**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, November 19, 2017, 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

God of a New Day,

We are busy people.

We have holiday preparations on our minds:

Kids coming home from college,

Travel plans,

Even funeral plans,

And our daily work ever before us.

You are our Sabbath, our retreat.

You bear us up with holy strength.

You grant us the renewal we need when we open ourselves to you.

So, we pray, bring your Spirit to bear on us today

With your renewing love.

That this Lord’s Day, we shall know it as a New Day.

**Amen.**

**Call to Confession**

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, Believe the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 123:1-4 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens,
and your faithfulness soars over us like the clouds.
We call on your righteousness, strong as a mountain,
and your justice, deep as the ocean;
for humans and all that lives on the earth,
we call out for mercy.

Your love is immeasurable,
and we lift up all your people who seek to know you.
Gather us under the shadow of your wings
and unite us with each other by your grace.

We pray for those who count themselves excluded from life’s good things,
that they might feast upon the abundance of your house.
We pray for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness or healing,
that you would give them drink from the river of your delights.
We pray for those whose lives are in danger or at an end,
for with you is the well of life.

In your light let us see light,
and in your loving-kindness let us make you known;
we pray in the name of your Christ, saying together:

*The Lord’s Prayer*

**Prayer for Illumination**

Holy God,
in the midst of our stillness, let your Spirit move;
through the sound of sheer silence, may we hear you whisper;
to the rhythm of creation, set the beating of our hearts;
and with the words of these stories we hear today,
teach us the lyrics to your song
**Amen.**

**Matthew 25:14-30**

14“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. 17In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. 19After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ 21His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ 22And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ 23His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ 24Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; 25so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ 26But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? 27Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. 28So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. 29For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 30As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

1Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. 2For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3When they say, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! 4But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; 5for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. 6So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; 7for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. 8But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

**Sermon: “PMA”**

In addition to the support of her family, Marjorie C. McKenzie probably stayed around with us for so long because of something she liked to call “PMA.” Some of you know what “PMA” is, right? “Positive Mental Attitude.” “PMA” became something of a mantra for her, whenever she felt like she couldn’t do something, or when she feeling a bit down hearted. If she couldn’t muster up enough PMA on her own, family and friends would call her and visit her remind her to work on “PMA.”

PMA doesn’t always come naturally to us. Some of us might feel it’s easier than for others. I’ll be honest with you – sometimes I have those days when I try to have PMA and it’s just not happening. Sometimes we need to have someone there to encourage us and build us up.

PMA may be just the tip of the iceberg, but it is a part of what Paul is talking about with the Thessalonians. They were pretty low on the stuff.

The Thessalonians were grieving and scared. Their oldest church members had begun dying away and they still hadn’t seen the return of Jesus. They feared that when Jesus came back the ones who had died would miss out on the Day of Resurrection. Things were not turning out as they had expected, and Paul tells them they must not allow themselves to live as others do when disappointed, forget their faith, and turn to works of darkness.

Unless you’re some sort of superhero, you probably know how that feels. Darkness that Paul speaks of is a despair that can lead us away from God, towards the temptation of living as children of darkness. It could start as disappointment, turning to fear and anger, and the negativity can become intoxicating that it can b near impossible for us alone to stop the downhill spiral. Our hearts can become frozen so that we might no longer be receptive to fresh hope and joy of Jesus Christ. It’s when we truly need someone else to shake us out of the stupor. We might even turn to other things for a cure, but few things can heal us like a good friend, or the pep talk of someone who understands.

Such friends are gifts from God, I believe. Nothing compares to the help of a friend.

In this passage on living as children of light, and not of darkness, Paul points to the importance of having Friends in Christ. I believe in the friendship of each of you here, for you are friends to me in various ways, and as various personalities you have different gifts for encouragement. I also believe that it is one of the joys of being a small church because we are so small we can know each person pretty well, if we give it a try. And when you do that you understand better about what that friend may need in the way of encouragement.

Paul says, live as children of day and light, which includes protecting oneself against the things of the dark – a helmet of hope, a breastplate of love and faith, and to encourage each other and build them up.

This is the life of a people who have already met Jesus. Paul assures them that the children of light are children of light because they are already believers. They have no need to worry for what will become of them. They are simply called to keep focused on what is light and hope, and to help others also find that faith, hope and love. Encourage one another he says, and build each other up. It is the behavior of a people who are already living in the New Day of Jesus Christ. PMA at its finest.

So, don’t be shy to ask for encouragement the next time you need it. And don’t be afraid to give it. It is more than warm fuzzies, sunshine and lollipops. It is strength for our faith, it is good for both the individual and for the whole church. The encouragement and building up of which Paul speaks is the antidote to these dark and frustrating times. We are the Children of Light. Let your light shine. Amen.

**Announcements:**

Today is potluck Sunday! Make sure you stick around and enjoy a Thanksgiving-y supper. All are invited.

Next Saturday, November 25th, beginning at 10:00AM at the Tucumcari Cemetery, we will say goodbye to Marjorie C. McKenzie, who has completed her life on earth and joined the Church Triumphant. Please join us in this celebration of her life, first at the cemetery, then proceed around 10:30PM to the church for the worship and supper.