**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**June 13, 2021 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

RH 521 Eternal Father, Strong to Save

Green Book When Peace Like a River

BH 422 God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending

**Call to Worship**

Jesus said the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed; it starts out as a small thing, but it grows and grows until it gives a home to the birds of the air.

**Can we believe a new day is coming? As surely as the sun rises over the horizon God is creating a new world.**

Jesus said the Kingdom of God is like that someone who casts seed on the ground, and then sleeps and wakes, day after day, while the earth produces the fruit from the seed that was cast.

**We do not know how God works out the fullness of redemption. But we know we are partners in that work.**

Praise the name of the Lord who still cares for the world!

**Praise the name of the Lord who leads with power and grace.**

**Opening Prayer**

It is well with our souls, O God, for we are in your presence. We come with all of the baggage of our lives and entrust all that we are to you. For nothing in this world comes close to your glory. Open our eyes to see your kingdom at work right under our very noses, and help us to participate in your work of salvation. Amen!

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession**

**Beloved God, it is often hard for us to see anything special in something so small as a seed. We look at others we encounter in our lives, and think, “How could they be worthy of love?” But you call us, again and again, to shower love upon the world – on the impressive flowers and on the tiny seeds. Help us to see each other as you see us – needing your grace poured out, and through your grace, being worthy of your love. Help us to grow into sheltering plants, able not only to rise toward your outpouring of grace and love, but to point others to your life-giving light.**  (silence) **Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, live and believe this good news:

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!**

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 20**

The LORD answer you in the day of trouble!
**The name of the God of Jacob protect you!**May he send you help from the sanctuary,
**and give you support from Zion.**May he remember all your offerings,
**and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices.**

May he grant your heart’s desire
**and fulfill all your plans.**May we shout for joy over your victory,
**and in the name of our God set up our banners.**May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

**Now I know that the LORD will help his anointed;**he will answer him from his holy heaven
**with mighty victories by his right hand.**Some take pride in chariots, and some in horses,
**but our pride is in the name of the LORD our God.**They will collapse and fall,
**but we shall rise and stand upright.**

Give victory to the king, O LORD;
**answer us when we call.**

**Prayers of the People**

It is good to give you thanks, O Lord,
and to sing praises to your name, O Most High.
We celebrate your loving-kindness to us every day
and your faithfulness night by night.
With every good gift you have given, we worship you.

You have made your people glad with your faithful acts, O Lord,
and we shout for joy at your righteous works.
Teach us to use your gifts rightly,
to do good to all people and build them up,
and to allow your beauty to flourish in this world.

We pray for the healing of those who are ill,
for the guidance of those who are strong,
for the reconciliation of those who are enemies,
and for the comfort of those who are grieving.
Let your kingdom flourish among us,
O Lord, our Rock.
We pray in Jesus’ name, saying together:

The Lord’s Prayer

**Offering**

**Time out for Teaching: 7 Marks of a Vital Congregation: Caring Relationships (Part VI)**

(see handout)

“By this everyone will know that you are disciples, if you have love for one another.” (JOHN 13:35)

• Sharing in God’s true agape moves us beyond half-hearted programmatic participation, lukewarm faith, and pretending.

• Instead of a closed, judgmental community, people find freedom to share stories, encounter the Savior, and ask for help.

• Welcome and hospitality are not left to a committee, but, imperfectly, we strive for all people find identity, purpose, and belonging in the household of God.

• Confront conflict, seek reconciliation in all divisions, find ways to embrace all diversity, seek to be peace-makers and bridge builders together.

**Prayer for Illumination**

**2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 14-17**

6So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord — 7for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

14For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. 15And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

16From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

**Gospel Mark 4:26-34**

26He also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, 27and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. 28The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

30He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? 31It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

33With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; 34he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

**Sermon “Seeing with New Eyes” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

 I was eating lunch with a friend a while back who is a former art teacher. We were talking about the fact that not everyone has “the talent” we want, but we can learn how to do art. Then he said, “A lot of it is about how to see…” That opened the eyes of my heart a little more, as someone who has always loved art, doing it and appreciating that of others. And what my friend said was true, I think. It is so important for us to learn how to “see.” Like Michelangelo who could “see” the sculpture in the uncarved block of stone. Like artists who can see something in the world and it becomes a composition of beauty in their minds.

 Maybe having faith is a little like having the heart of an artist. We walk by faith, not by sight, Paul says. The vision we work with is one that celebrates the invisibility of God’s work, as it becomes increasingly visible and to us all. It is not our work to bring the Kingdom of God into existence. It’s God’s work and we are blessed enough to be a part of it.

Paul wrote in his second letter to the Corinthians that their knowledge of Jesus Christ has altered how they see everything: “…the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all…And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. [therefore] …we regard no one from a human point of view…”

Faith should give us eyes to see God’s world in a very particular way, trusting that God is at work, even when we cannot perceive it. Isaiah the prophet once wrote, “Behold I am doing a new thing, do you not perceive it?” In today’s Gospel readings, we are told that God’s kingdom inevitably grows into something that provides shelter, nurture to those around it. And it never stays small, but multiplies its gifts. I guess God just cannot help but want to fill creation with salvation. The kingdom of God just keeps getting bigger.

 And all it takes is just a small seed of the Kingdom and God is on the way to growing something, something with purpose. Jesus says, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, 27and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. 28The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.” Here, the whole process appears to be the Kingdom of God. Once this planter sowed the seeds, the seeds grow while he’s not paying attention! The kingdom happens even when no one is watching! I find that comforting, for God is the one growing it all.

 God takes the initiative in growing the Kingdom and we are the participants. It can of take some of the pressure off of us, for even if we mess something up, God is persistent. Such as what Paul says in his 1st letter to the Corinthians, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered the seed, but God grows the seed.” This is God’s project and we get to be the eager and inexperienced helpers, sort of like doing on the job training. Sometimes it just calls for us to find our place in it and receive the love and care of the relationships God’s kingdom provides. For caring relationships are really the fruits of God’s kingdom. To see God’s work happening, even if infinitesimally small. Even if it means celebrating the smallest of good news. Like a single prayer raised in church, and a whole church who prays it. God’s kingdom multiplies and grows in unexpected ways, including bringing us unity when we share our concern and joys.

 I have always been proud of the persistence of the Exercise, Eat and Pray group. This group of just 4-5 women (including me) meets in Fellowship Hall to do some exercise three times a week. I have been a part of this group I came here Tucumcari 10 years ago. At the time, it was June Johnson, Lois Hansen, Blevins and Marge McKenzie, Barbara McCausland, Lucille Andrada, Sharon Huffman, Mickey Page. The people have changed, but the group has persisted. We check in with each other and talk about our aches and pains. We laugh a lot too. It is perfect for those who live alone, have issues with mobility and need to exercise in a safe environment. On some Fridays, a four-year-old comes with his great-grandmother. We all dote on him, and he gets to see what it’s like to hang out with older ladies. So it’s a “win-win” situation for us all. And the church is open, should someone come by in need of food or other kinds of help. The Kingdom of God is happening at least three times a week at 10:00AM, if you want to see it for yourself.

 The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, so small that you can barely see it. But then, it grows into this monstrously large plant that provides shelter and food to the creatures nearby. I imagine that every church strives to be that mustard seed, to grow into a place of nurture, shelter, hope. A place where, even if it starts with two or three people, caring relationships form and grow strong. Sometimes we lose sight of that relationship and responsibility when we have become focused on our own problems. But then God calls us back to the bigger picture, to focus again on the work of God’s kingdom. Caring relationships make this mustard tree flourish and grow. Caring relationships are the fruit of God’s kingdom. We don’t have to look far in this church to see the chance to participate in God’s kingdom work.

 Perhaps this walk of faith is a little like having an artistic eye, for it takes discipline to be able to see things as God sees. To have the vision to see what little ways God is at work, and then to consider how we can support that work of God. It might be that you cannot see anything at all, so be patient, for God’s work is happening even when we miss it. But when you see it, and you might as well join in. There are quite a few good things going on around here lately, small as they are, but they beckon for just the right person to show up and participate. So, let’s open our eyes a little wider, so we can see what God is doing, here and out there. Amen.

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Amy (Glenna Gray’s daughter) multiple upcoming surgeries
Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (paralyzed) – Glenda’s sisters
Dorothy Randalsm – at Autumn Blessings, for strength and comfort
Elmer Schuster - ongoing dental surgeries, leg pain
Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer, prayers for her husband, Larry too
Glenda Coles – injured rotator cuff
Dr. Jean Corey, losing two employees, looking for new hires
Julie Sursa – pain with walking
Lissa – Glenda’s granddaughter (3 months pregnant, health concerns)
Lucy Jasper – Alzheimers/Dementia
Lynn Hawkins – looking for a new home in town
Marty Garcia – severe pain, awaiting MRI and answers
Ruth Johnson – for general health, preparing to move to Wisconsin
Shara Isler - hospitalized, friend of the Schusters
Sharon and Wayne Huffman – general health, Wayne preparing for surgery Wednesday
Shay – Julie Sursa’s daughter
Susan (Susie Martinez's step-daughter) - waiting to see if she gets a new job - a good "step-up!"
Susie - knee injury, in a leg brace, planning for EMS school
Teresa Gallegos-Brake – continuing to heal from leg surgery
Travelers
All those suffering from COVID19

**Announcements:**

**Tomorrow: Green Chile Gals!** Amy is bringing Greek Lemon Chicken soup. You’re welcome to brown bag it or bring something to share. Let’s just hang out and break bread together. It starts around 5:45PM.

**Ruling Elders:**  We shall meet again after church next Sunday, June 13th. Hope to see you there. If you have a report you want to submit early, or something to add to the agenda, please call/text Rev. Amy before Thursday this week. Thank you!