**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, August 13, 2017, 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord,

This is your day!

We have spent this week focused on other things,

Working and playing

Thinking and worrying.

But today is your day.

So focus our hearts and souls and minds

On you.

In this hour, let us be free of the things that hold us back from worshiping you.

And in this hour please renew our spirits

So that with each breath we take, we are closer to you in One Spirit.

In the name of the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Amen.

**Call to Confession**

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

My friends, God hears your prayer – whether you shout from the top of your lungs or whisper softly under your breath. God has already forgiven you, and calls you to live in His grace.

Friends, Believe the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens,
and your faithfulness soars over us like the clouds.
We call on your righteousness, strong as a mountain,
and your justice, deep as the ocean;
for humans and all that lives on the earth,
we call out for mercy.

Your love is immeasurable,
and we lift up all your people who seek to know you.
Gather us under the shadow of your wings
and unite us with each other by your grace.

We pray for those who count themselves excluded from life’s good things,
that they might feast upon the abundance of your house.
We pray for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness or healing,
that you would give them drink from the river of your delights.
We pray for those whose lives are in danger or at an end,
for with you is the well of life.

For the Trujillo and Cepeda and Rivera family in their grief for Felice.

For Sharon to find healing

For those who suffer chronic pain

For those whose eyesight has grown weak

For those who are traveling

For those who grieve

For people suffering mental illness or addiction

For the homeless and the hopeless
For teachers and students and parents preparing for the school year.

In your light let us see light,
and in your loving-kindness let us make you known;
we pray in the name of your Christ, saying together:

*The Lord’s Prayer*

**Time Out for Teaching: History of Tradition**

This morning I want to draw your attention to the Psalm we just read. What was the name of the person the Psalm described?

Joseph.

Which Joseph was this? Joseph, son of Jacob, grandson of Isaac, great grandson of Abraham.

Joseph’s life is the “end of the beginning,” meaning, his life story is what brings the book of Genesis to an end. This Psalm reminds us of a tradition that we shall ponder for the remainder of God’s story. A dreamer, the youngest of his family, hated by his family, sold into slavery in a foreign land, and who becomes like royalty, but also a redeemer to the people who rejected him. There are traditional themes in Joseph’s story which have been passed on through Biblical history.

What traditions does his story remind you of?

Moses?

King David?

Jesus?

Us?

What we are doing is applying a technique of Biblical Interpretation called “History of Tradition.” It helps us find the salient points of a story by looking for traditional themes that repeat themselves. Seeing these patterns can help us discern what aspects of a story to explore. Dreams? Birth order in a family? The role of redeemer? Rejection by one’s own people? Don’t hesitate to ask questions when you approach the Bible. Asking questions like these can greatly enrich our studies and bring to life the meanings that these ancient saints who wrote the stories may have intended.

**Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28**

1Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. 2This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. 3Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. 4But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

12Now his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock near Shechem. 13And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” He answered, “Here I am.” 14So he said to him, “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me.” So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

He came to Shechem, 15and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, “What are you seeking?” 16“I am seeking my brothers,” he said; “tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.” 17The man said, “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. 18They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. 19They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. 20Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.” 21But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” 22Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him” — that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. 23So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; 24and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

25Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. 26Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers agreed. 28When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

**Matthew 14:22-33**

22Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. 25And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. 26But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. 27But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

28Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” 29He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

**Sermon: Dreamers**

 What we have here is some sibling rivalry.

Joseph’s brothers are jealous. He’s the youngest, but he receives special treatment from his dad, Jacob. Jacob has even gone so far as to make a special tunic for Joseph, which sets him apart from the rest of the brothers. It’s a fancy tunic, a “ketunnet passim,” which appears only one other place in the entire Old Testament, and it is worn by royalty. This fancy tunic was worn by the daughter of King David in 2 Samuel 13. But Joseph’s fancy outfit is not only thing that makes his brothers jealous. It’s his dreams. Verses 5-11, which we omitted for the sake of brevity, describe two dreams Joseph had, each dream telling him that one day his family will bow before him. And that little whippersnapper had the nerve to share his dreams with the brothers and dad!

No wonder the brothers are angry. So much that we are told that they attack him, throw him in a pit and then sell him into slavery. They failed to realize that Joseph’s dreams weren’t of his own making. They had little faith that some dreams are actually gifts from God.

Little do the brothers realize that this moment is just the beginning of a much longer story of how God uses people and their dreams. The other stories of Abraham and his descendants come to us in small snippets, piecemeal moments of their lives. But Joseph’s stories are different. They are all connected in one long narrative from this moment when he’s sold into slavery until the day when he is an important man working for the Pharaoh in Egypt. It’s all connected: the alienation from his very own family because of his dreams, and later his acceptance by the most powerful people in Egypt because of his dreams. Then one day, when famine strikes, Joseph gets the chance to grant mercy to the family who hated him.

We can choose our friends, but we can’t choose our family! And we can’t run far from the dreams God has for us.

 God gives us people who will listen to our dreams, even those closest to us will not. I think all people of faith are dreamers. While there will always be people who scoff at our dreams and ideals, a Church is a place where we should be able to share our dreams with each other, compare our dreams, talk about them and see if they are also God’s dreams for us.

It was dreamers who imagined the church might have a Rummage Sale to draw many and raise money to do mission work. It was dreamers who thought up a Men’s breakfast. Dreamers who decided to purchase a digital projector and screen for our movie nights, yoga classes and community health talks. Dreamers who are thinking of ways to pay for a new roof for this church. Dreamers, who cannot see tomorrow clearly, who have enough faith that God gives us good ideas and that dreams can have divine purpose. Dreamers need each other to put their hearts together and work out a way, to make a dream come true, if it’s God’s will. Dreams can be God’s gifts to us when they help us further God’s mission of good news to the world.

In the book of Acts, on the day of Pentecost, Peter stands up and gives a speech to the people who have just witnessed the tongues like flames and the disciples speaking in other languages. Peter interprets the words of the prophet Joel, which read: ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.
Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”

This is why we have church, friends, to dream together. Maybe even encourage one another to get out of the boat as Jesus does for Peter in our gospel reading. Not everything is possible, but in God, anything is possible, when we listen to the dreams God gives to us. So honor one another’s visions and dreams. And listen to your own. They just might be God talking. Amen.