**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**November 21, 2021 Reign of Christ**

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

**RH 216B Jesus, Lover of My Soul**

**RH 307 O Jesus, I Have Promised**

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

**RH 213 Crown Him With Many Crowns**

**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**

**Call to Confession**

**Confession
O God, you are faithful to all generations—from the beginning of time, you have called all kinds of characters to be your people. When we forget that their story is our story, forgive us. When we admire them from afar while insisting that kind of faith isn’t practical for us, forgive us. We confess that your justice is too hard for us to do, and we prefer to create our own. We confess that we do not often bear the fruit you expect of your vineyard, resisting your kingdom’s way when it conflicts with our desires. Forgive us yet again, and plant your word of justice deep in our hearts and lives.***~silence~* **Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**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 132:1-12 (13-18)**

O LORD, remember in David's favor

all the hardships he endured;

how he swore to the LORD

and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob,

**"I will not enter my house**

**or get into my bed;**

**I will not give sleep to my eyes**

**or slumber to my eyelids,**

**until I find a place for the LORD,**

**a dwelling-place for the Mighty One of Jacob."**

We heard of it in Ephrathah;

we found it in the fields of Jaar.

"Let us go to his dwelling-place;

let us worship at his footstool."

**Rise up, O LORD, and go to your resting-place,**

**you and the ark of your might.**

Let your priests be clothed with righteousness,

and let your faithful shout for joy.

For your servant David's sake

do not turn away the face of your anointed one.

**The LORD swore to David a sure oath**

**from which he will not turn back:**

**"One of the sons of your body**

**I will set on your throne.**

If your sons keep my covenant

and my decrees that I shall teach them,

their sons also, for evermore,

shall sit on your throne."

**For the LORD has chosen Zion;**

**he has desired it for his habitation:**

**"This is my resting-place for ever;**

**here I will reside, for I have desired it.**

I will abundantly bless its provisions;

I will satisfy its poor with bread.

**Its priests I will clothe with salvation,**

**and its faithful will shout for joy.**

There I will cause a horn to sprout up for David;

I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one.

**His enemies I will clothe with disgrace,**

**but on him, his crown will gleam."**

**Prayers of the People**

People of God, Jesus comes to bring God’s mercy to all people.
Therefore we are bold to pray
to the one whose reign is justice, peace, and joy:

We pray for those who are captive to violence, oppression, and sin.
We pray for all who are hungry, sick, sorrowing, or afraid.

We pray for everyone who longs for new beginnings.
We pray for those who celebrate and rejoice.
We pray for all who travel to be with families,
and we pray for those who celebrate the birth of the Savior alone.
We pray for the gift of peace, in our hearts and in our world.

We pray for those in positions of power,
for those who have more wealth and power than they realize,
and for those whom we are called to serve.

Let your kingdom come in this world, O God,
and let our hearts welcome the birth of the Holy Child,
who teaches us to pray as we say together:

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Offering**

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

**Time out for Teaching: “Stewards of God’s Mysteries”**

What is a “steward?” I immediately think of a “wine steward,” or “sommelier,” who is a person well-trained in wines and is able to serve wines while helping people select the proper one for that particular meal. A steward is able to know just how much to pour for the proper and legal limit, and dispenses the wine with restraint and courtesy.

There is a wonderful phrase that I have found pretty fascinating. It comes out of Paul’s writings to the Church in Corinth (1 Cor 4). Listen to this and see if you can gather what means to be “stewards of God’s mysteries.”

4:1Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. **2**Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. **3**But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. **4**I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. **5**Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.”

It goes on from there, saying that the Corinthians already live like kings and don’t even realize that they are so lucky. That they should be humbled by this fact, instead of “puffed up” around one another. That what they have was never theirs to begin with, but a gift by God’s grace.

On this Reign of Christ Sunday, the last Sunday of the church year, I’d like for us to think more about how God’s kingdom is already here in our lives, how shall we allow God to reign through our own choices. We are the stewards of God’s mysteries today. We dispense the wine of grace. We have to choose to forgive another, or accept forgiveness. We are the operators of God’s house, the stewards of God’s kingdom.

**2 Samuel 23:1-7**

1Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, son of Jesse, the oracle of the man whom God exalted, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the favorite of the Strong One of Israel: 2The spirit of the LORD speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue. 3The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, 4is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.

5Is not my house like this with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. Will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire? 6But the godless are all like thorns that are thrown away; for they cannot be picked up with the hand; 7to touch them one uses an iron bar or the shaft of a spear. And they are entirely consumed in fire on the spot.

**Second Reading Revelation 1:4b-8**

4bGrace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, 5and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, 6and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen.

8"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

**Gospel John 18:33-37**

33Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" 34Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" 35Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" 36Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." 37Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

**Sermon “The Voice of a King” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

What is a kingdom? Every Sunday we pray the words, “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven…” The Lord’s Prayer uses a ‘vocative’ voice, which means to call out, to call forth the kingdom of God, almost like you are calling for someone to come closer to you. When we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we are not only calling for the Kingdom of God to come, by the sheer act of prayer, we are also participating in God’s Kingdom, as one of God’s many loyal subjects. We are participating in the Kingdom of God by praying for it, and anytime that we pray. What is a kingdom? Perhaps the place where God’s voice resounds through the hearts of all of God’s people, which can happen whenever we talk to Jesus.

Pilate is talking to Jesus and trying to find out if Jesus is King of the Jews.

He interrogates Jesus before handing him back over to Herod, and then on to the cross, that awful throne. Pilate seems genuinely curious about Jesus. Jesus’ reputation likely preceded Him and so, as he stood before Pilate, Pilate has the opportunity to ask questions that have been burning in his mind. He wants to know if Jesus is a King. Why does he care? Probably because, if Jesus said that He was a King, then Pilate would have reason to believe Jesus to be a threat to the Roman Empire – for it was the Emperor of that kingdom who held all of the political and military power in the known world.

Pilate was a representative of the Empire, a client of the Emperor, endowed with the work of keeping the Israelites from causing too much trouble. Those pesky Jews were pretty dissatisfied with the Emperor. They were staging protests in front of Pilate’s home, protesting taxes and the blasphemous behavior of the Roman soldiers. Things were politically unstable. We often forget about that fact, as we think of Jesus walking around healing and teaching. Many people were searching for the truth, for they were also feeling out of touch with their own religion. For not only were they alienated by the Romans, they were feeling alienated by many of those leaders of the Temple. The average Jew had trouble keeping up with the requirements of those powerful Jewish sects like the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They didn’t particularly fit in well with more violent and political groups like the Zealots. They were average everyday people who just wanted to know what to believe and how to be faithful. These “average” people even had a nickname: the “am-ha-eretz” or known as “people of the land.” When Jesus came along, He was able to give voice to the problems they were facing, including the problems with their own religion. What is a kingdom? Those who hear their Lord’s voice and follow it.

Pilate wants to know - what kind of king might this Jesus be? Is this man a threat to the present Empire? Well, you heard what Jesus said. “You say that I am [a king]. My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” Jesus is evasive. He makes it clear that he has a kingdom, but that it is not from “here.” But that still doesn’t help Pilate’s inquiry. For if Jesus has a kingdom and he is not presently there, but is “here,” then it begs the question, what is this king doing HERE? Is he here on a diplomatic mission? Is this an invasion? And what sort of invasion is this, to go in without protection from his followers? Pilate didn’t care about faith, but he did care about defending the authority of the Emperor. We are left to wonder at what Jesus wants, and that he is clearly unafraid, and bold enough to declare to Pilate that he is a king and he is definitely NOT of the Empire. He has his own kingdom. Maybe it was a way of telling the Emperor that there is one kingdom that can never be owned by any earthly lord and that kingdom knows no bounds.

In one week, we press the re-set button, and come back around to the beginning of the church year, with the first Sunday in Advent. In Advent, we express hope that the birth of Christ becomes incarnate, dwells among us, in fullness and in truth. We hear the proclamations that the “kingdom of God is already at hand,” and we pray fervently, “Come, Lord Jesus!” Today is the last Sunday in the Church year. We have told the stories of that kingdom all year long. We are called to live our lives as subjects of that kingdom – a kingdom that is not from here, but has already been planted here.

Last week I talked a lot about the gift of friendship and how it can be so simple as planting a seed, like an invitation. God’s kingdom starts so small at first, seems almost unimportant like a random invitation to dinner. But then, as it continues, maybe contact after contact with that person, God’s kingdom becomes bigger and easier to see, as the relationship grows. This time of year, is a great time to witness examples of God’s growing kingdom: I have been invited to four different Thanksgiving dinners. It means that people are thinking of other people, looking to ask someone over who needs a friend. This is just one of the many things that we do well when we listen to our king’s voice and do what is God’s will.

It starts so small, like the mustard seed we heard about in the Call to Worship. Small is not a problem. It means that there is potential for growth. And that seed has been planted within each of us. The seed is the voice of our King. We pray “thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven…” we pray, that God’s kingdom stay within us, and grow out beyond us. Keep letting your Lord work through you. On this Reign of Christ Sunday, the last Sunday of the church year, live fully and generously, knowing that God’s kingdom is already here. What an honor it is, to listen and heed the King’s voice. Amen.

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Amy (Glenna Gray’s daughter) chronic medical issues
Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (paralyzed) – Glenda’s sisters
Bill Assini – fell, broken rib, in a lot of pain

Dorothy Randals’ Family in their loss

Elmer Schuster - leg pain

Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer
Glenda Coles – awaiting shoulder surgery (early December)
Gloria Martinez (Teresa Gallegos’ sister) – healing after leg surgery

Jenna Morris – recovery from knee surgery (not much longer)
Lucy Jasper – Alzheimers/Dementia
Misty Tompkins and her family – stiff person syndrome, seeking experimental program

Victoria Sieglen and family – grief in loss of mother, Pat
People seeking jobs, and people seeking employees
Ruth Johnson – for general health
Sarah Hittson's daughter Marie - surgery
Schools, students, teachers and families
Sharon and Wayne Huffman – general health
Shay – Julie Sursa’s daughter

Susie – still seeking a car, planning for EMS school
Teresa Gallegos-Brake – high risk leg surgery and amputation

Tommy Morris – for health and strength
Travelers
All those suffering from COVID19

**Announcements:**

**October Bible Study:** Rev. Amy is looking at starting up a brief, Fall Bible Study. Try to make time for an evening, weekly study of 1 Corinthians. This wonderful, 16 chapter letter discusses life together as a Christian community and how we can live our lives in light of the grace of Jesus Christ. Stay tuned for more details.

**No October Rummage Sale:** This fall, the Presbyterian Women will not be having our usual Fall Rummage Sale. However, we plan to have a sale and could use your help. We will be selling items through Facebook and eBay. Please let Marjorie McKenzie know if you are able to help us make it a success!