**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**November 7, 2021 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**RH 435 I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord**

**RH 304 O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee**

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

**RH 235 Breathe on Me Breath of God (1 and 2 verses during communion- see below)**

**BH 385 What A Friend We Have in Jesus**

**Call to Worship**

Our world offers many wide avenues
and beautiful boulevards to walk;
**Our God invites us to walk the road**
**of service and sacrifice.**
Our society suggests we put down our roots
in the shallow soil of pleasure and greed.
**Our God seeks to plant us on the banks of hope,**
**watered by the rivers of joy and grace.**
Our culture promotes achievement, success,
climbing to the top, ringing the bell.
**Our God tells us if we want to be first**
**we need to go to the end of the line.**

**Opening Prayer**

**Help us, Lord, to turn toward your way,
to fill our minds with your thoughts,
to fill our hearts with your love,
to fill our footsteps with your will.
Guide us as we seek your vision of success,
though it will mean letting go of our own.
We pray in the name of the One who died so that we may live.
Amen.**

**Call to Confession**

Friends, let us confess the ways that we have failed to live up to God’s bountiful invitation.

**Confession
God, we are prone to think too highly of ourselves. We forget that it is you who are good, you who are the greatest. We forget that you call us to do your will, not the other way around. When we have fallen into arrogance, forgive us. When we have allowed our good intentions to stand in the way of your grace, forgive us. When we have directed attention away from you, forgive us. Empty us of all things that do not give glory to you, so we are ready to be filled with your love.  *~silence~***

We pray in the name of the One who emptied himself in order to live your will.**Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**Hear and live this good news: Love could not be contained in the tomb and will not be constrained by our understanding! Christ is risen, bringing forgiveness and hope to all people. **Alleluia! Amen!**

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 127:1-5**

Unless the LORD builds the house,

those who build it labor in vain.

**Unless the LORD guards the city,**

**the guard keeps watch in vain.**

It is in vain that you rise up early

and go late to rest,

eating the bread of anxious toil;

for he gives sleep to his beloved.

**Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD,**

**the fruit of the womb a reward.**

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior

are the sons of one's youth.

**Happy is the man who has**

**his quiver full of them.**

He shall not be put to shame

when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

**Offering**

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

**Time out for Teaching: Thoughts on Aging – Generation Z**

You might say that in the book of Ruth, there is some “intergenerational ministry” going on. Ruth – Naomi’s daughter-in-law – has chosen to remain with Naomi whom she loves. Last week I described how they became saints to each other. I guess you could call it “intergenerational ministry!”

Ruth loved Naomi. So, when they returned to Naomi’s homeland, Naomi does well by Ruth, by instructing her on how to meet her next husband, Boaz. “Boaz” – which means “strong man” - would become a great comfort to her and her family. And they grew, they added to the lineage of King David.

This is just one example of mentoring the next generation of young people.

I want to share some statistics which I heard from an author, Missy Buchanan. Generation Z is considered the “most stressed out generation” – stress which has increased with the rise of social media like Facebook and Instagram. Unlike older generations who can remember life even without the internet, Generation Z struggles with more mental illness than any other.

“FOMO” is real, which stands for “Fear of Missing Out.” This fear becomes anxiety about losing ground with peers, with our online friends, or a fear of being unfairly compared to others. 80%, Buchanan says, report mental health issues. 62% report feeling “deep depression.” And 10% of them have contemplated suicide. People of Generation Z are those born between 1997 and 2012 (so those who are 25 and younger). Even though they may have hundreds of “friends,” Generation Z reports high levels of loneliness, made worse since COVID.

We think as older adults that we are stressed out and tired. But we have more gray hair, life experience and more wisdom to share than we give ourselves credit for. We are “survivors earmarked with a special assignment.” It falls on us to humbly build bridges to the younger ones, not only because we might save lives and make friends. It is also for the sake of the church. Think for a moment… and let me know sometime if you want to have that conversation with me. What do you have to say – and more importantly do - to build that bridge? Maybe the church could build on your ideas.

**Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17**

1Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you. 2Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3Now wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4When he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." 5She said to her, "All that you tell me I will do."

4:13So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the LORD made her conceive, and she bore a son. 14Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! 15He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him." 16Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. 17The women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

**Gospel Mark 12:38-44**

38As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! 40They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

41He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. 43Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

**Hebrews 9:24-28**

24For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; 26for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, 28so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

**Sermon “The Perfect Gift” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

It was the night before Christmas… we were tucked into bed, visions of sugar plums dancing in our heads…it was probably about 1982. It was an unusual Christmas Eve, all of the grownups in the house stayed up until 4AM. It was the year of the Barbie Dream House. I wasn’t really into dolls much. I was more of the stuffed animal kind of kid. But for some reason I was taken with the Barbie Dream House. My Barbie’s boyfriend was named Gary. Gary was a cheap knock-off of the much more famous “Ken Doll.” We called Gary “Guy Smiley.” And I was convinced that Barbie and Guy Smiley needed a house.

So, that Christmas Eve, my parents, grandparents and my Aunt Jennifer stayed up until 4AM. It took 5 adults several hours to assemble this house, so that on Christmas morning, when my brother and I were up at 6:30AM, I would see the house in all of its glory.

Now, my parents have always been very good providers. They tried not to spoil us with too much wild gift giving. But there are just some years when you get a gift with a major impact. They knew that it would be better to have the whole thing assembled ahead of time, and sitting under the tree, when I came downstairs that morning. It was probably the best childhood Christmas gift I ever received (although there was one other when I was given a microscope, which was also pretty awesome).

What goes into making the perfect gift? The presentation. The involvement of family. Sacrifice. And our delight. The Barbie Dream House was very nearly one of those “perfect gifts.”

The Letter to the Hebrews describes the perfect gif in Jesus Christ: His presentation. The involvement of family, such as Ruth, King David, Mary and Joseph. The sacrifice. And our delight of knowing of forgiveness.

This morning we are being asked to meditate on the perfection of Jesus Christ. The letter explains to a people of Jewish persuasion that Jesus is the absolute, perfect gift for them. Jesus is both priest and sacrifice. No human being on earth could be both of these.

The Hebrews would be curious about this, for their religion evolved through the use of humans as priests, and animals as the sacrifices. They also used grains and other crops as offerings, but the use of animal blood was for the heavy stuff. The Book of Leviticus says that “blood is life.” Blood was used in rituals to cleanse individuals as well as the entire community of their sins. In such rituals, they would sacrifice a lamb, place the blood of that lamb onto a goat, and then send the goat away, running off into the countryside. This signified the removal of their community’s sins. This incidentally is where we get the word “scapegoat.”

Hebrews tells us that these elements of creation - humans, animals, blood and crops – are not imperfect. They simply were provisional, until the true gift of Jesus Christ came along. Jesus does away with our need for any of that other stuff. For he is our all in all, final and perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people. He came to set us free with just one act. The sacrifice. The presentation. To our delight. And for involvement of His family.

Sometimes we forget that the forgiveness that is offered us through the great high priest, is to involve family. For it starts with a very personal gift of grace, a gift that we cannot possibly earn. This is because even if our past is wiped clean, we keep on making new mistakes, calling for more grace to cover us. The cycle of sin is deeply personal, for no one knows our mistakes better than our Lord. And yet, it is not just personal. For our calling includes the need to seek reconciliation with others, others who have also been stuck in this cycle of making mistakes. Logically speaking, if we choose not to forgive, then we aren’t helping to break the cycle of sin and brokenness. If we choose to forgive, then the most perfect gift of grace can be passed on, if they accept it!

Passing on grace can create family. It creates a church. It connects us through a power much greater than any other kind of transaction. Forgiveness forms bonds which can transcend the nuclear family. It is the way that we can call each other “brother” and “sister.” But this takes practice. Every time we are called upon to forgive or ask for forgiveness we are being called to do a difficult thing. But I believe some of the most difficult things in the world are worth doing.

Someone in our church once told me, “I try to forgive so that the Lord forgives me.” I understand that logic. It is a little like what we say when we pray the Lord’s Prayer: “Forgive us our sins AS we forgive those who’ve sinned against us…” It is the life to which we’ve been called. Be a part of the healing and help break the cycle brokenness and sin. The perfect gift has already been given. Now what are you going to do with it? Amen.
**Service of Holy Communion (please turn to RH 235 to sing in response to the Body and Blood of Christ)**

**Invitation**

We gather at this table
not for God’s benefit but for our own.
We recall the story of salvation,
because we are the ones who need to know it again.
Remember, beloved, the goodness of the One
who day by day calls the world into being;
who life by life calls humanity into loving relationship;
who is always and everywhere faithful.
Rejoice, children of God, in the life of Jesus Christ,
who is born into our lives;
who teaches us the way of righteousness;
who walks with us through the gates of suffering and death;
who is our resurrection life.
Gather at this table
to share in these gifts of bread and cup;
to receive the Holy Spirit;
to be made new and united with all God’s people,
the redeemed of every time and place.
At this table and in all our lives,
Jesus is yet with us – even to the end of the age.

**Words of Institution**

**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you.
**And also with you.**Lift up your hearts!
**We lift them up to the Lord!**Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

With thanks and praise, we trust that God knows all our needs.
There is nothing else to say,
so let us join in the prayer Jesus taught:
*The Lord’s Prayer*

**Receiving the Elements**

This is the body of Christ broken for you!

**Thanks be to God! Verse 1 of RH 235**

This is the blood of Christ shed for you!

**Thanks be to God! Verse 2 of RH 235**

**Prayer after Communion**

**\*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 – at Autumn Blessings, for strength and comfort
Elmer Schuster - leg pain

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

Jenna Morris – knee surgery on November 10th
Dr. Jean Corey – seeking employees

Keith Bond – as he travels to visit family
Lissa – Glenda’s granddaughter (high risk pregnancy)
Lucy Jasper – Alzheimers/Dementia
Lynn Hawkins – still seeking a home closer to her doctor

Lynn Hudson – funeral for Jim, helping Misty’s family
Misty Tompkins – stiff person syndrome

Pat Sieglen – health and strength; please pray she can go home
Paul Estrada – getting leg prosthetic, undergoing therapy
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
Tammy Lucero –treatment for cancer

Teresa Gallegos-Brake – that her foot pain lessen

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

**Announcements:**

**Attention, Elders!** There will be a Session Meeting at 9:30AM next Sunday, November 14th before worship. An Agenda and some of our reports will be sent by email early this week.

**Operation Christmas Child** – We have just one more week before the Operation Christmas Child boxes are due at Center Street United Methodist Church. If you deliver them to church on Sunday, November 14th, then we will have a “Blessing of the Boxes” before we turn them in.