**We value clarity more than reality, what we can see more than what may be, what conforms to our picture more than what shocks, surprises, challenges or confounds us.**

**Light of the world, forgive us when we privilege our own sight and thus become blind.**

**Open our eyes to you – your deeper truth and your life within us –**

**so that we might look around us and within us and see anew.**

**In faith, may we come to know you more fully, love more deeply,**

**and see the world and everyone it as you do, according to your grace. (Silence) Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Brothers and sisters, regardless of how we see, we are loved by Christ,

who came to bring sight to the blind in mind and spirit,

who knows our blind spots and gives us new vision.

**May we learn to see with the eyes of Christ. Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 99 (see bulletin)**

**Time out for Teaching: Theophany**

Today is an important day. Jesus makes a theophanic appearance to three of his disciples.

It is a characteristic "theophany." Remember a few months ago, when the Time Out for Teaching was a series of descriptions of "genres" or "types" of scriptural literature? This story of Jesus and his disciples is a "theophany." It means that God is making an appearance. It is one of those stories in which God is unveiled for the human eye, makes God's holy and glorified presence known among human beings, and the human beings cannot do anything but recognize that this is God.

The disciples, who always seem to be in learning mode, not yet reached apostleship, tend to remind us of just how silly and flawed humanity can be.

Now, there are at least two things going on in every theophany story. God appears and humans see. It says something about God and it also says something to us about ourselves. We humans, flawed as we are, often do something silly or embarrassingly human.

But God comes off very profound, bear some eternal message of hope, and sometimes judgement. God brings the message we need to hear, if we would just keep our mouths closed for a moment, exercising our call to self-control, and just pay attention.

**Exodus 34:29-35**

29Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. 30When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. 31But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. 32Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. 33When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; 34but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, 35the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

**Gospel Luke 9:28-36**

28Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. 29And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. 30Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. 31They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — not knowing what he said. 34While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. 35Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" 36When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

**Sermon "Know Jesus, Know Hope" Rev. Amy Pospichal**

Jesus brings up the mountain three of his closest disciples, Peter, James and John. They have often been considered his "inner circle," and they happen to be three of the first disciples he ever called. Andrew, Peter's brother, was also summoned by Jesus on the same day, but he is noticeably absent from this story.

Jesus "discovered" these guys along the shore of Galilee, hailing from Bethsaida, just a few 20 or 25 miles from Jesus' hometown. They might have been distant relatives of Jesus, for all we know. Like how some of us in Tucumcari have distant cousins who hail from Logan. Peter, James and John might have felt mighty close to Jesus, be it as blood relations, or just familiar hometown friends. Why they got to go up the mountain is not made clear to us. Except perhaps sometimes, familiarity with someone can prevent us from knowing someone better.

All too often we can make the same mistake - with Jesus and with one another. The person sitting across the aisle from you you might have known all your life. How well do you really know them? For those of us who grew up as Christians, sometimes we can be the very worst at knowing what Jesus actually says to us in the Gospels, or haven't cracked open our Bibles in years. When we hear familiar stories read in church, the Transfiguration story being one of them, we might make the mistake of hearing the very same thing we've always read, missing out on the freshness of God's living word, which eagerly wants to jump off the page and into our lives.

God wants us to know Jesus, for who he really is. Knowing Jesus gives us hope.

As I was driving south on the East side of Lubbock this past week, I couldn't help but notice a billboard erected by one of the many evangelical churches in Texas. It says just 8 words, two lines: "No Jesus, No Hope," and "Know Jesus, Know Hope." In the first, the word is spelled, "N-O," telling us that if there is no Jesus in our lives, then our hope is seriously compromised. The second line says "Know Jesus" with a "K-N-O-W" - that is in knowing Jesus for who he is, then we have a lot of hope compared to if we don't know Him. We might find hope in some of the things we are able to do - our own talents, our abilities, our actions. But knowing Jesus brings us a whole lot more hope than if we don't know him.

Jesus three closest disciples get a little peek in at who He really is. And perhaps it was to help those disciples out. When they ascended that mount with Jesus, Jesus to them was probably their homeboy, the friend from the across the lake, a friend with extraordinary abilities to speak, lead, preach and heal. On the mountaintop they find out that he is all that and more. Bathed in God's glory, flanked by the two greatest prophets ever lived, it was as if the curtains parted for a moment to reveal Jesus' true identity. Suddenly their homeboy was not just another gifted preacher/healer. And this had to be helpful for them, for as they descend the mountain, Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem, where he shall stand accused for blasphemy, be tried for treachery, executed on a cross, before they find out the good news that through him, death has lost its sting.

For what the disciples were about to undergo with their teacher, they would need every shred of hope they could find. Knowledge of Jesus could help them.

We might not have all had mountaintop experiences like these three disciples. Perhaps sometimes you might feel like one of the other 9 who were outside of the "inner circle." But like them, all are called to faith and service. I invite you to consider your options in how you can know Jesus - what gives you hope. We have Scripture. We have people to talk to about faith. We also have small moments to give thanks to God for being alive. We have fellowship with one another. The person sitting next to you is really a remarkable walking miracle if you get to know him or her better. So remember you have many ways to know Jesus, including knowing how he has been at work in other peoples' lives, and therefore, in your own life too. So begin today, as this week begins the journey through Lent, to get to know Jesus better, and you will find hope. Amen.

**\*Apostles’ Creed P 12 red hymnal**

**Holy Communion Service**

As thankful people we approach this table. As invited people we come to share in the feast that is prepared for us but does not belong to us. We come as Christ’s own at his invitation, for this table is not for the worthy but for the hungry.

Let us pray.

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 him thanks and praise.**

Great God of all that is,

and was, and yet may be –

by your Word the cosmos became

you called for light, and light was

and it was good, many times over, good.

You are the one in whom we stand,

the rock on which we build,

the wave that levels all.

No life lives apart from you,

and no death comes that is secret from you.

We thank you for being, for making, and for knowing.

Christ Jesus, the Logos of God made flesh,

living all life at once, and for all time,

you offered your words on mountain and plain,

at sea and at table,

on the cross and after.

We treasure your words,

and listen for your knock at the door,

your voice calling us out of the dark.

Holy Spirit, indwelling life,

you intercede for us with sighs

when we have no words of our own.

You are the fire on the tongue,

and the tongues of fire,

the light in the dark,

the wisdom of the foolish,

the strength of the child

and the vigor of the old.

You subdue the violent,

overthrow the dominant,

and breathe new life into the least of us.

You make a way where there is no way,

and are God present with us.

In the name of creator, redeemer and sustainer,

Yahweh, Iesus, Parakletos,

Being, Love and Life,

we are thankful for all that is,

all that was, and all that yet may be.

This we pray with the confidence of children, saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven...Amen."

**Serving the Elements:**

On the night that he was betrayed...

 **WELCOME** **THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

* Green Chile Gals meet at the McFarland's tomorrow night! **THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**
* Amy is taking a class in Austin, Texas from Monday through Thursday this week.
* ***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

Frances Agnew - Amber's aunt, very sick

Kay Hart and her family at the loss of her dad, Ed

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

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

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

Gilbert Martinez – heart problems

Tom Anderson – cancer

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

Family of Mary Jimenez