**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**April 16, 2017 Easter Sunday**

**11:00 a.m.**

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

**Call to Worship**

The sun had just risen from behind the horizon…

the world was quiet, but for the chirping birds and buzzing insects…

the three women walked slowly to the tomb

only to quickly leave with shocking news they never expected to receive:

JESUS IS RISEN!

**HE IS RISEN, INDEED!**

Let’s share in the mystery and wonder of those words…

let’s allow our hearts to ponder and our minds to reflect…

**let’s celebrate the glory of God, together!**

JESUS IS RISEN!

**HE IS RISEN, INDEED!**

**Opening Prayer**

Because you live, O Christ – our world is more alive

Because you live, O Christ – all your promises are possible

Because you live, O Christ – our hearts can be open to your call

To see your creation as loved by you.

Open up our tombs of despair and darkness,

So that we fearlessly may give our hearts over to you in worship with joy.

You are alive, O Christ. For you are our Life. Alleluia! Amen.

**\*Opening Hymn #204 RH “Jesus Christ is Risen Today!”**

**Call to Confession**

Christ is risen! But we still have to trust the story and know that with God all things are possible. His death and his resurrection shows us just that. And it was done because he loves us so. Trusting in God’s unfailing love, you are invited to pray with me using the prayer of confession found in the bulletin.

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

Christ is risen! His death, his resurrection and appearance to his disciples means the start of new life. Let today be the start of a new life following Him. Do not be afraid to believe that God loves you.

Friends, in the name of the Jesus Christ, you and I are forgiven!
**Thanks be to God! Amen!**

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.**

**Special Music “Because You Live, O Christ” Sometime Singers**

**Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24**

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
**his steadfast love endures forever!**

Let Israel say,
**“His steadfast love endures forever.”**

The LORD is my strength and my might;  he has become my salvation.
There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:
**“The right hand of the LORD does valiantly;
the right hand of the LORD is exalted;
the right hand of the LORD does valiantly.”**

I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the LORD.
**The LORD has punished me severely,
but he did not give me over to death.**

Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the LORD.

**This is the gate of the LORD;
the righteous shall enter through it.**

I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.
**The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.**This is the LORD’s doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
**This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

**Pastoral Prayer**

You are good, O God, for it is your unfailing love which brought about all of life, and we, created in your image. You, O God, love us so that you have allowed us time and again to try things our way, even if our way turns out to be the wrong way. And you love us so much that you continued through centuries to give us lessons to redirect us.

Today is unlike any other day, O God, when you have done the impossible – you shake us up with the unexpected. Even though you gave us prophecies and predictions that you would be persecuted, crucified and raised from the dead, we did not believe it. But you are God and you can do what we cannot do by ourselves.

And you did it, Lord.

Help us now, Lord.

That we lean into the impossible possibilities you lay before us.

That we know there is more than we can see with our own eyes.

That you have shown us that in you there is only life, and death is no more.

That your love is what won the battle, your power over darkness.

Open the tombs of our hearts that we can emerge, unafraid.

Make our spirits the crucible for your Spirit,

So as we live, so others shall see you.

For now our lives are hidden in your life,

As we are clothed by you.

Let those who now know you in suffering

Soon know you in joy.

Let those who are being persecuted, those who are seeking refuge, those who are feeling the violence of the world, those who are feeling betrayal, those who feel desertion,

Let them soon know the healing you offer.

For we know that in you, death is fleeting, Life is forever.

In the name of the Risen Jesus Christ, Alleluia! Amen.

**Offering Marjorie G. McKenzie, Offertory**

**Hymn #203 RH The Strife is O’er the Battle Done**

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Jeremiah 31:1-6**

1At that time, says the LORD, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.
2   Thus says the LORD:
     The people who survived the sword
          found grace in the wilderness;
     when Israel sought for rest,
3        the LORD appeared to him from far away.
     I have loved you with an everlasting love;
          therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.
4   Again I will build you, and you shall be built,
          O virgin Israel!
     Again you shall take your tambourines,
          and go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.
5   Again you shall plant vineyards
          on the mountains of Samaria;
     the planters shall plant,
          and shall enjoy the fruit.
6   For there shall be a day when sentinels will call
          in the hill country of Ephraim:
     “Come, let us go up to Zion,
          to the LORD our God.”

**Second Reading Colossians 3:1-4**

1So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.4When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

**John 20:1-18**

1Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 2So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” 3Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. 4The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. 8Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10Then the disciples returned to their homes.

11But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; 12and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. 13They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” 14When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” 16Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). 17Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.‘” 18Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

**Sermon “Look Up” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

With spring underway, it is a good time to go for a bike ride. But the hills we have around here can be daunting. I have found, that as I approach a hill on my bicycle, I have to decide how to approach it. Will I approach it with my head up or down? Will I approach it with a positive attitude or one that is fearful and uncertain?

I’ve noticed – in whatever way I am getting around – on foot, bike or car – if I lift up my head and eyes, the hill doesn’t look quite as intimidating. In fact, it can appear rather flat. It’s just a psychological trick I play, to fill me with that positive mental attitude. But seems to help.

On the Day of the Resurrection, Mary was going about her morning in the garden with her head and eyes downcast. She must have been. After all, her dear Rabbi was dead. She wept by the tomb, believing his body had been taken. She worried that a proper burial was not an option. Her heart was downcast. Seeing the angels there in the tomb didn’t seem to help matters. They asked, “Woman, why are you weeping?” as if to hint that her weeping was unnecessary. But she doesn’t catch the hint. She is so down she doesn’t even recognize Jesus himself when she turns and sees him and he asks her the same question, “Woman, why are you weeping?” He asks her the same question as the angels and she still doesn’t get it. To be fair, she is in the middle of something that has never happened before, she cannot fathom that that could be Jesus her Lord standing there. She cannot fathom that He is no longer dead! She thinks He is still dead, and, right now, her grief is compounded because His body is missing. She nearly accuses him of moving the body! After everything that she and the disciples had been through, she must have wondered, What now? What’s next?

What’s next? We might ask ourselves. When all is going wrong in our lives, it is hard for us to lift our eyes above it all. It can feel impossible to lift our heads up and see that the hill we’re climbing is really not as hard as it feels. But we are Resurrection People and that means we can look up. For we have an extraordinary announcement: Christ is Risen!

Christ is Risen indeed!

Maybe today you weep for someone no longer here to celebrate Easter with you. Maybe today you grieve that the world isn’t what it used to be. Maybe today you feel pressured with endless demands of your job. Or you know when you leave this place of joy and celebration, you return to a dysfunctional situation at home. But I have news for you, Christ has broken the bonds of death, dispelled the darkness of the tomb and beckons to us all to walk in the light of new life. For Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!

Paul’s letter to the Colossians sums up how we may approach life after Easter: “…If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth,…” He means that if we have truly dedicated our hearts in baptism to following Jesus, then we have a mission: to set our minds on the highest things, where Jesus Christ lives, and all other things shall find their place of importance. We can lift our heads and see new eyes. We can walk with dignity and seek the dignity of others. We can expect to see God’s hand in Creation. And that all good things are because of God’s unfailing love.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ grants hope – a firm and certain hope in God’s forever power to raise the dead. It is not just a self-help lesson in the power of positive thinking. It changes everything, how we see God, see ourselves and see one another. That is of course, if you are willing to look up. Christ is Risen! Alleluia! Amen.

**\*Closing Hymn**

**\*Benediction**