**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**Sunday, January 26, 2020 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

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

**Prayer of the Day**

**\*Opening Hymn RH #271 “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me”**

**Call to Confession**

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

In Christ’s name, I announce to you that our sins are forgiven!  
 **Alleluia! Amen.**

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.**

**Responsive Reading Psalm 27:1, 4-9**

**Hymn RH #295 “Christ of the Upward Way”**

**Presentation of Offering and Offertory**

**\*Doxology Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**\*Dedication of the Offering**

**\*Congregational Response We give Thee but Thine own. Whatever the gift may be;**

**All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee. Amen**

**Prayers of the People**

God of love,

We confess our faith in you. You are the light that shines in the darkness and cannot be overcome. You are the light of day that finds at high noon every shadow and chases it away.

You are the one who assures us that we are never alone, by your Holy Spirit, you comfort us even when we are unable to find our own comfort.

In life and in death, we belong to you, Almighty and Eternal God.

Help us to remember that no matter what else may be happening to us, we can always be assured that you are our life and light. You are our all in all, who makes a way in the wilderness.

This day we hold our hearts out for your inspection and our prayers on our sleeves. Hear our needs, O God.

For those seeking direction, provide them your Spirit of discernment.

For those who are suffering in grief, give them a moment of joy and a glimpse of your eternity.

For those who are hungry, who are without a home, or who just feel so spiritually, be their shelter and their bread.

For our nation weary with conflict, grant us a sense of new life!

For…. (prayer requests)

Let us now lift our prayers to you in silence.

Guide our church members, Dear Lord of Life, as we prepare for the Annual Meeting of the congregation today. Grant that we may always follow in your way, listen for your voice, and seek to set our minds on heavenly things. And help us to let those heavenly things rule our daily lives and actions. Strengthen always for your service. In the name of the Jesus Christ, the light the world, who came down for us and for our salvation, teaching us to pray, “Our Father, Who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and glory forever. Amen.”

**Time out for Teaching “For Us and For Our Salvation”**

Our psalm today sings of the glory of God, and the light of God which lights our way in the darkness. It celebrates the salvation of God for us.

It reminds me of the Nicene Creed, which has a famous line in it: “For us and for our salvation.” It says, “For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.”

It describes Jesus, who came to us for us and for our salvation.

What do you think of that phrase, “For us and for our salvation?”

They could have just said, “For us.” Or they could have just said, “for our salvation.” I don’t believe this is a place where they trying to be poetic, like a psalm. It was written this way for a reason.

Let’s think about what “salvation” is. The root word is “salve” which is from Latin for “save.” It is also deeply connected to the word “salve,” like a balm you put on a sore. There is a similar word in Greek, which is “soso” sometimes used in stories where someone has been healed, but it is also translated as “saved.”

Wouldn’t you agree that with salvation comes healing? And with healing comes salvation?

I believe that if we take that line from the Nicene Creed “for us and for our salvation” seriously, the coming of Jesus the Anointed One means God wants to heal us. Jesus the Anointed (the Messiah) has come to be the balm for our sufferings and sin. It tells us that God’s plan to save and heal us is for us, but also for salvation. And I think Salvation itself is God’s goal for the world. Salvation is God’s crowning touch on this Creation.

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Old Testament Isaiah 9:1-4**

1But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness  
          have seen a great light;  
     those who lived in a land of deep darkness —  
          on them light has shined.  
3   You have multiplied the nation,  
          you have increased its joy;  
     they rejoice before you  
          as with joy at the harvest,  
          as people exult when dividing plunder.  
4   For the yoke of their burden,  
          and the bar across their shoulders,  
          the rod of their oppressor,  
          you have broken as on the day of Midian.

**Gospel Matthew 4:12-23**

12Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. 13He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:  
15  “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,  
          on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles —  
16  the people who sat in darkness  
          have seen a great light,  
     and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death  
          light has dawned.”  
17From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

18As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. 19And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” 20Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. 22Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

23Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

**Epistle Reading 1 Corinthians 1:10-18**

10Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. 11For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. 12What I mean is that each of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas,” or “I belong to Christ.” 13Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. 16(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 17For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

18For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**Sermon: “Needing Immediate Therapy“ Rev. Amy Pospichal**

I have often thought it would be cool to have a Bible study about 1Corinthians. Maybe that should be our Lenten Devotional this year. What do you think of that?

1 Corinthians figures prominently in the Presbyterian Book of Confessions, in the “Confession of 67.” “The Confession of 67” was written during a time in our history when there was great need for reconciliation. Remember the 60s – that time of peace, love and rock and roll. But remember the race riots. Shootings on college campuses. The war in Vietnam. Assassinations. No wonder in those days our church felt the need for reconciliation, that true peace that comes with God’s healing.

Confessing our faith during hard times is part of our heritage as the Presbyterian Church. When it seems like things have gone awry, when it appears that the world is going to heck in a handbasket, we reaffirm our faith. We can always look to the Bible for reaffirmation. But we also can find that reaffirmation by reading what others have said since the Bible was written. The Presbyterian Book of Confessions tells the story, stretching back to the 2nd century. The Heidelberg Catechism, the Scot’s Confession 1500s. The Westminster Catechism from the 1700s. The Barmen Catechism from Germany in 1932. We might look at these statements of faith with cold objectivity. But I prefer to see these as products of our faithful brothers and sisters, who needed immediate therapy during trying times.

During the Reformation Era, for example, as the Reformers broke away from the Roman Church, they fought over their own understandings of things like the Sacraments of Communion and Baptism, and how to organize the church without a pope. It was confusing for the average person, for many people couldn’t even read and write, let alone study theology. It was therapeutic for those who could read and write to write down what their hearts confessed about God. And, by putting it down in writing, it was then easier to discuss it. 2nd Helvetic Confession was written at the request of Frederick III, a German governor, who was a friend to Martin Luther. Frederick was about to be tried for heresy and so he asked a pastor Heinrich Bullinger to write that confession of faith as part of his defense on trial.

Trials of all kinds call for immediate therapy, and ought to lead us to review our faith.

And give us reason to ponder how our faith informs our actions. Maybe you haven’t had to go trial like Frederick. But you have had your own trials. Maybe you lost someone you loved, which may have caused you to question all sorts of things. You might need some immediate therapy. Write down what you believe. Maybe you are truly troubled by the problems in our world – political problems, the vast amount of human suffering we see each day. Write down what you believe God is saying to you about these things. Perhaps you are worried about this church. I am. We are going through some financial insecurities, and without clear answers. We are about to make choices which affect this church. Sometimes we face trials where there are no clear immediate answers, but we still need immediate therapy. Trust God enough that you can stop, pray and/or write down what you think God must be saying to you. Healing can finally begin. Great things have come out of those most trying moments.

Scripture comes out of those moments. Every word in the Bible testifies to the trials of the people of God and how God acted for them and for their salvation in history. Every letter in the Bible was written to fill a need. A need for correction, assurance, or direction to God’s people. For the church in Corinth, Paul wrote because they were having trouble keeping their beliefs straight. Sort of like a doctor who must set a broken leg, Paul is straightening out a few fundamental ideas so that the Corinthians will be much more in line with the gospel and their knowledge of the power of God which is the cross. Until they understood in whose name they were really baptized, their division would only become more painful. That Family of Faith needed immediate therapy and Paul was the one to help with the healing.

He chides them – for their division is over who baptized whom. “I belong to Paul,” and “I belong to Apollos…” when in fact, he says, you all belong to God! Your division, he says, is just in your own perceptions of who your teacher is. The real teacher is Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Friends, remember who is your Savior, as we make decisions for this year. Friends, we stand together at the edge of a new era. Let 2020 be the year we see more clearly. If we have trouble seeing clearly, then let’s put on the corrective lenses of faith, of Scripture, and what our hearts confess to be true about where God is leading us. We can always trust that God has “us and our salvation in His best interest.” You have important choices to make about future of God’s church in Tucumcari. Please make sure, soberly and prayerfully, that you declare the power of God at work among us. Amen.

**\*Closing Hymn RH#275 “Amazing Grace – How Sweet the Sound”**

**\*Benediction and Response “Amen, Amen, Amen**

**THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

**Call to Annual Meeting!**  Today please prepare to stay for about 15 or 20 minutes after church in order that we can vote for Elders and Deacons, the Pastor’s Terms of Call and present the Annual Report to the congregation. If you desire to nominate someone to the office of Elder or Deacon, please be sure to ask that person before you nominate him or her from the floor. Thank you in advance for participating. Non church members may participate in discussions, but do not have a vote.