**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, October 9, 2016, the Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Call to Worship**

God calls us to gather together to seek the Shalom of our city
**We seek God’s Shalom together**
Where there is separation, may God forge new connections through us
**We seek God’s wholeness together**
Where there is violence, may God bring reconciliation through us
**We seek God’s peace together**
May the wholeness and peace of God be felt in this community
**We seek God’s Shalom together. Let us worship God!**

**Prayer of the Day**

**Call to Confession**

Lord, we call upon you today in worship that you may help us feel your shalom, your wholeness, in worship. You offer us peace, even where there is no peace to be seen, for you are our refuge and our strength. Spending our morning in your presence, may you renew and refresh our spirits for service and contemplation of your salvation. This we pray, in the name of the Christ, Jesus. Amen.

**Prayer of Confession**

**Creator God, you made us to live together with you. We confess that we are sorely tempted by the opportunity to be our own gods. We admit to you that we have tried shortcuts to wisdom—we think we know what is best, when really we know just enough to do harm to your creation and your beloved people. Forgive us for acting so arrogantly out of our limited human perspective. Forgive our disobedience, and give us ears to hear your word, and hearts ready to obey your will.** ~silence~ **Amen.**

**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.**

**Responsive Psalm 66:1-12**

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;

sing the glory of his name;

give to him glorious praise.

Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!

**Because of your great power, your enemies cringe before you.**

**All the earth worships you;**

**they sing praises to you,**

**sing praises to your name."**

Come and see what God has done:

he is awesome in his deeds among mortals.

**He turned the sea into dry land;**

**they passed through the river on foot.**

There we rejoiced in him,

who rules by his might for ever,

whose eyes keep watch on the nations-

let the rebellious not exalt themselves.

**Bless our God, O peoples,**

**let the sound of his praise be heard,**

**who has kept us among the living,**

**and has not let our feet slip.**

For you, O God, have tested us;

you have tried us as silver is tried.

**You brought us into the net;**

**you laid burdens on our backs;**

**you let people ride over our heads;**

we went through fire and through water;

yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.

**Prayers of the People**

Faith is something that grows,
from a nearly invisible beginning,
through the nurture that is prayer.
Whether you feel you believe today or not,
let the faith of this congregation uphold you
as we share our joys and concerns with each other…

*Invite joys and concerns*

O Lord, we put our trust in you,
for you have provided every good thing for your people.
We are confident despite our own brokenness
and the brokenness of this world,
because we know that you are redeeming all things
and bringing your reign to completion in us.
We confess our sin and welcome your forgiveness now…

*silence*

We take delight in you, because you have answered our prayers.
We praise you for new beginnings,
for restored health and new life,
and for your steadfast promises every day.
We name our joys and hopes now…

*silence*

We commit our way to you,
and we trust in you to complete what you have begun in our lives.
Make your church righteous and holy in Jesus’ name,
and let our shared life bear witness
to the light of your love.
We offer ourselves to you now…

*silence*

O Lord, we have stilled ourselves before you,
and we wait patiently for your work.
We pray for those who suffer from oppression or violence,
especially for those in lands far from our own,
and most of all for those whose suffering benefits us…
We pray for those who are our enemies,
and we declare our intent to forgive and reconcile…
We pray for those who wait upon your healing,
and those who long to know your salvation.
We pray for your people in every kind of need…

*silence*

We await the fullness of your reign, O God,
and we choose to participate in your will.
We pray in the name of the one who taught us to pray, saying:

*The Lord’s Prayer*

**Time Out for Teaching: “Borderlands”**

When was a time you felt like you were walking on holy ground?

When was a time you didn’t feel that way?

Sometimes it’s when we feel most out of sync with our surroundings, we feel most out of touch with God.

Those areas are borderlands of life. Some of them are mental borders. Some actual, geographical borderlands. Here are a few borderlands where I have been:

* Talking to a nurse at a nursing station in a hospital.
* Walking through the door of Quail Ridge.
* Inviting a person to church during the County Fair at our church booth.
* Listening to persons who express very different political views.
* Feeling acutely Caucasian as a missionary in Kenya.
* Sitting in a meeting with folks from all over our community.
* Someone expressing to me their intense sadness or loss.
* Being at Ministry of HOPE and listening to two people speak Spanish.
* Saying, “I am an American citizen” at a border crossing.

There are many places where we are of the city of God, meeting people at a borderland. They are mental, emotional and geographical places. Remember that you are at a border of something wherever you may be. God is with you there and wherever you find yourself. And God will be with you if you cross over the line.

**Gospel Luke 17:11-19**

11On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. 12As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, 13they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. 15Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. 16He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. 17Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? 18Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

**Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7**

1These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

4Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

**2 Timothy 2:8-15**

8Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David-that is my gospel, 9for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. 10Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. 11The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; 12if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; 13if we are faithless, he remains faithful-for he cannot deny himself.

14Remind them of this, and warn them before God that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening. 15Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.

**Sermon: “On Location”**

Paul sends his report on location – the location: prison. It’s not the first time, nor the last time that Paul writes a gospel message, while he is in chains. It is not meant for his readers to feel sorry for him, nor to be impressed with his martyrdom. But he reports on location, where he is in chains to let them know that the Word of God cannot be chained. And by the very fact that this Good News comes through to us, it proves that God’s Word gets around, unchained.

We are the ones who think we can contain God or control where God goes. But when we read words like we have just read: “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David - that is my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained.”

This is one of those times when the location makes a difference in how we hear the message. If he was writing us from the sunny sands of the French Riviera, the word would mean a great deal less. But Paul is in prison, and he is making the Good News powerfully understood, just because he is in chains.

They say, “Context is everything.” Where we are and how we see ourselves planted in God’s amazing world has an influence on how the message of God understood. You have heard the phrase, “Bloom where you’re planted?” Sometimes we take our location for granted. We may feel negatively about the problems with our community infrastructure, the way the wind blows trash through our yards…I actually have to mow part of the street now, where grass has grown up through the asphalt. We complain about things. We tell our children to move away after high school because there’s nothing for them here. We easily become skeptical of people’s attempts to make Tucumcari attractive.

But maybe that is one of the reasons why God has planted His church here.

God’s word is unchained, moves about, reaches our ears and then heads out the doors to calm the anxiety of those it meets. It is alive and at work through each one of us. God’s word is alive and moving, so it can come here and take root in places we dismiss as unholy.

Jeremiah has something to add to this. As he writes to all those from Jerusalem who have been taken into exile, including the Temple priests: “Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce.  Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage…” you get the idea… “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”

God tells them this so they will settle down for the long haul. God is telling them that, even though they have become like refugees, displaced persons, where they are now doesn’t have to be as bad as it seems. Yes, they were taken from their homeland. Their deliverance home will be a long time coming.

It turns out that after being in exile, some of them never did return home from Babylon, and those Jews who chose to stay became part of what we call “The Diaspora” – Jews dispersed throughout the ancient world, like seeds to the wind.

This is the good news. When we feel like displaced persons. When we turn on the news and are appalled by what we see. When it seems like our values do not line up with the world’s ways, we may feel like foreigners. But God says, plant gardens. Put down roots. Pray for the city’s welfare. Be planted here as seeds of righteousness – not just to flourish but for the good of this place. Make this church and make this community God’s garden where you will find nourishment for yourself and others.

About 50 years ago, we did that very thing, helping the Pascirta Family emigrate here from Hungary. They were one of many families who were at the mercy of the rising Communist government, which threatened people with violence. This church’s heart broke for the people of Hungary. It was this church’s dream to help someone get out there and start a new life. It took us about a year, lots of planning and long distance phone calls to make it happen. It was a whole church acting on faith, putting their heads together, finding and fixing up a house. We saved money so they could travel here, and gave them what they needed until they could get settled.

I’ve always thought that with the many unoccupied homes we have in Tucumcari, wouldn’t someone be far more comfortable here than waking up to the sound of bombs going off in the middle of the night?

Friends, sometimes we feel like the refugees in a foreign location. But we confess that God is our refuge and strength. Even though our faith gets shaken up and out of sync with the rest of the world, there is no reason why we cannot live here, plant new dreams, tend God’s garden here. God is going wherever we go, even when we we’re in exile. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Announcements:**

The next Community Health Talk will be on Saturday, October 12th at 10AM, called “Medicare 2017” presented by Mr. Steve Morgan from Conchas.

Please attend next Sunday’s Bible Study lead by Pastor Amy, as we continue our conversations about the new confession of faith, the Belhar Confession.