**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Sunday, December 8, 2019 2nd Sunday in Advent**

**RH 21 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee June Greenfield, Accompanist**

**RH 149 Watchman, Tell Us of the Night**

**RH 155 There’s a Song in the Air!**

**Call to Worship**

The Advent journey has begun.
**We have started getting ready for Christmas.**The light of one candle has guided us this little way.

The hope we have for something new is not enough to show us the way.
**We need more light for the journey
if we are to find our way to God’s holy mountain,
the place where God’s community becomes real,
and all creation can dwell together without fear.**

When things are at their most broken, God can and will make all things new.

Friends, let us share the peace of Christ for this journey together:
**Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!**

**Candle of Peace/Prayer of the Day**

One: Come, Emmanuel.
The world is not ready, the field is still uneven,
Yet we watch and prepare to see God’s glory revealed, together.
*~candle is lit~*
**A spark of peace lights the way—
Despite our fast-fading courage,
We will follow the voice calling us in the wilderness toward Shalom.**

Let us pray together:

**All: Holy and life-giving God, your Son, our Savior, carries the title “Prince of Peace”. You have called us to imitate Him in thought, word, and deed. Let us seek to be peacemakers in our homes, in the community, and in the world. We thank you, God, for Your peace, which passes all understanding. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.**

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession
God of peace,
you promise a new and different way of life,
and you invite us to join you on the path to get there.**

**Yet we usually prefer to stay on our own path.**

**We put ourselves before others
and so destroy the gift of life in each of us.**

**We fill our days with human pessimism,
assuming that nothing will ever get better
rather than welcoming your deep divine hope.**

Forgive us, Lord.

**Show us your hope anew in Jesus this Advent,
that we might see your branch sprouting anew in our midst
and fill our lives and the whole earth with our embrace of you.** (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.**

**Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19**

Give the king your justice, O God,
          and your righteousness to a king’s son.
**May he judge your people with righteousness,
          and your poor with justice.**May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
          and the hills, in righteousness.
**May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
          give deliverance to the needy,
          and crush the oppressor.**May he live while the sun endures,
          and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
**May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
          like showers that water the earth.**In his days may righteousness flourish
**and peace abound, until the moon is no more.**

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
          who alone does wondrous things.
**Blessed be his glorious name forever;
          may his glory fill the whole earth. Amen and Amen.**

**Prayers of the People**

People of God, Jesus comes to bring God’s mercy to all people.
Therefore we are bold to raise our prayers
to the one whose reign is justice, peace, and joy:

We pray for those who are captive to violence, oppression, and sin.
We pray for all who are hungry, sick, sorrowing, or afraid.

We pray for everyone who longs for new beginnings.
We pray for those who celebrate and rejoice.
We pray for all who travel to be with families,
and we pray for those who celebrate the birth of the Savior alone.
We pray for the gift of peace, in our hearts and in our world.

We pray for those in positions of power,
for those who have more wealth and power than they realize,
and for those whom we are called to serve.

Let your kingdom come in this world, O God,
and let our hearts welcome the birth of the Holy Child,
who teaches us to pray as we say together:

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Time out for Teaching: Waiting in the Light**

**Special Music: “Magnificat” Emily Priddy**

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Isaiah 11:1-10**

1   A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
          and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
2   The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
          the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
          the spirit of counsel and might,
          the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
3   His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

     He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
          or decide by what his ears hear;
4   but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
          and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
     he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
          and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
5   Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
          and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

6   The wolf shall live with the lamb,
          the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
     the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
          and a little child shall lead them.
7   The cow and the bear shall graze,
          their young shall lie down together;
          and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8   The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
          and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den.
9   They will not hurt or destroy
          on all my holy mountain;
     for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
          as the waters cover the sea.

10On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

**Matthew 3:1-12**

1In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 2“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” 3This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,
     “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
     ‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
          make his paths straight.’”
4Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, 6and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

7But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8Bear fruit worthy of repentance. 9Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 10Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

11“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

**Sermon: The Peaceable Kingdom**

Our Old Testament reading sings of the great hope of Christians and Jews, and probably all the world. The Peaceable Kingdom. It describes a vision in Isaiah, given to the prophet by the Spirit of the Lord, of a world in which no one else is ever harmed on God’s holy mountain. It bears repeating: “The wolf shall live with the lamb,
          the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
     the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
          and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze,
          their young shall lie down together;
          and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
          and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den.”

It builds a vision of a world that none of us have seen, at least not yet. Animals and humans all together in one place, sharing food, playing, and all led by a little child.

The image is alluring. It is alluring because we desire peace, where we study war no more. It is alluring because it seems that as much as we try to achieve peace, the harder it seems to find. It’s a vision, and the second light of inspiration we draw from the Advent candles. A vision that can easily be lost in these tumultuous times.

I pray for our holiday-making this year, maybe more than ever before. My prayers are that we urgently seek peace - the kind of peace that God desires for all of us. My prayer is that in this season of impeachment hearings and political investigation, in these times of violence in our own community, we look actively for ways to dispel fear and hatred.

What is peace anyhow? There was the peace of the Romans during Jesus’ times, which was one based on terror. People were not always happy nor fulfilled, nor at peace in their culture, for if they made a wrong move that threatened the Roman Peace, they could certainly be exterminated. Some peace!

There is the sort of peace that we make based on fear of causing trouble. And yet, sometimes trouble can be good, if it changes the world for the better, so that more of God’s world will be at peace, instead of just a few. Such as what Jesus did, by eating with outcasts and sinners, as Jesus himself did, and it made trouble. But it was good trouble. The sort of trouble that helps more people find peace with God.

Peace can be very difficult to achieve, especially if it comes at the price of a little trouble. Sometimes we achieve peace through compromise and contracts. Sometimes the only peace we can find is when we have done all we can for a situation, and are able to rest on it.

Edward Hicks was a Quaker Minister and painter who lived during the early 1800s. He lived in Pennsylvania. Between 1820 and 1849, when he died, he painted between 60 and 100 versions of “The Peaceable Kingdom,” which was based on the Isaiah 11 reading you just heard. In all of his paintings, featured in the foreground, are animals and humans, all sitting together, eating together. Cattle, lions, leopards, birds, sheep and bears. The setting appears the same, like the deep forests of early American Pennsylvania, and a beautiful river behind them. An 1833 version, which hangs in a frame in the hallway of the manse, includes another intriguing feature. Behind colorful tableau of animals and humans living in harmony in the forest, there is a table with white American colonists and native American people, all dressed in their finest. They circle the table, symbolically sharing it. This was Hicks’ way of depicting the treaty that William Penn made with the native people there, which was believed to a peacemaking treaty. This meant a lot to Hicks, for Penn was a Quaker and they were traditionally Pacifists. God’s vision of peace for us isn’t just for us and the animals, it is for us to practice with other people. Something real to work on.

Jesus once told his congregation in his Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” The light we light today is in celebration of the peace God gives us and the peace we are called to make with others. The vision of peace gives us light for this journey of Advent.

Recently someone was telling me about how important Advent is to them. She said to me, “Everyone else is rushing into Christmas. They want to hurry up and get the instant gratification of the season. I like this time because we are forced to wait for the good things to come.” There has just got to be some kind of peace to this season. It is up to us who believe to demonstrate the peace of Christ in a world bent on consumerism and gratification. And also for ourselves, for practicing peace is the very best way for us to prepare to receive His peace. We are the ones who proclaim the light who has already come to shine on us. We live in this hope every day. And the way to peace is to make peace with one another and within ourselves.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight! Let us begin by making peace with God and ourselves. Join the Advent Resistance by demonstrating peace. Everyone needs to see more of it. Amen.

**Reception of New Members – Linda Randals**

**PRESENTATION**

Linda Randals is presented by the session, for the reaffirming of the baptismal covenant into which she was baptized. She now desires to profess publicly her faith and to assume greater responsibility in the life of the church, and God’s mission in the world.

We rejoice that you now desire to declare your faith and to share with us in our common ministry. In baptism you were joined to Christ, and made members of his church. In the community of the people of God, you have learned of God’s purpose for you and for all creation. You have been nurtured at the table of our Lord, and called to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hear these words from Holy Scripture:

**Matt. 5:14–16** “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light so shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

Now, as you publicly declare your faith, I ask you to reject sin, to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, and to confess the faith of the church, the faith in which you were baptized.

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world? **I do.**

Who is your Lord and Savior? **Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.**

Will you be Christ’s faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love? **I will, with God’s help.**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit? **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

You have publicly professed your faith. Will you devote yourself to the church’s teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers?

**I will, with God’s help.**

Let us pray. Gracious God, by water and the Spirit you claimed us as your own, cleansing us from sin, and giving us new life. You made us members of your body, the church, calling us to be your servants in the world. Renew in N. and N. the covenant you made in their baptism. Continue the good work you have begun in them. Send them forth in the power of your Spirit to love and serve you with joy, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

 Amen.

**LAYING ON OF HANDS**

Defend, O Lord, your servant Linda. with your heavenly grace, that she may continue in you forever, and daily increase in her your Holy Spirit more and more, until she comes to your everlasting kingdom. Amen.

**WELCOME**

By publicly professing her faith, Linda has expressed her intention to continue in the covenant God made with her in baptism. Let us welcome her as she joins us in the worship and mission of the church.

**With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you to share with us in the ministry of Christ, for we are all one in him.**

**THE PEACE**

The peace of God be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Announcements:**

**Session Meeting This Week:** This Tuesday at 4:00PM the Elders will meet for the last time in 2019. Hope all of you are able to make it.

**Potluck Dinner Next Sunday:** Next Sunday, December 15th is our next Potluck Fellowship Dinner. Please bring some food to share and we’ll enjoy breaking bread together!

