**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**Sunday, August 23, 2020 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**Hymns:**

**RH 374 Be Still, My Soul**

**BH 358 Help Us Accept Each Other**

**RH 433 Christ is Made the Sure Foundation**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

**Call to Confession**

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

Here is Good News! God is willing to cleanse us from our errors and sinful ways. Through God’s grace we are washed and forgiven.  
**Thanks be to God! Hallelujah! Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 124:1-8 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

Gracious God, because we are not strong enough to pray as we should, you provide Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit to intercede for us in power. In this confidence we ask you to accept our prayers.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for the church.

Silent prayer.

Faithful God, you formed your church from the despised of the earth and showed them mercy, that they might proclaim your salvation to all. Strengthen those whom you choose today, that they may faithfully endure all trials by which you conform your church to the cross of Christ.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for creation.

Silent Prayer

Creator of all, you entrusted the earth to the human race, yet we disrupt its peace with violence and corrupt its purity with our greed. Prevent your people from ravaging creation, that coming generations may inherit lands brimming with life.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for the world.

Silent prayer.

Sovereign God, you hold both the history of nations and the humble life of villages in your care. Preserve the people of every nation from tyrants, heal them of disease, and protect them in time of upheaval and disaster, that all may enter the kingdom that cannot be shaken.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for peace.

Silent prayer.

Judge of the nations, you created humanity for salvation, not destruction, and sent your Son to guide us into the way of peace. Enable people of every race and nation to accept each other as sisters and brothers, your children, on whom you lavish honor and favor.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for those who govern us.

Silent prayer.

God Most High, in Jesus of Nazareth you show us the authority that pleases you: for he rules not by power or might, but serves in obedience to your will. We pray for all in authority over us: for our President, N., for Congress, for our Governor, N., and our state legislature, (and N., N.). Deliver them from vain ambitions that they may govern in wisdom and justice.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for this community.

Silent prayer.

Merciful God, since Jesus longed to protect Jerusalem as a hen gathers her young under her wings, we ask you to guard and strengthen all who live and work here. Deliver your people from jealousy and contempt that they may show mercy to all their neighbors.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for all families and those who live alone.

Silent prayer.

Holy God, from whom every family on earth takes its name: Strengthen parents to be responsible and loving that their children may know security and joy. Lead children to honor parents by compassion and forgiveness. May all people discover your parental care by the respect and love given them by others.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for all who suffer any sorrow or trial.

Silent prayer.

Compassionate God, your Son gives rest to those weary with heavy burdens. Heal the sick in body, mind, and spirit. Lift up the depressed. Befriend those who grieve. Comfort the anxious. Stand with all victims of abuse and other crime. Awaken those who damage themselves and others through the use of any drug. Fill all people with your Holy Spirit that they may bear each other’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us give thanks for the lives of the departed who now have rest in God.

Silent prayer.

Eternal God, your love is stronger than death, and your passion more fierce than the grave. We rejoice in the lives of those whom you have drawn into your eternal embrace. Keep us in joyful communion with them until we join the saints of every people and nation, gathered before your throne in ceaseless praise. God of glory, you see how all creation groans in labor as it awaits redemption. As we work for and await your new creation, we trust that you will answer our prayers with grace, and fulfill your promise that all things work together for good for those who love you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught his disciples to pray by saying, **“Our Father, Who art in heaven… Amen.”**

**Presentation of Offering and Offertory**

**Time out for Teaching: “Baby Moses” (a careful study of Exodus 1:8-2:10)**

Let’s hear a reading from Exodus, which is from the lectionary for today. I will only read it once because it is kind of long. I ask you to please pay careful attention (and feel free to read along with me in your pew Bible) to the following things:

Who are the characters? and What are their actions?

Finally, what can we determine about God in this story? What can we learn about faith?

What can we learn about the world?

8Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. 10Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” 11Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. 12But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. 13The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites. 14and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

15The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16“When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.” 17But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. 18So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?” 19The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” 20So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. 21And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. 22Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.”

1Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman.2The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. 3When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. 4His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

5The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. 6When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him, “This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,” she said. 7Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” 8Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Yes.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. 9Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed it. 10When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, “because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The new King | Afraid the Hebrews will grow too many and rise up against him;  Sets taskmasters over them to force them into labor;  Calls for the death of all baby Hebrew infants |
| Joseph | This is no longer the time of Joseph’s reign in Egypt. How long has passed? We don’t know for sure. |
| Israelite People/Hebrews | They are the descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel, who settled in Egypt during Joseph’s time and are now living well there. |
| Taskmasters | Those the new king appointed to oppress the Hebrews. |
| Hebrew midwives, particularly Shiprah and Puah | The midwives who helped deliver babies, notably the ones who resisted the Pharoah’s injunction to kill all newborn boys. They feared God more than they did the wicked king. |
| Levite Man and Woman – parents of baby Moses | They loved their baby, protected him for 3 months, and then placed him in a little basket in hopes that he would be found and saved. |
| Moses’ Sister | She followed the basket downstream and became her little brother’s intercessor. She negotiated with the Pharaoh’s daughter so that mom could become Moses’ nursemaid, thus saving him. |
| Pharaoh’s Daughter | She seems nowhere near as evil as Moses. She wants to help the baby and ends up keeping him, protecting him. |

**Prayer for Illumination**

Gracious God, we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from your mouth. Make us hungry for this heavenly food, that it may nourish us today in the ways of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, the bread of heaven. Amen.

**Romans 12:1-8**

1I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.

3For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

**Gospel Matthew 16:13-20**

13Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. 18And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

**Sermon: “Up On the Watershed” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

I have been fascinated with a song I heard a long time ago by a duo called the Indigo Girls. It is called “Watershed.” It sings of standing at the top of a watershed and looking down at a fork in the road. And seeing a place where a car had an accident and crashed into a guard rail. Then the singer remembers times when she herself was a bit reckless. Seeing an accident like that was a “watershed moments.” Moments like that remind us of what’s most important in life, a chance to recommit to being better people. Watershed moments are when the course of events are affected. Game changers.

For years, I have loved that song, but I never actually knew what a watershed was. I thought it was a building. A watershed is a place where a river runs through, but is directed by some other formation like a mountain, causing the water to change direction. It creates a means for directing water to flow. And of course, wherever the water flows is where we, other animals and all life choose to life. So, a watershed moment is a moment in time that affects all life and how we live.

It was a watershed moment for Peter, who is given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And, like many watershed moment, it begins with a question: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” This question, Jesus asks, is a traditional type of teaching method for Jewish rabbis. His way of questioning them was a little like other thinkers and teachers of his time. There were philosophers and religious thinkers of many stripes. There were “Cynics” who asked questions to challenge people’s standard notions. There were “Stoics,” who offered a philosophy of trying to conform to nature, resisting temptations to excessive lifestyles of too much food or money. And then there was Jesus, who brought these philosophies together in a unique and powerful way that was about both things. Resistance to temptation, challenging the society around them. His question became an approach to teach them about who the Son of Man is. For, when you learn who the Son of Man is, it should change our entire way of looking at everything else. Knowing Him and what he stood for should be a watershed moment.

Now, just in case you didn’t know this, this watershed moment happened very close to an actual watershed. Water flowed through that sacred space known as “Caesarea Philippi.” It was named after Caesar and Philip, the one of the sons of Herod. Philip built a shrine to Caesar and a shrine to himself. There was also a shrine to the Greek god Pan, a fertility deity, whom they say you could hear laughing in the sound of water bubbling from the base of a small mountain. This place had a long history of pagan worship and is the backdrop for this teaching moment. They were surrounded by reminders of what others considered holy, but they were with Jesus, the holiest of all.

Up on the Watershed, we can get perspective on everything else and why the fact that Jesus is the Son of Man should matter so much to us. Why it matters to me, to know who the Son of Man is, is echoed by the midwives in the story of Moses’ birth. You heard that – no matter what the Pharaoh commanded them to do – they feared God even more. They respected God more, which gave them the strength to resist evil. It’s a beautiful thing when we remember just who is in charge. It can change the course of our entire lives, and we participate in the course of history.

So, a few lines of that song go like this:

Twisted guardrails on the highway  
Broken glass on the cement  
A ghost of someone's tragedy  
How recklessly my time has been spent  
They say that it's never too late  
But you don't, you don't get any younger  
Well I better learn how to starve the emptiness  
And feed the hunger

Up on the watershed  
Standing at the fork in the road  
You can stand there and agonize  
'Til your agony's your heaviest load  
You'll never fly as the crow flies  
Get used to a country mile  
When you're learning to face  
The path at your pace  
Every choice is worth your while

We have a choice, at all times, to decide how we wish to be. It may take a while to know what the right choice is. But, who is the one in charge? The Son of Man. The Messiah. He gave us the keys to the kingdom of heaven on earth. What are you going to do about it?

**THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

**Social Distancing and Personal Protection.** Please respect one another’s space, observing the 6-foot distancing between one another. Please remember to wash your hands on the way out today. If you need a protective face covering, please notify the pastor and she can help you.

**Church Lockdown Continues.** Friends, please be mindful that the Fellowship Hall side of our building is still locked down until September 7th.

**Alternatives to Church Events** – Anyone who would like to meet for a meal outside at a local restaurant, or gather at someone’s home for fellowship, or go for a walk together, please call the pastor at 575-708-0860. Other suggestions for how we can still fellowship with each other, are welcome.

## **Watershed**

[Indigo Girls](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALeKk03olwuhobUN7CivLmLpbyglyd7Ztw:1597784601063&q=Indigo+Girls&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgVuLUz9U3MDTLMs5exMrjmZeSmZ6v4J5ZlFMMADjdNUMcAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjDqMu806XrAhWNPM0KHb68AtcQMTAAegQIDRAF)

Thought I knew my mind  
Like the back of my hand  
The gold and the rainbow  
But nothing panned out as I planned  
And they say only milk and honey's  
Gonna make your soul satisfied  
Well I better learn how to swim  
'Cause the crossing is chilly and wide

Twisted guardrails on the highway  
Broken glass on the cement  
A ghost of someone's tragedy  
How recklessly my time has been spent  
They say that it's never too late  
But you don't, you don't get any younger  
Well I better learn how to starve the emptiness  
And feed the hunger

Up on the watershed  
Standing at the fork in the road  
You can stand there and agonize  
'Til your agony's your heaviest load  
You'll never fly as the crow flies  
Get used to a country mile  
When you're learning to face  
The path at your pace  
Every choice is worth your while

And there's always retrospect (when you're looking back)  
To light a clearer path  
Every five years or so I look back on my life  
And I have a good laugh  
You start at the top (start at the top)  
Go full circle round  
Catch a breeze  
Take a spill  
But ending up where I started again  
Makes me want to stand still

Up on the watershed  
Standing at the fork in the road  
You can stand there and agonize  
'Til your agony's your heaviest load  
You'll never fly as the crow flies  
Get used to a country mile  
When you're learning to face  
The path at your pace  
Every choice is worth your while

Stepping on a crack (stepping on a crack)  
Breaking up and looking back  
'Til every tree limb overhead just seems to sit and wait  
'Til every step you take becomes a twist of fate (twist of fate)

Up on the watershed  
Standing at the fork in the road  
You can stand there and agonize  
'Til your agony's your heaviest load  
You'll never fly as the crow flies  
Get used to a country mile  
When you're learning to face  
The path at your pace  
Every choice is worth your while

Up on the watershed  
Standing at the fork in the road  
You can stand there and agonize  
'Til your agony's your heaviest load  
You'll never fly as the crow flies  
Get used to a country mile  
When you're learning to face  
The path at your pace  
Every choice is worth your while

And when you're learning to face  
The path at your pace  
Every choice is worth your while

Lyrics by Emily Ann Saliers

Definition of Watershed

<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/watershed#:~:text=A%20watershed%20is%20a%20turning,is%20a%20geographical%20term%2C%20originally.&text=It's%20from%20this%20meaning%20that,dividing%20line%20in%20social%20life.>