**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**February 6, 2022 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**BH 525 Here I am, Lord**

**RH 215 Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts**

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

**RH 235 Communion Hymn: Breathe on Me, Breath of God**

**Bulletin Insert I Have Decided to Follow Jesus**

**Call to Worship**

How lovely it is to be in the presence of God!
**Better is one day in God’s house**
**than thousands spent elsewhere.**
Our hearts and flesh sing for God,
our souls long to know God.
**Holy, holy, holy is God,**
**the whole earth is full of God’s glory!**
Come, let us worship God together!

**Opening Prayer**

Gracious God of love,

Be in our words and worship today. Be in our hearts and help us to feel for one another the way you love us so. Surround us with your gracious Word and remind us of your purpose for us – that we may glorify you in all that we are and do.  **Amen.**

**Call to Confession**

God saves us despite us being unworthy of that salvation.
In response to that grace, let us confess the ways we have fallen short.

**Confession
Lord, you are before and behind us, around us and within. We give you thanks for your constant presence, even as we admit that we don’t always see or hear you with us. So often we find ourselves standing at the edge…of uncertainty, of fear, of society, of faith, of life. We pray for your path to be clear, to show us your way, but we confess that sometimes we see it and we are afraid and turn our eyes back instead. We long for comfort, stability, familiarity. We admit to you that we prefer the easier way of what we have always done, even if it is not where you currently call. Forgive us, O God. Forgive us for our selective memory, our tendency to nostalgia, our hearts set on self-preservation. Turn our eyes forward, to where you are leading. Remind us that you are our God, and will never leave us. Give us faith to see your way, and courage to walk it. Focus our minds, hearts, and strength on your love, that we may know you fully…for to know you is to love you, and to love you is to serve you, whom to serve is perfect freedom.
It is with faith and hope that we ask these things in the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ, whose love casts out all fear and leads us into new life with you.** *~silence~* **Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**Friends, our help is in the name of the Lord
who has heard our plea and answered our confession with absolution.

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 138**

I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart;

before the gods I sing your praise;

**I bow down toward your holy temple**

**and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness;**

for you have exalted your name and your word

above everything.

**On the day I called, you answered me,**

**you increased my strength of soul.**

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O LORD,

for they have heard the words of your mouth.

**They shall sing of the ways of the LORD,**

**for great is the glory of the LORD.**

For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly;

but the haughty he perceives from far away.

**Though I walk in the midst of trouble,**

**you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;**

**you stretch out your hand,**

**and your right hand delivers me.**

The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;

your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.

**Do not forsake the work of your hands.**

**Offering**

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

**Time out for Teaching: “Three Call Stories”**

This morning we get to hear more “call stories” of Scripture. Last Sunday, I mentioned the call story of Isaiah. He is the only prophet who has roots in both of the Israelite and Judean Exiles. Here, in Chapter 6, we read of the extraordinary moment in the Temple of the Lord, where Isaiah views the Lord on the throne, the hem of the Lord’s robe filling the space in the Temple around him. It’s pretty astonishing, as you might imagine.

Has anyone ever shared with you their call story? I have heard a lot of them over the years. Some people are cerebral. They say that it was over the course of several different events that they began to feel as though God had put them in a position where their hearts just said “yes” to something. I have also heard the stories when someone felt a hand on their shoulder and a voice speak to them, and when they turned around, no one was there! I will share a little with you about my own story, just briefly. For me it was a little bit of both. I was very active in high school as a member of my church’s youth group. Our church put a heavy stress on the importance of mission – so we did some traveling. We cleaned up graffiti in Philadelphia, played board games with mentally challenged people at an adult day care center. We served sandwiches at a homeless shelter. We also did fundraisers for the Church World Service hunger program. We did a lot of great things from a mission point of view. That’s also when I traveled to Kenya for a month to work. In college, I was questioning my course of study and began to wonder whether I should move from pre-vet to religion. And one day, in my sophomore year, I was taking a shower and praying for guidance. I was given a vision of my doing something that totally scares me. Public speaking, from a pulpit, nonetheless. I was standing there preaching God’s Word, and I thought “why, God, would you want me to do that?” I was not until years later – when my first partner, Scott, died from cancer (while I was working for the Medical Ethics committee at a medical school) that I began to realize that God must be calling to me to do something in the medical world. I put things together – working in a hospital - I loved, having seen the inside of an ICU far too many times – didn’t bug me as much as it bugs others, and a few other ideas – this is how I decided to leave the medical field and start seminary.

Sometimes it’s possible that God wants us to do something that scares us. What about you?

**Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13)**

1In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. 2Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. 3And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. 5And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

6Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. 7The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." 8Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" 9And he said, "Go and say to this people:

'Keep listening, but do not comprehend;

keep looking, but do not understand.'

10Make the mind of this people dull,

and stop their ears,

and shut their eyes,

so that they may not look with their eyes,

and listen with their ears,

and comprehend with their minds,

and turn and be healed."

11Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said:

"Until cities lie waste

without inhabitant,

and houses without people,

and the land is utterly desolate;

12until the LORD sends everyone far away,

and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land.

13Even if a tenth part remain in it,

it will be burned again,

like a terebinth or an oak

whose stump remains standing

when it is felled."

The holy seed is its stump.

**Gospel Luke 5:1-11**

1Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, 2he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. 4When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." 5Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." 6When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. 7So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. 8But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" 9For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; 10and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." 11When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

**1 Corinthians 15:1-11**

1Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, 2through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you-unless you have come to believe in vain.

3For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, 4and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5and that he appeared to Cephas, the n to the twelve. 6Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. 9For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them-though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 11Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

**Sermon “Sacred Stumps” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

In the big backyard of my childhood home in Ashland, Kentucky, there stood a big old tree stump. We had a nice large, grassy back yard which sloped down away from the house, which was lined with deciduous trees. It was the house where we lived until I was about five. As my mom sat in the backyard, working on her watercolor, I would run around, exploring the grass and trees, my tiny mind running wild with big imagination! The most prominent place of the yard was that tree stump, tall enough that my little chubby legs had to work to climb. I was a tree climber in those days! The stump was wide enough that once I got up there, I could stay up there and sit like a queen on her throne. It was a wonderland of activity. There were holes and tunnels all over it. Some parts were kind of spongy in texture, and I delighted in being able to pull off pieces of the wood, as if I were some destructive, terrifying Godzilla. The decaying wood was teeming with life of many kinds that I could behold with my naked eye: centipedes, “roly polys” (aka, pillbugs), ants. There were beautiful and delicate streaks of colorful molds, lichens and other fuzzy growths that I thought was fascinating and kind of pretty.

I believe that when we are children, we are natural-born scientists and artists. I think when we grow up, we can lose our natural sense of wonder about God’s living world. Eventually we become distracted by other things – jobs, families, responsibilities. But a tree stump is still a tree stump, as dead as it may appear to our adult imaginations, it is alive with potential! And if the roots are still living, then there is even more life there to be lived! Where there is life, there is hope. And God’s life is all around us, as the Psalmist says to us today.

Last year towards the end of summer, a few of us started keeping watch on the tree outside the sanctuary in our courtyard. I’m talking about the tallest one, just a few feet away from the east wall. It is nicely-branched out, but hadn’t apparently borne any new leaves in a while. Then someone (I believe it was Theresa Goldston) asked me how that tree was doing. I said, I didn’t know and that next time I was out there, I would let her know. And… the next week, I was out there, inspecting the tree, which looked dead, but I saw brand new sprouts, growing up at the base. What looked like a dead tree to my own eyes, and probably those who walk past the church, is actually alive.

In our own lives in Jesus Christ, we might see death, but life is growing up right underneath us. If we might actually look for it, we might see it. Today we see in Isaiah that God grows a plan for our world, right up from the midst of seeming destruction. Right up out of the trouble of Isaiah’s time, there is hope, even as early as chapter 6 of a 65-chapter prophecy. Isaiah’s book details not just one but both periods of Hebrews’ Exile in foreign lands. What a long and drawn-out period for a people to try and hold out hope. It was far worse and terrifying than the exile that COVID has caused us. These experiences involved peoples who were born in exile and died in exile, never to ever be able to see their homeland.

But even as early as chapter 6 in Isaiah, do we see promise. Just after the Lord tells Isaiah that God will shut up their ears and hearts and make it hard on them, Isaiah asks God, “How long, O Lord?” God responds:

“11 ‘Until cities lie waste

without inhabitant,

and houses without people,

and the land is utterly desolate;

12until the LORD sends everyone far away,

and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land.

13Even if a tenth part remain in it,

it will be burned again,

like a terebinth or an oak

whose stump remains standing

when it is felled.

The holy seed is its stump.’”

 The stump is all that seemed to be remaining of Israel, when they went into Exile. A stump seems pretty final. “The holy seed is its stump.” Sometimes all we see is a stump. But then, to the naked eye, that’s pretty much what things look like to us. We worry about the drought this part of God’s world has had for more than 2 decades. Many of us worry about how that affects our local and regional economy. Many of us worry about how the rest of our state appreciates this part of it. We do produce a lot of important resources. Resources like energy and food. And of course, we see our community that seems hobbled by the pandemic and we think these could be signs that God is judging us. There are a lot of people who have been left widowed, childless or without property in the past couple of years. It seems like we are in exile. It can feel like a field of tree stumps where a mighty forest once was.

Maybe like God’s message to the Israelites, we should consider what to do in response. Instead of sitting here with our hearts and ears and eyes closed, waiting for it to be over, we might consider how we might respond to the situation. But what is most important here is to stay faithful to Him – always. So that instead of foolishly reacting in fear and doing something to save ourselves, perhaps our faithful response is to ask God to help remove what is blocking our ways and give us a clear vision.

Where there is life, there is hope. And God’s life is everywhere. Next time you feel like life has cut you down to the stump, go outside into the church courtyard, and look at the trees. Remember that hope could be growing up right under your feet. Amen.

**Service of Holy Communion**

*Invitation to the Table*

This is not my table.
This is not our church’s table.
This is not our denomination’s table,
or an American table,
or a table reserved for the wealthy or well-connected.
This table is reserved for sinners,
for the poor,
for those who are cast out,
for those who hunger and thirst.
This table is reserved for all the baptized.
This table belongs to Jesus Christ.
Come.

**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

We praise and thank you, Lord,
because you do wonderful things.
In Jesus Christ, you make your salvation known
for all people,
completing the faithfulness you promised
to the house of Israel,
which you remember still.

Through these gifts of bread and cup,
we join all the earth in praising you.
Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us
as we share in this meal.
As you feed us,
make us instruments of your praise
and servants of your faithfulness.

Keep us faithful in Christ’s service
until he comes at long last to establish justice and plenty on the earth.
We pray with and for all people,
joining in the prayer Christ taught, saying…
*The Lord’s Prayer*

*Prayer After Communion*

God of glory, in this holy meal
you show us your will for every meal.
In Christ’s strength, let us live and work
for the day when all tables are filled with your abundance
and surrounded by your people in peace.
In Jesus’ name. Amen.

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Amy (Glenna Gray’s daughter) chronic medical issues
Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (paralyzed) – Glenda’s sisters
Brian Sims - hospitalized with COVID (brother-in-law of Laro Sims, Marge's daughter)
Elmer Schuster - leg pain
Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer
Glenda Coles – bad shoulder pain, praying for surgery
Jenna Morris – moved to Clovis for her new job
Kevin Mueller - grief both for his father and his uncle
Lucille Andrada's daughter and her family - COVID
Lucy Jasper – Alzheimers/Dementia
Misty Tompkins and her family – stiff person syndrome, seeking experimental program
Paige Christian - Linda's niece, 7 mos pregnant and COVID positive
Paul Estrada - for encouragement
People seeking jobs, and people seeking employees
Ruth Johnson – for general health
Ryan Pottenger's dad (COVID)
Ryan's Grandpa, Francis - for comfort and care
Sarah Hittson's daughter Marie - surgery
Schools, students, teachers and families
Scott Holtz - on life support in AZ (a friend of Amy’s)
Sharon and Wayne Huffman – general health
Shay – Julie Sursa’s daughter
Susie – still seeking a car, planning for EMS school
Tammy Lucero - thanksgiving that she completed a course of cancer treatment and may she be healed
Tommy Morris – for health and strength
Travelers
Ty Gresham – kidney failure

Tyler (former student of Emily's) and his wife at loss of their infant son
All those suffering from COVID19

**Announcements:**

**Bible Study** will resume this Wednesday at 5:15PM. We are going to look at:

[Jeremiah 17:5-10](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/revised-common-lectionary/2022/2/13/#rcl-first-reading) – also known as the “weeping prophet…” let’s find out why.

[Psalm 1:1-6](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/revised-common-lectionary/2022/2/13/#rcl-psalm) – It reads like the Proverbs!

[1 Corinthians 15:12-20](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/revised-common-lectionary/2022/2/13/#rcl-second-reading) – a message about what the “resurrection body” is about.

[Luke 6:17-26](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/revised-common-lectionary/2022/2/13/#rcl-gospel)