**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Sunday, November 10, 2019 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**RH 9 Now Thank We All Our God**

**RH 513 My Country ‘Tis Of Thee**

**RH 21 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

**Call to Confession**

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, Believe the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 98:1-9 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

We exalt you, O God our Sovereign,  
and we bless your name forever and ever.  
Every day proclaims your blessing,  
and lifetime after lifetime sings praise to your name.  
To you, whose greatness never ends,  
we lift these prayers for your beloved people.

We pray for children and generations yet to come,  
that they may know and praise your works with joy.  
We pray for elders who ponder your glorious splendor,  
that they may rejoice in your marvelous works.  
We pray for those who have little to depend on except your might,  
that all your people may have everything they need.  
We pray for those who are sick, suffering, or grieving,  
that their lives might bear the mark of your great goodness  
and that, healed and whole, they may sing of your righteous deeds.

We pray to you, for you are gracious and full of compassion,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
We pray to you, in the name of the risen Christ,  
in whom we pray together:  
***The Lord’s Prayer***

**Time out for Teaching: “Ordin-What?”**

Ordination is the word we choose to describe someone who we publicly recognize as “chosen” by God to serve in a particular task. You, and many saints who have since gone before us, confirmed that you believed I should be your next pastor on a fateful day in 2011. You did so after hearing me preach a sermon and getting to know me a little better, and then voting for or against that. I was brought to you as a nominee by a specially-called Pastor Nominating Committee, comprised of several of you.

And so, a little like a marriage made in heaven, you took me, agreeing that I would be your minister and I agreed to be yours. There’s a third component to that agreement, that it is also the presbytery’s covenant, a third party to help us if we ever any troubles between us. In fact, it is part of their job to visit us once every three years to “check in” and see how we are all doing.

Ordination is called “ordination” because God provides order and decency to the Church. We acknowledge and live into that fact the best way we can. We also believe that order and decency (some denominations would call it “discipline,” connected to “discipleship”) are something we should strive for, even though we are not always the best at it. This is why we try to rely on the grace we have been offered in Jesus Christ (his birth, life, death and resurrection). I think it is because we know God has gifted us with this wonderful and extraordinary life of faith, we want to do it well, and when we don’t, well sometimes faithful people can be hardest on ourselves.

And yet, we acknowledge and live into Jesus Christ’s grace, in spite of ourselves, striving for that order and decency. The ordination of people into service of recognized offices (for deacon, elder and minister) is sealed with the prayers of the people and the laying on of hands. These are ancient practices we inherited from the saints of old, as a means of conferring that grace they will need to perform their calling.

So, the word “ordination” is our word for recognizing the order and decency God has given the world, through our organization as a church. It gives us a vehicle to convey the grace of Jesus Christ through both our own lives of faith and through the ministry of this organization Jesus has called “the church.”

**Prayer for Illumination**

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17**

1As to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we beg you, brothers and sisters, 2not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. 3Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. 4He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. 5Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you?

13But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14For this purpose he called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.

16Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, 17comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

**Gospel Luke 20:27-38**

27Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him 28and asked him a question, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. 29Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; 30then the second 31and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. 32Finally the woman also died. 33In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her."

34Jesus said to them, "Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; 35but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. 36Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. 37And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive."

**Haggai 1:15b-2:9**

15bIn the second year of King Darius,

1in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai, saying: 2Speak now to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, and say, 3Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Is it not in your sight as nothing? 4Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD; work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts, 5according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My spirit abides among you; do not fear. 6For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; 7and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the LORD of hosts. 8The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. 9The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.

**Sermon: “With God’s Help”**

It was the 2nd year of King Darius. That would be around 520 BC, when the Prophet Haggai received the word of the Lord to speak out. For the remnant of Judah was coming home from generations of exile in Babylon. But they knew when they returned, that they would return to a different kind of Jerusalem. For the center of their universe, the Temple in Jerusalem, was no longer there. It was in shambles. So, the Lord charges Haggai with a message for them all: “Take courage.” Take courage, O Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel. Take courage, O Joshua son of Jehozadak. Take courage, people of God. The message is to take courage, even though the world no longer looks like it did to our ancestors.

Let’s remember what he’s talking about. The Lord is telling the people to take courage because right now things are looking very bleak. The reason is because Judah they had been in exile for several generations. And even though it was a joy to be released home from years away, their very happiness of returning home was filled with new questions. What do they do, now that their beloved Temple was destroyed? That was their holy space for grace, comfort, celebration. That gathering place was now rubble. The Temple in Jerusalem was where they had gone to sing to God, to make offerings for forgiveness of their sins, to make new promises and renew their old ones, and offer the first fruits of their crops and livestock. It was their life’s blood.

Maybe you have had a similar experience of disappointment. Maybe a recent disappointment has soured your faith, caught your sense of purpose and hope off-guard, or even an old way of living has been left in shambles. How did you keep your chin up when your world is now irreversibly different? This probably runs through many of our minds when we remember life in the Church when we were growing up. Remember those times: Parents dragging their children to church each Sunday whether the kid wanted to go or not. Sunday School teachers who dedicated their mornings to teaching us lines from scripture, craft projects and songs to sing. We worshiped in this space or a similar space filled with other Christians. It wasn’t so bad, if you liked music and didn’t mind wearing restricting leather shoes. Active circles of people with like-minded interested, all together because they loved God. I’ll bet you have your own memories of such times of learning and growing.

I wouldn’t be surprised if some people stopped attending church because they miss those good old days. Some people just feel safer being in a crowd, rather than sticking out like a visitor. Furthermore, there’s nothing like going to a church where one is reminded of its “former glory,” and it seems as though we are rattling around in this big space. I commend you for coming, keeping the faith, facing the truth every time you enter this space. For, as Haggai has called out to Judah, you are also at home to face these new and different times together. The Israelites returned home from exile, finding the world a bleaker and emptier place, devoid of space to seek God’s grace. Until…The word of the Lord came to them, from the Spirit of God to the Prophet of God, to the sons of God to the people of God: “Yet now take courage; work, for I am with you, according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit abides among you; do not fear.”

And then the Lord makes another promise. That the heavens and all the universe and nations shall be shaken and that the Lord shall bring prosperity to His House.

The Lord was speaking not of becoming rich as church, but of healing and wholeness once more for all of God’s people. It is really just a restatement of the promise God gave to Israel generations earlier. A promise that God will abide with them always, so take courage. Notice what other command God gives us in this reading. After “take courage,” God says, “work, for I am with you.” Isn’t that interesting? “Work, for I am with you.” Take courage. And then Work, for I am with You. God says we are to carry on, even if we are the remnant of a different time and season of the church. We are the hinges – the connections - for the church between the past and the future. What does that look like, if we live into that hope, work with the assurance that God is with us?

I admire those who have pressed forward in spite of their circumstances. I admire them and find them inspiring. They don’t give up on the work before them, even if it seems bleak. I cannot help but think about on this Veterans’ Day weekend, the perseverance of those who have gone to protect us, because they and their families have dedicated their lives to the work of serving in our military. They are ordinary citizens who have chosen the hard way of life, the way of courage and dedication to the work. We too – veterans and civilians in service to God – are constantly being asked to adjust to new challenges, no matter how bleak it might appear to us. Let us remember that God’s Spirit abides with us, fills us with courage to meet new challenges. I have a green and black T-shirt I like to wear sometimes. I wear it because I won it in a contest, for on the back it has the words, “I can do hard things.” I won it in a contest a couple years ago at Spin Digity, where I go for exercise classes. “I can do hard things” is more than a reminder that I won a contest. It tells me that I can always “take heart.” It means that with God’s help, we can all do difficult things, when we put in the work and the imagination. Whether we do them well or we muddle through them, our perseverance counts for something. This is why one of the vows our leaders have taken at ordination ask, “Will you promise to serve with energy, intelligence, enthusiasm and love?” “I will, with God’s help.” That is the proper answer. We promise to do all of these things, even hard things, with energy, intelligence, enthusiasm and love. But the answer is “with God’s help,” for God is with us. And, we can persevere through any season, even the bleakest of times. Amen.

**Announcements:**

**Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes:** … Are due to the church today! If you have a shoebox to turn in and you do not have it right now, please contact Rev. Amy to make arrangements, so that they get to the Methodist Church by this week’s deadline. You can reach Amy at 575-708-0860.

**Sunday Potluck Dinner:**  Next Sunday is the 3rd Sunday and you know what that means. It’s time to share a fellowship meal with one another. Bring a dish and invite your neighbor to church so we can get to know them.

**New Member Class Next Sunday 9:30AM:** Amy will be offering a New Member Class to all who are interested (even if you’re already a member) and will be equipping you to join the church joyfully and ready to participate in God’s ministry. You don’t have to bring anything with you. You will be prepped to join the church as early as December 8th, or if you have more questions you have time to consider joining later that month. For more information, contact Amy at her cell phone 575-708-0860.