**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**February 27, 2022 Transfiguration of our Lord**

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

**RH 301 A Mighty Fortress**

**BH 310 Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee**

**BH 322 Spirit of the Living God (Prayer for Illumination)**

**BH 485 To God Be the Glory**

**Call to Worship**

Listen to God, whose voice speaks from top of the tallest mountain to the depths of humanity.  
**May the peace of God’s words resonate within us!**  
Marvel at the light of the Holy Spirit, which inspires all goodness and shines forth brilliantly against the darkness of sin and evil.  
**May the light of the Holy Spirit be the lamp to our true path!**  
Follow Jesus wherever he leads you – for Jesus’ way is love.  
**May the love of Jesus lead us to change ourselves and the world!**

**Opening Prayer**

Our holy Parent, our hope is in you,  
who makes all things and from whom all blessings flow.  
Your faithfulness is the anchor of our hope.

Our Savior Jesus Christ, our trust is in you.  
More than a teacher,  
Your life, death, and resurrection gives meaning to our existence.  
Your faithfulness tethers us to holy mystery.

Holy Spirit, we put our trust in you.  
Blowing over and through creation, unexpected and untamed,  
You stir forgiveness, fruitfulness, and create families.  
Your faithfulness ties together past, present, and future.

Holy Trinity, One God, we believe you transfigure our faith.  **Amen.**

**Call to Confession**

Jesus said, “those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.” Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, we admit before God and one another our faults and failings. Let us pray.

**Prayer of Confession**

**You know, O God, how often we set our mind on human things instead of divine things. You know the ways we try to force your Spirit to fit our agenda, to manipulate your grace for our own ends. You know that we are prone to thinking of our desires long before we ever consider yours. We confess these things to you, praying that saying them out loud might make us aware of our own brokenness, so that we can also be more aware of your ever-present grace. Startle us with your truth and your love. Set our minds and hearts on you, and lead us on your way.** *~silence~* **Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**The grace of God is always doing a new thing—whether we are prepared, or worthy, or not.

Friends, Believe the good news of the Gospel.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

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 99**

The LORD is king; let the peoples tremble!

He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

**The LORD is great in Zion;**

**he is exalted over all the peoples.**

Let them praise your great and awesome name.

**Holy is he!**

Mighty King, lover of justice,

you have established equity;

**you have executed justice**

**and righteousness in Jacob.**

Extol the LORD our God;

worship at his footstool.

**Holy is he!**

Moses and Aaron were among his priests,

Samuel also was among those who called on his name.

**They cried to the LORD, and he answered them.**

He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud;

they kept his decrees,

and the statutes that he gave them.

**O LORD our God, you answered them;**

you were a forgiving God to them,

but an avenger of their wrongdoings.

**Extol the LORD our God,**

**and worship at his holy mountain;**

**for the LORD our God is holy.**

**Prayers of the People**

Lord, we have come seeking you this morning,  
knowing that you are near,  
believing that you want to be found.  
We have confessed our sins,  
Of word and deed  
Of silence and apathy  
We give thanks for your mercy and pardon,  
freely given as we turn to you.

With feet firmly on the ground, the sky seems so very distant.  
And though we feel your presence as close as the embrace of a loved one,  
Our understanding of you – of your thoughts and your ways –  
Remains as distant as the clouds.  
And yet we trust you.

We trust that your Spirit  
Will enliven and enlighten us, illuminating the Scriptures.  
Like rain and snow provide healing water for the earth  
Your Word quenches the thirst of our hearts

You send rain, You sent your Son,  
You send your Spirit, You sent your Word  
All to accomplish what you desire  
Each to achieve purposes you ordained.

And you send us  
Like the grain that buds and flourishes in fertile ground  
We live to offer seeds of hope and the bread of life to our neighbors

We look to the day, Holy One, when you lead us out in joy and peace  
When the mountains and trees sing and clap  
And people sing out in praise of the one who was, and is, and is to come

But for now, we trust that  
When we turn our faces to you,  
When we lift our hearts and prayers to you  
You will hear  
We come as people ready to move mountains.  
We come as people borrowing the faith of others  
Trusting our pleas will achieve their purposes.

*~specific concerns may be spoken~*

We pray all of this, as well as those things left unspoken, in the name of Jesus the Christ…

**Offering**

**Prayer for Illumination BH 322 Spirit of the Living God**

**Time out for Teaching: “Fishers not Mountainclimbers”**

I’m a fisherman, Lord, not a mountain climber.  
I know sunburn, not radiance.  
I know the fog of the sea, not heavenly mists.  
I know the seagull’s call, not Mysterious Voices.  
I know my yesterdays, not my future days.  
But I also know You, Jesus.  
And you, I will follow:  
Back down the mountain,  
to Jerusalem,  
to an upper room,  
to a midnight garden,  
to a cross…

**Exodus 34:29-35**

29Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. 30When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. 31But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. 32Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. 33When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; 34but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, 35the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

**2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2**

12Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, 13not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. 14But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. 15Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; 16but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

1Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

**Gospel Luke 9:28-36 (37-43)**

28Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. 29And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. 30Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. 31They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — not knowing what he said. 34While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. 35Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" 36When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

37On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38Just then a man from the crowd shouted, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. 39Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. 40I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." 41Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 42While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43And all were astounded at the greatness of God.

**Sermon “Borrowed Faith” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

The story you just heard from Luke could be a bit disturbing. After Jesus’ extraordinary display of glory up on the mountaintop, Jesus seems downright impatient with the man who comes to him out of the crowd in fear for his boy’s life. As you just heard, this man claims that the disciples were unable to save his boy, so he came to Jesus directly.

Here in Luke is a pair of stories that don’t seem to go together. There is the big reveal on the mountaintop, the glory of the Lord which shone all around Jesus, as Moses and Elijah show up alongside him. The three disciples who get special insight – Peter, James and John – have trouble processing what they are seeing, but they grasp it enough to realize that Jesus is no ordinary Rabbi. This is the big time. Bigger than Moses and Elijah. Glory is all around. Glory that shines from heaven. What is that glory? Light, it seems, light that is in some way a sign that God is there.

After witnessing that otherworldly glow, down the mountain they came. And then they are hit with reality. Soon they have to contend with a desperate father, who expresses disappointment that Jesus’ disciples could not save his son. And Jesus, who seems exasperated with everyone, openly declares, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." Then Jesus heals him, and astonishes everyone present.

To whom is Jesus speaking? “You faithless and perverse generation…” Is he speaking to the frightened and stressed-out father who anxiously steps forward to save his son? Or maybe Jesus is speaking to everyone here? Is Jesus also speaking to his own disciples who couldn’t heal the boy?

The fact is, we may never know who is included in Jesus’ accusation, but I suppose we all could qualify from one time to another. We have been to those mountaintop experiences of faith, but then, when we come down, we still have to deal with everyday life and the stuff that makes it had to be faithful and true to Him. If we could all just stay on that mountain with Jesus, bask in His glow, in a nice, safe atmosphere – even if the oxygen is a little thinner – and stay in a little cozy lean-to without a care in the world. But with a beautiful, distant bird’s eye view of the world below…

Every Sunday might feel like a little taste of that mountaintop experience. And then we are asked to leave this place of comfort and safety to head into the world and contend with this world’s hurt and anger.

The world below is where God wants us to be, apparently. At least for now. It is the place also where our faith gets challenged by difficult things. It is the place where it is harder to stay true to God’s way, God’s kingdom way. It is the place, down here at eye level, where we are struck with all of those things that make life harder. And finding the strength to withstand them, and navigate them, can only be done with faith.

That’s why faith is so very important. I believe that this is why God calls us to faith in the first place. Because life is hard. Peter sort of misses the point when he is overwhelmed with the experience of the glowing Jesus, and isn’t sure what to say, so he just blurts out that it is good for them to be there and so let’s make dwellings. Jesus glows with God’s Glory, something that He always has, but rarely reveals. But for that moment on the mountain, Jesus reveals it to these three disciples. God never does something without a reason, especially something like this. The disciples must have been changed too. To see the glow about Him just confirms what they thought before – Jesus is the Messiah, Beloved and Chosen by God, and not just an earthly Savior. One with real clout in Heaven. His glory is real. The rest of us have to live on faith.

With each moment we live, we have the chance to use the faith we have. It’s not a faith that we can drum up on our own. Our faith comes from God. It’s a borrowed faith, one that is often strengthened by meeting other people of faith. It is a borrowed faith that we get from rare, revelatory mountaintop moments. We need to have moments to bask in God’s glow, kind of like recharging our batteries so that we too can glow with God’s glory.

Our faith needs recharging from time to time. We cannot glow in the dark forever after all! I believe that we all need to stop and allow God to recharge our faith. For the reality of this world can really get us down and - our faith can help us remain strong. Jesus never takes action without a good reason. He brought his closest disciples up the mountaintop to show who he really is. They were flabbergasted, but they had to know the truth. They had to know the truth because they would be facing a lot of new things soon. Dark things. Frightening things. Disappointing things. That he would die on a cross. So Jesus showed them that He was something much more than a mortal Messiah.

Take time out for God. Let your faith re-charge as we lean into the season of Lent, as we prepare to face the challenges of this week ahead. There is no need for us to feel ashamed in knowing that we live on borrowed faith. We will take what we can get! And God is very, very giving, even when we annoy Him! Thanks be to God for that! Amen.

According to Raymond E. Brown’s “An Introduction to the New Testament, the Transfiguration story and the following healing story of the little boy with convulsions is the very end of a large section of Luke’s gospel. It is also where Luke makes a big divergence from Mark and Matthew and Luke uses his own sources of story material to describe Jesus’ journey into Jerusalem where Jesus will die. The section of this story in which Jesus’ glory is revealed to the 3 disciples Peter, James and John, followed by the healing story which leaves everyone astonished, caps off a section that Raymond Brown calls “Questions of Jesus’ Identity.” Traditional readings of this section say that after this section, Jesus pretty much stopped doing things that would be proof of His identity as God’s Son, God’s Beloved. After Jesus has revealed to the three and then to others that He has power where others do not and carries the glory of God, no amount of miracles at that point will persuade those who do not want to believe. It was as if Jesus stopped bothering to prove Himself to those who weren’t that interested. After this section of Luke’s gospel, Jesus begins a three-stage journey to Jerusalem, with very little in the way of healing. It contains proclamations and announcements of judgment, questions about eternal life and being ostracized by a Samaritan village. Jesus is calling for people to be watchful for signs of the times. And where healing does occur, it takes on apocalyptic, metaphorical overtones. The healing of the crippled woman in the synagogue on a Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17, for example).

Luke’s gospel goes on up to chapter 16, before his writing rejoins the story order of the other gospel writers. Luke the writer was a story collector. He was believed to have been a fellow traveler of the Apostle Paul’s, so just imagine on these travels, that he would have had access to many, many stories of Jesus, perhaps more Mark or Matthew.

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Amy (Glenna Gray’s daughter) still having chronic medical issues (possibly cancer)  
Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (Paralyzed) – Glenda Coles’ sisters  
Betty Ragan – under the weather  
Debbie and Tim O’Quinn – serious health programs, including COVID positive  
Elmer Schuster – leg pain  
Fay Birch – Stage 4 cancer  
Glenda Coles – recovering from shoulder surgeryy  
Jenna Morris – new life in Clovis  
Lucy Jasper (Susie’s cousin) – Alzheimers/Dementia  
Misty Tompkins and her family – stiff person syndrome  
Family of Paula McCasland  
People seeking work, others seeking employees  
Richard and Linda, concerned about breakup of the Randals Ranch

Robert Lopez and family in their grief  
Ruth Johnson  
Francis (Ryan Pottenger’s Grandpa) – comfort and care  
Sarah Hittson’s daughter, Marie – chronic surgical needs  
Sharon and Wayne Huffman – health  
Shay -Julie Sursa’s daughter  
Susie – shoulder and neck injury from ice  
Tommy Morris – for health and strength  
Our School systems  
First Responders  
Travelers  
Those who struggle with COVID and their caregivers

**Announcements:**

**Bible Study** will continue this Wednesday at 5:15PM in the Church Library. We will be looking at the scriptures for the first Sunday in Lent, believe it or not.

**This Wednesday is Ash Wednesday.** This Wednesday, March 2 from 12:30-1:30PM, Rev. Amy will be dispensing ashes in front of the church. If you would like “drive up ashes” on your forehead, please call/text ahead to 575-708-0860, because if it’s cold, she will be inside the sanctuary!

**Presbyterian Women Meeting:** Saturday, March 5 at noon, please join us at the church for a PW meeting. On the agenda will be: review of the new handbook (names, dates, addresses, etc.), discussion of Rummage Sale, selection of new officers, and more.