**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**June 4, 2017 Day of Pentecost**

**11:00 a.m.**

**131 BH Wind, Who Makes All Winds That Blow**

**239 RH Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove**

**129 BH Come, O Spirit, Dwell Among Us**

**Rev. Amy Pospichal, Pastor Betty Faye Ragan, Accompanist**

**Call to Worship (based on Acts 2:1-21)**

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

From heaven there came a sound,

**like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house.**

Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared and on each of them.

**All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.**

Each one spoke in their native tongue

**And understood each other!**

**Opening Prayer**

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession**

**Spirit –**

**You started the church, as a demonstration plot for your kingdom, for all the world to see.**

**We confess that we celebrate the Church’s birthday as if it was an event of the past. We look back on Pentecost as a day gone by, instead of the hope for this world and that to come.**

**We remember the good old days as if there won’t be any more.**

**We confess that we devalue our lives and the spiritual gifts you have provided for this time and this place.**

**Forgive us, O God, for the ways we think too humbly of your provisions for your Church. Train our hearts, O Christ, that we place your gifts into the service of your Kingdom, that - the hungry fed, the thirsty quenched, the homeless sheltered, the captives freed - your Gospel is revealed by our living. (silence) Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Through the love of God in Christ Jesus, we 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 104:24-34, 35b**

O LORD, how manifold are your works!   
**In wisdom you have made them all;   
          the earth is full of your creatures.**Yonder is the sea, great and wide,   
**creeping things innumerable are there,   
          living things both small and great.**There go the ships,   
**and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.**

These all look to you   
**to give them their food in due season;**when you give to them, they gather it up;   
**when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.**When you hide your face, they are dismayed;   
**when you take away their breath, they die   
          and return to their dust.**When you send forth your spirit, they are created;   
**and you renew the face of the ground.**

May the glory of the LORD endure forever;   
**may the LORD rejoice in his works —**who looks on the earth and it trembles,   
**who touches the mountains and they smoke.**I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;   
**I will sing praise to my God while I have being.**May my meditation be pleasing to him,   
**for I rejoice in the LORD.**Bless the LORD, O my soul.   
     Praise the LORD!

**Blessed be God!**

**Offering**

**Time out for Teaching: History of Tradition - Pentecost**

A useful approach to studying Scripture is to take a look at the history of traditions that the Scripture points out for us. On this Day of Pentecost, we might take a look at the history of the tradition of Pentecost, for it was first a Jewish festival day, before it was ever a Christian one.

The Jews celebrated Pentecost, 50 days after the Passover, as a festival commemorating the giving of God’s Law to Israel.

As we all know, the Law was a life-giving gift to the Israelites. It provided them a way to become a great nation. It gave them a relationship to the Lord which was a covenant they could strive to live by. The Law was the rule by which they could return in repentance when they went astray. I guess you could say that the Law was evidence that God cared for them.

There is another tradition happening in the Pentecost story – some would say this is like a reverse Tower of Babel. Remember in that story when the people tried to build a tower to reach God in heaven. God instead frustrates their attempt by causing them to start speaking in different languages so they cannot work together to reach God by their own means. This Pentecost event is a little like this but the difference is, even though they are speaking in different languages, languages of their own homelands, they are able to understand one another, not by their own efforts, but of God’s own volition.

Lastly, a tradition most evident by its use in the Acts 2 reading is the use of the prophets to interpret events of their time. See what happens when the giving of the Spirit to the people takes place. Witnesses discount it and say “They are drunk with new wine,” but then the Apostle Peter stands up and interprets what has just happened, and he uses the words of the Prophets to make sense of it all.

So, Pentecost is important to us now – a day to celebrate God’s covenant – not just with Israel through the Law but with people of all nations by the Holy Spirit, thus forming what we call the church. We are the church by God’s gracious Spirit, capable of understanding God and each other, by God’s own initiative. And, we have a model for how to be church – for using the Scriptures to constructively make sense of these times.

Just as the giving of the Law to Israel became a basis on which Israel could become a nation – “a holy nation, a kingdom of priests…” so also Pentecost for us Christians give us a “Law” that formed the Church.

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Numbers 11:24-30**

24So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. 25Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again.

26Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. 27And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” 28And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, “My lord Moses, stop them!” 29But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!” 30And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

**1 Corinthians 12:3b-13**

3bNo one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

4Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;6and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

12For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

**Acts 2:1-21**

1When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes 11Cretans and Arabs — in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” 12All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

14But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. 16No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:   
17  ‘In the last days it will be, God declares,   
     that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,   
          and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,   
     and your young men shall see visions,   
          and your old men shall dream dreams.   
18  Even upon my slaves, both men and women,   
          in those days I will pour out my Spirit;   
               and they shall prophesy.   
19  And I will show portents in the heaven above   
          and signs on the earth below,   
               blood, and fire, and smoky mist.   
20  The sun shall be turned to darkness   
          and the moon to blood,   
               before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.   
21  Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”

**Sermon “The Out of Towners” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

I am fascinated with those out of towners in Luke’s Acts of the Apostles. Who are they? We don’t know much about these out of towners. What we can say is they are from all over the known world. You could say that this Pentecost moment was an international gathering. They were from North Africa (Libya and Egypt), they were from Rome, from Asia Minor and many more nationalities are represented.

The other thing we can say is the out of towners are perplexed. It is not what they expected to see on Pentecost, a traditional festival to celebrate the formation of Israel by the giving of the Law. Some asked, “What does this mean?” and others just sneer, “They are filled with new wine!”

We know very little else about these out of towners.

We get a lot of out of towners in Tucumcari this time of year. We have our pet peeves about them. They don’t know the customs of our community, and yet we know we should be grateful for them. I think one of my issues with out of towners is there are many of the photographer types like to stop their cars in the middle of Route 66 to take pictures, which seems to me like an accident waiting to happen.

Some out of towners talk funny, some of them too fast. Some of them in other languages. I am amazed at the nationalities who rent a classic car and travel through Tucumcari for that “Route 66 Experience”. It may be their only impression they will ever have of this city.

Remember the two ladies from China who appeared on a Sunday morning wanting to see the church? Wayne rightly invited them to come in and stay for worship, but they had to go on their way.

The Presbyterians have been dwelling in Tucumcari for over 110 years. This church has seen a lot of change, but I believe we are in a new age when we’re about to see a lot more.

In between repairing roof shingles and attending Presbytery meetings, wondering at times how God keeps us going on our shoestring budget, we have a most important purpose as God’s church. It is to read the signs of the times. No longer are we a community centered around the railroad, nor around the trucking industry. It appears that we are becoming more of a seasonal economy, based on tourism and small businesses. All the while, the human factor continues to be a sore point: large numbers of persons on welfare, high school dropout rates, drug addictions, teen pregnancy, none of these are seasonal. And here we are the Church, stuck between practical problems and Pentecostal opportunities.

Peter sees the opportunity after this Pentecost moment, for he hears the sneers of the out of towners. In their sneering, he knows the real problem: their need to understand. They needed him to interpret the moment.

In the words of the prophet Joel, Peter tells the out of towners that “ALL” flesh shall receive God’s Spirit, even upon slaves, people of each gender, sons and daughters as well as the elders. There shall be signs before the coming of the Lord. And then the final good news is “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Everyone…SHALL be saved. Peter’s first sermon is to an international audience and he is telling these people of different languages, from different lands that they shall be saved. God’s Holy Spirit made it possible for his words to find their way into the hearts of many. This broad and joyous message of God’s salvation gets planted into particular individual hearts – Parthian, Medes, Roman, Egyptian, Cappadocian and many others.

That is what the Holy Spirit does, my friends. We plant the Word of God and God translates. God’s global message of salvation finds its way into particular places.

There are places in our denomination where the church is being reborn in unexpected and particular ways. To name just a few, there is a Ghanian congregation in New Jersey who formed because they missed their native foods, so they began meeting for dinner and worship in someone’s home. Now they are attracting other people who are not from Ghana but who find it renewing. There is a new worshiping community in Knoxville, Tennessee, called “Geekworks,” attempting to get the Gospel to the people who feel out of place in traditional churches, but particularly like science fiction and fantasy. I have heard of worshiping communities who have cropped up in microbreweries and sing hymns at an old timey piano. There’s an Arabic Presbyterian in Arizona has appeared. A main mission for them is to practice peacemaking with local Muslims. God’s word is universal. God’s Spirit is alive and well, and seeks to inspire the world to call upon His name.

We don’t have to know Chinese or Swahili or even Spanish. But you already know other languages – you know the language of grief, the language of love, of hospitality, of friendship. You can speak in the language of good food, of open doors, of positive adult role models. These all are languages God can use. I have a feeling that this church is going to be here for a long time, if we speak God’s language. Amen.

**Service of Holy Communion**

**Invitation**

Friends, this is the table of Jesus Christ our Lord! People have come from east and west, north and south to dine with Christ at this table. All who seek Jesus Christ are invited to as his honored guests to taste and see that the Lord is good. Come, for Jesus is here and waiting to share this with you.

**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.**

We praise you, O Lord,  
for your Holy Spirit calls all things into being.  
The entire created order serves you joyfully,  
and your gracious presence is the song of every heart.

We bear witness that you alone are God,  
and we give thanks that you have claimed us as your people.  
By water and the Word, you make us your own;  
by fire and the Spirit, you call us into the world.  
Wherever we go, the risen and ascended Christ is our good shepherd.

Therefore we join our voices with all your people  
in every time, every place, and every language,  
singing praises to your holy name:

***Holy, holy, holy…***

Holy One, we enter your gates with thanksgiving;  
Blessed Christ, we rejoice in your holy presence.  
By your gracious invitation,  
we gather at this holy meal  
where we give thanks and call upon your great name.

Send forth your Holy Spirit once again.  
Blow through this place;  
reveal yourself in this bread and this cup;  
make your dwelling within this congregation.  
Join us to one another  
and transform us by your presence,  
that we may be the sign of your life in this world  
for all who are hurting, hungering, and searching.

This day we remember the needs of your people. We lift up those who suffer from violence, those who are sick, those who are lonely. Remember the needs of your people in England, Manchester and London. Remember the needs of the refugee. Remember the needs of those who grieve.

Reveal your goodness through us, O Lord,  
for your mercy is everlasting;  
we pray with your faithful ones in every age,  
joining our voices in the prayer you taught us, saying:

***The Lord’s Prayer***

**Words of Institution (Responsive form, please)**

**Distribution of the Elements**

**Prayer after Communion**

Jesus, you have fed us with your holy meal. Follow us from this table with your goodness and mercy,  
that we might rise to serve you with new life and hope  
as we dwell in your house forever.  
Lord, come quickly! Amen.

**\*Closing Hymn**

**\*Benediction**