**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, January15, 2017, 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Call to Worship**

Arise and awaken, children of God!

**For our light has come, and the glory of the Holy One shines out!**

Lift up your eyes! Look around you!

**The people gather together – the people of all nations come together to worship God**

You shall see and shall shine with God’s light

**Let us rejoice and praise God, whose love shines forth into the world.**

**Prayer of the Day**

**Call to Confession**

God’s promises are sure and God’s love is from everlasting to everlasting. But we often have trouble maintaining a constancy of faithfulness to him. In faith and penitence, let us approach the throne of grace first together and then in silence.

**Prayer of Confession**

**Holy and beloved God, though you ask us to love each other, and be bound as your family by that love, we instead work to separate those bonds. Whether leaping to conclusions and snap judgments, or out of fear of those who seem different on the surface, we are not comfortable in welcoming the stranger and seeking justice for the oppressed. Change our perception, helping us to know your presence in everyone we encounter. Change our minds, that instead of imposing our way on the world, we first seek your goodness. And change our hearts, filling them to overflowing with your love.** ~silence~

**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 40:1-11**

I waited patiently for the LORD;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
**He drew me up from the desolate pit,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.**He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
**Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the LORD.**

Happy are those who make
the LORD their trust,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods.
**You have multiplied, O LORD my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you.**

Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be counted.

**Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.**Burnt offering and sin offering
you have not required.
**Then I said, “Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me.**I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart.”

I have told the glad news of deliverance
in the great congregation;

see, I have not restrained my lips,
as you know, O LORD.
**I have not hidden your saving help within my heart,
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;**I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness
from the great congregation.

**Do not, O LORD, withhold**

**your mercy from me;
let your steadfast love and your faithfulness
keep me safe forever.**

**Prayers of the People**

Lord of Life,

You modeled for us a life of righteousness that was marked from the start with your very own baptism. You were without sin when you were washed in the Jordan, but emerged to officially begin your life of ministry, and died on our behalf, bearing the weight of the world.

Thank you for your leading us. Thank you for dying so that we might live to you.

Today we pray for the needs of others and for ourselves.

We thank you for bringing Matt home safely the long distance from Louisiana through bad weather and hardship.

We thank you for the moisture which continues to melt slowly into the earth and pray that you continue to shower your earth – for the sake of farmers, ranchers, our water table and allergy-sufferers.

We pray for many others who are traveling, possibly made late because of the recent snow.

We pray for the needs of the world, torn asunder by political differences, by violent conflict, by fear.

We pray for the Middle East, for North and South Korea, for Russia and China. For our own nation and rising new leadership.

We pray for the situation in Poland.

God remind us of your strong and powerful hand, by which we are held. For it is in you that we live and move and have our being.

Now in silence we lift up our personal prayers to you.

You are the one who brings new life, gives meaning and substance to our lives, lifts our minds to the loftiest of thoughts and ideals. You give us purpose to look beyond ourselves and our own limitations. You alone are God, and in humility and simplicity we pray as your disciples were taught saying, “Our Father, who art in heaven…Amen.”

**Time Out for Teaching: Come and See…And Other Tactics**

Evangelism is John’s major reason for writing down the Gospel. He explains it near the end of the book in John says in Chapter 20: “ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.”

Jesus uses one of many evangelistic tactics in our gospel reading this morning. Someone asks him, and he invites them along, “Come and see…”

There are other places in Scripture we might find suggested ways to evangelize. Such as recognizing where good is already at work in the world, and claiming that it is God’s work. When the disciples come to Jesus and say, “Someone else is casting out demons in your name… should we stop them?” Jesus says, “No” because it is a good work and His name is being associated with that good work. We can do that whenever we partner as a church with other groups who are doing good things, and our collaboration will add the “Jesus stamp” to it.

John the gospel writer has traditionally been called “St. John the Evangelist,” for all throughout the gospel we see ways that Jesus is evangelizing to others. The woman at the well in chapter 4 is another example. Do you remember how that conversation went?

It was a conversation where Jesus allowed her to tell him about her life, by approaching her and getting to know her better. She ends up spreading the word about the Messiah throughout the neighboring town.

John tells us, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” It means before everything else, Jesus was there. Wherever you go, even to the furthest reaches of the universe, Jesus was there too.

**Isaiah 49:1-7**

   1Listen to me, O coastlands,
          pay attention, you peoples from far away!
     The LORD called me before I was born,
          while I was in my mother’s womb he named me.
2   He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
          in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
     he made me a polished arrow,
          in his quiver he hid me away.
3   And he said to me, “You are my servant,
          Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”
4   But I said, “I have labored in vain,
          I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
     yet surely my cause is with the LORD,
          and my reward with my God.”

5   And now the LORD says,
          who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
     to bring Jacob back to him,
          and that Israel might be gathered to him,
     for I am honored in the sight of the LORD,
          and my God has become my strength —
6   he says,
     “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
          to raise up the tribes of Jacob
          and to restore the survivors of Israel;
     I will give you as a light to the nations,
          that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

7   Thus says the LORD,
          the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
     to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
          the slave of rulers,
     “Kings shall see and stand up, princes,
          and they shall prostrate themselves,
     because of the LORD, who is faithful,
          the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

**1 Corinthians 1:1-9**

1Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

2To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

3Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind — 6just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you — 7so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**John 1:29-42**

29The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’ 31I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.” 32And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ 34And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

35The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, 36and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” 37The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” 39He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. 40One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). 42He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).

**Sermon: Jesus Explained**

 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God…John’s Gospel begins with the beginning of Creation, to tell us that Jesus was around from the start.

 Just a little further in to chapter 1 is another beginning. The beginning of Jesus’ ministry. It begins with people who recognize the Word of God made flesh and living, walking among us. And of course, as it was foreordained, John the Baptist, is first to recognize and point him out for others to see. John confesses that all this time he didn’t know Jesus, until that moment of baptism. He says, and I quote: “I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”

 If you remember your Bible stories, you might find John’s confession a bit perplexing. Surely John knew Jesus. Their moms hung out together. Mary and Elizabeth were aware that their babies were to grow up very special. John leapt in his mother’s womb when Mary came to visit. Luke’s gospel tells us that both John and Jesus grew up strong in the Holy Spirit. John must have grown up hearing about his unusual cousin, must have suspected something when Jesus approaches him wishing to be baptized. John even tells him, “Wouldn’t it be more fitting if I be baptized by you?” Perhaps he was too familiar with Jesus to recognize him.

 Sometimes our familiarity with someone can be the thing that keeps us from knowing each other more deeply. Married couples who claim to be stuck in a rut are often advised to do something differently together, work at trying to see each other in a new light. Church members who get used to seeing each other the same time and same place every week may forget to inquire after one another’s well being so our hearts and prayers for one another stay fresh. The same thing goes for our relationship to the Son of God. We can go all our lives with the same image of Him in our minds, live parallel lives, but forget that we are invited in to relate to him more, talk to him, see him as an actual person rather than just an idea. We might forget the depth of his wisdom, the depth of his love, the greatness of His power. Perhaps it’s time for us all to have a reintroduction to Jesus.

 John does this for his readers and for you. He reminds us that Jesus the Christ is a multi-faceted personality. The Baptist John calls forth Jesus’ identity as “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” He says this twice. And it is a dangerous thing to say – suggesting that this man Jesus is both the sacrificial lamb to replace all the sacrificial system of the Temple. And Jesus is also the priest, to replace all who stand between us and God. If the wrong sort of people hear such claims, Jesus could be in danger! We also learn of the other facets of his character. He is a teacher. Teachers discipline us, correct us, open our minds and hearts, help us to think higher thoughts, dream of a great future. Teachers can be prophetic, reminding us of what’s truly important in life. And finally, Jesus is God’s Chosen King of all Kings. He is the Messiah, which in Greek is “Chrestos” or “Anointed One.” He is our primary authority, above all earthly leaders.

 Jesus is all of that. And He came into this world to bring all of that to us.

 John Calvin refers to Jesus as Priest, Prophet and King. Jesus isn’t just one of those but all of them. If you find that ringing in the new year was rather hollow. Maybe 2016 ended in sorrow. Or life has just a bit boring, let Jesus make things interesting again. He is here to do more than to just offer forgiveness. He is here to teach, to challenge you. He is here to lead you. Go forth and refresh your relationship to the Divine Lamb of God. Amen.

**Announcements:**

The Congregational Meeting will take place on Sunday, February 5thafter worship. An Agenda and an Annual Report are forthcoming.