**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, August 27, 2017, 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

**Most loving and gracious God, we give you thanks for your unending faithfulness. We come into your presence with praise and with hope, for you are good, and you call us your own. You created us in your image, and you shepherd us through this life, calling us by name and leading us in your way. Make our hearts open to receive you, bear us up by your Spirit that we are strengthened by you, enlighten our minds to know you more fully. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.**

**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 124 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

God of love, we are thankful to you for never leaving us.

For the healing presence you bring.

For the peace you instill in us when we need it.

For the friends who come to us in times of trouble.

For the fellowship we have in this church.

But we also know that there are many who are suffering today.

People caught in flooding down in Texas. The rain keeps falling. There are displaced families and not to mention homeless people washed away. Please help them. Also protect and assist to those who are there to help others. And please be with those in the line of tornadoes today.

For Kenna to heal up from her arm injury.

For Suella Barnett who fell and hurt her head.

For Don Wellborn, preparing for heart surgery.

For Franklin Jackson who has a leg injury.

We now take a moment in silence to lift up our prayers.

For your people who live in terror, people who live with hunger.

Bring your wisdom to bear on the actions of the most powerful in our country and all the world.

Guide nations with compassion and a desire for peace.

Protect those who stand up in the line of danger to protect us.

Thank you for sending us reminders of your mighty hand at work. For the kindness of strangers, for acts of heroism, for the joy of a sunset and the innocence of a child. Our lives are full of your presence. Open our eyes to see you more clearly and thrill our hearts by your Spirit to live more fully. For it is in you that we live and move and have our being, always. Through the one who came to teach us how to love, we pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven…Amen.”

**Time Out for Teaching: Psalms of Remembrance**

Some of the psalms recount times when God answered the congregation’s prayers. Such reminders call to mind God’s past acts of deliverance and this does what for us?

* They can strengthen our faith that God shall deliver us again

These remember the past. The psalm we just read might be a psalm of remembrance, for it remembers God’s deliverance from a flood, maybe The Flood. Notice that it remembers just how helpless and vulnerable the people felt, using the image of a bird caught in a snare and it declares, “the snare is broken, and we have escaped…”

Other psalms that fit this are: 78, 105, 106, 135, 136.

Can you think of other times in our worship when we call to mind God’s past acts of salvation? Why do you think we do this?

**Exodus 1:8-2:10**

8Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. 10Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” 11Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. 12But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. 13The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites. 14and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

15The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16“When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.” 17But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. 18So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?” 19The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” 20So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. 21And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. 22Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.”

1Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman.2The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. 3When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. 4His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

5The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. 6When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him, “This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,” she said. 7Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” 8Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Yes.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. 9Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed it. 10When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, “because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

**Matthew 16:13-20**

13Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. 18And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

**Sermon: The Field Trip**

When I was in fifth grade, our class took a field trip to Washington, D.C.. After eating our sack lunches by a reflecting pool, we took a guided tour of the Capitol Building. Our guide showed us up and down these grand, white curved granite staircases, pointed out and discussed the enormous, oil paintings depicting great moments in early American history and historic people. She taught us about the legislative branch of our government and the history of the architecture. Finally, she led us into the Senate Chamber, and we sat in the gallery to watch and listen to them at work.

As a kid living in the suburbs of DC, I had pretty regular access to the grandest monuments, museums and memorials. But sitting in that space watching our leaders at work was awesome. To sit in a space where history had been made, where Presidents walked and momentous decisions affecting the course of our nation should strike us with a sense of awe. In spite of how we complain about our politicians, there is something almost sacred about the offices they hold.

It is possible that the disciples felt something similar as they walked with Jesus amongst the religious and political monuments at Caesarea Philippi. Surely they were aware of the greatness being celebrated there: a shrine dedicated to Pan, the god of fertility, a temple to Caesar, believed by the Romans to be God incarnate, and a monument erected to honor of Philip, one of the four sons of Herod the Great. Just as with any good field trip, Jesus uses this place as a teaching opportunity, asking them what do they know about the Son of Man: what others say and what they believe. Amid these human-made monuments to greatness, Jesus probes them about the one who is greater than all.

Notice how carefully He structures his line of questioning. First, “Who do others say that the Son of Man is?” They give the traditional textbook response: “Some say Elijah, others John the Baptist…” Then he asks, “Who do you say I am?” Here he probably puts the emphasis on the word “you” – “Who do YOU say I am?”as the first question asks what “others” say.

He wouldn’t have asked both questions if they weren’t important. The answer to the first one was correct. And it draws a direct line to the second, pointing to Himself as the Son of Man, the Messiah. It draws a direct line, between the one that others have been waiting for, and Him, standing there with them.

All of this conversation is going on against the backdrop of human greatness, human power, human idolatry. Context, they say, is everything. I say the field trip was a success.

Field trips are important to the learning process. We get all the book learning we can get, then we take it to the streets, so to speak. Go on a field trip to really put your knowledge to work. Get the experience with what you have learned by applying it to real life situations and you will end up learning even more because of it. Like internship or a field study, it gives you hands-on experience.

The disciples demonstrate with their experience that they know Jesus two ways: they know Him from what others say and they know him because they have this personal relationship to Him. Both are important.

So what did we learn here? Our knowledge of Jesus relies on both what others say and on our own personal relationship to Him. Do you have a personal relationship to Jesus your Savior? And…our entire lives of faith involve going on a field trip. When we leave this sacred space today, we go out into the field to learn even more. You have a relationship to Jesus, special and personal, to share with others. But also we’re on this trip to learn.

Whether we realize it or not, whenever the church opens the doors to let the world in – for movie nights or worship services… whenever the church goes out into the world to say something about what we believe – like county fair displays or doing works of mercy… we ourselves are on a field trip. Our ears and our hearts and minds remain open, prepared to listen as much as to speak, ready to hear who others say Jesus is, just as much as we are ready to tell of our personal relationship to Him. Our field trips are a two-way street and what an adventure it is. Thanks be to God! Amen.