**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**July 20, 2021 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

RH 41 When Morning Gilds the Skies

RH 374 Be Still My Soul

BH 276 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

**Call to Worship**

This is the day the Lord has made,

let us rejoice and be glad in it!

**We come with awe and praise, hearts lifted high!**

**Some of us come with doubt and fear, hearts troubled.**

This is the church the Lord has made,

the people God created for this place and this time.

**We come, all of us, to hear God’s word,**

**know Christ’s presence,**

**and follow the Spirit wherever she may lead.**

Come, let us worship the Living God,

who calls us together.

**Opening Prayer**

We are in your holy presence, our Creator and body and soul we belong to you. Today we ask that you cleanse our hearts and minds, open us and fill us once more with your Holy Spirit. So that each time we open our mouths your praise pours forth! Through the power of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession**

God, you call to us, but often we do not listen.

**We are so busy speaking, we forget that conversations go two ways. We are so busy looking for what we want, we forget to look for what you want.**

Quiet our fear, our greed, and even our uncertainty, that we may seek you, and hear you, and know you. Forgive us our one-way conversations, our short-sighted solutions, our narrow fields of vision.

**When we look only for answers, sit beside us as a friend in the questions. When we look only for our desires, walk with us through your beautiful yet broken world. When we look only for our own ways, open our eyes to your way, and bring us to true life with you, today and every day. We pray in the name of the One who lives and breathes among and within us. 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 9:9-20**

The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed,  
a stronghold in times of trouble.  
**And those who know your name put their trust in you,  
for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.**

Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion.  
Declare his deeds among the peoples.  
**For he who avenges blood is mindful of them;  
he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.**

Be gracious to me, O LORD.  
**See what I suffer from those who hate me;  
you are the one who lifts me up from the gates of death,**so that I may recount all your praises,  
and, in the gates of daughter Zion,  
rejoice in your deliverance.

**The nations have sunk in the pit that they made;  
in the net that they hid has their own foot been caught.**The LORD has made himself known, he has executed judgment;  
the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.

**The wicked shall depart to Sheol,  
all the nations that forget God.**

For the needy shall not always be forgotten,  
nor the hope of the poor perish forever.

**Rise up, O LORD! Do not let mortals prevail;  
let the nations be judged before you.**Put them in fear, O LORD;  
**let the nations know that they are only human.**

**Prayers of the People**

God, you call to us, but often we do not listen.

We are so busy speaking, we forget that conversations go two ways.

We are so busy looking for what we want, we forget to look for what you want.

Quiet our fear, our greed, and even our uncertainty,

that we may seek you, and hear you, and know you.

Forgive us our one-way conversations, our short-sighted solutions, our narrow fields of vision.

When we look only for answers, sit beside us as a friend in the questions.

When we look only for our desires, walk with us through your beautiful yet broken world.

When we look only for our own ways, open our eyes to your way,

and bring us to true life with you, today and every day.

Let your kingdom flourish among us, O Lord, our Rock.  
We pray in the name of the One who lives and breathes among and within us.

The Lord’s Prayer

**Offering**

**Time out for Teaching: 7 Marks of a Vital Congregation: Ecclesial Health (Part VII)**

(see handout)

“The body does not consist of one member but of many. God has so arranged the body that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.” (1 COR. 12:14, 24B–25)

• Understanding of: Why we are a church community? How are we a church community in practice? Prayer permeates all life together.

• Clarity in mission, core values to ministry, passion and joy in being the church. Our budget reflects these values, vision, and ministries.

• Fiscally responsible — stewardship and tithing are taught, transparency in spending, continual assessment/discernment of a sustainable budget.

• All are aware of how decisions are made, stake-holders in the process and procedures, valued voices in the envisioning, open to changes, continual assessment of the “why” and “how” we are church together.

• Nurturing and supporting the health of pastor(s), staff, and all called to lead; fighting against burnout.

**Prayer for Illumination**

Divine Spirit,  
surround us with the wisdom of your word  
that we might dance in your love  
and be messengers of your truth in this world. **Amen**.

**1 Samuel 17:32-49**

32David said to Saul, “Let no one’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” 33Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth.” 34But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock, 35I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. 36Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God.” 37David said, “The LORD, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine.” So Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you!”

38Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. 39David strapped Saul’s sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, “I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them.” So David removed them. 40Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd’s bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

41The Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. 42When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was only a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. 43The Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the field.” 45But David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46This very day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head; and I will give the dead bodies of the Philistine army this very day to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD’s and he will give you into our hand.”

48When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

**2 Corinthians 6:1-13**

1As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2For he says,  
     “At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
          and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”  
See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! 3We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see — we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

11We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. 12There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. 13In return — I speak as to children — open wide your hearts also.

**Gospel Mark 4:35-41**

35On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” 36And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. 37A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” 39He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” 41And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

**Sermon “Fear Factors” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

There was a reality show about 15 years ago called “Fear Factor.” It was not for the squeamish. I can handle some scary shows and fake blood. But the contestants of that show competed by doing yucky or scary things, as long as they weren’t overly risky to human life – things such as seeing how long you can stand enclosed in a tank of roaches. Yuck!

Most of us don’t need any help with feeling afraid. What are you afraid of? As I come close to becoming half a century old, I have realized that I am not afraid of the same things I once was. (I’m still afraid of cockroaches, having lived in Central Texas.) But I have new things to frighten me, like getting old alone, and heights. The older we get, the wiser we become. We also become tougher in some ways, yet more aware of our fragility.

I don’t like flying either. I can think of other, slower ways I’d rather to travel – a cross country train trip sounds wonderful – and a bit old-fashioned, I guess. But flying is a necessity for me in order to see my family. As we take off from the runway, usually I have to take deep breaths to stay calm, and repeat to myself the beginning of the Presbyterian Brief Statement of Faith: “In life and in death we belong to God….In Life and in death we belong to God…”  
 In January of 2006, I traveled as a seminary student with a class to Jordan, Syria and Israel. We went out on the Sea of Galilee, in a boat similar to what Jesus and the disciples might have been in. The boat got caught up in some high winds. I got a bit nervous, just praying that we would get back to shore safely. It was irrational fear. My own fears overtook me. We have no way of controlling the cause of our fears, for that cause is the fear of something much bigger than we are. We have no control over the wind. I just wish that in that moment I had remembered this story of Jesus and the disciples on that very same sea!

The disciples felt panic at that very moment on the open waters of the Sea of Galilee. Panic, for they were with Jesus, Son of God who had healed people, taught with authority and spoken out to the Pharisees. But here, as they felt their very lives in peril, they cried out in panic – an irrational question: “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” It reminds me a little of the kind of question I hear from other people who are enduring some horrific experience: “How could God let this happen?” This is the kind of fear that causes us to freeze, panic or want to run away. It happens, before we have a chance to even prepare ourselves for the feeling.

They were frightened. They didn’t know Jesus yet as the Son of God. They saw him as a healer and teacher. But after he teaches them to have faith, he then demonstrates that he does care, so much so that he commands the sea and winds to calm down. Oftentimes, his “miracles” are referred to as “signs” – signs of the Kingdom of Heaven. Signs of the arrival of God. And in Mark’s 4th chapter, we have already seen such signs, healing of the sick, eating and drinking with sinners and more. But just who is this Jesus anyway? To say he is God would be blasphemous for there is only one God. It is one of the great mysteries in Mark’s gospel. Only the demon-possessed, the sick and the blind recognize his true identity. The “messianic secret” is a repeating theme in Mark. To us, it is the worst-kept secret in the Bible. But for the people in the story, who meet Jesus for the first time, his identity unfolds slowly, like an important gift you would open carefully, one flap at a time so you don’t tear the paper. So, by the time that Jesus breathes his last breath on the cross, and the curtain is torn in two, a centurion cries out, “Surely this man was the Son of God!” But in Mark chapter 4, the identity of “this man” is still in the process of discovery. And he has done something new at this point, for now we also know that Jesus commands even the wind and seas. He can do even more than be a healer, teacher and renegade. He has power over nature. And still, the disciples wonder…

What also know is that Jesus actually cares that they are perishing.

If we said that God would put us in danger to teach us a lesson, then it would make God sound kind of cruel. But, as we see in this story from Mark, Jesus takes ordinary things of life – including the scary stuff that happens – and is able to show us something wonderful. Jesus, in this story, uses the moment to reveal more to the disciples about his own true nature. One who cares what happens to us. He is not going to sugar coat things. He wants us to have faith to weather every storm. But He also cares about us.

While a lot of moms have taught their own children such lessons, a lot of dads have too. According to the research provided by the National Fatherhood Initiative, traditional fathers tend to encourage play and experimentation with their children, to build up our sense of confidence and communication skills. Fathers tend to be the ones who wrassle their kids on the floor. They tend to be the Little League coaches. They tend to stimulate and challenge their children to push the boundaries a little so that they learn where those boundaries are. Moms do that too. But Dads generally do a bit more of that, in traditional settings. I have known people who said their dad taught them how to swim, and other safety skills. My own dad never did that, but he led the way in spelling contests and word games on road trips. He encouraged me to work hard for a good grade in school. He taught me a philosophy about driving a car. He taught me what anger looks like and what inner peace can look like. I learned confidence and self-esteem from him. My dad also said that we should know how the world works, so we know how to handle ourselves when called upon. No sugar coating there!

Our faith is in a God who cares. Cares enough to show us that though the winds and water may scare us, we don’t need any sugar coating. What we need is confidence in the God we serve. For God is uses all things, even the ordinary things of this world which frighten us, as a chance to know even more of God’s love for us all. God wants you and wants me to be challenged so we keep on growing and deepening our faith. So, with study of Scripture, prayer and fellowship, our faith can grow stronger to help us through every storm of life. God wants to equip us for an entire life of faith, which will help us through every storm. A Good Father never stops teaching us by showing us. Thanks be to God for Dads’ best attributes which remind us to also have confidence in the one true Parent, Lord of All. 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, waiting for MRI results this week  
Julie Sursa – pain with walking  
Lissa – Glenda’s granddaughter (doing better, still in need of prayers)  
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  
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:**

**Today is a Congregational Meeting!**  Please stay a few minutes afterwards to review the 2021 Budget, as it has undergone extensive revision.