**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**June 25, 2017 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**11:00 a.m.**

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

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

**Opening Prayer**

Hear our prayers today O God.

You are the bridge for every canyon,

The healer of the breach

You are the one who comes to us in our every need.

Let our worship proclaim you and your power in our lives

For every person who needs to hear this truth today.

In the name of Jesus the Savior our Lord,

Amen.

**Call to Confession**

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

Through the love of God in Christ Jesus, we 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.**

**Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

God of the sparrow,

Your grace is sufficient for us when we call to you out of our own imperfections. We pray for your signs of favor in a world full of hurting.

Let us show your grace in our lives, that your Spirit may be witnessed by all who need hope.

Forgive us when we forget to show your love and care for others. Help us to open our eyes to the concerns you have for the least of these in this world.

Empower us to do your will and walk your walk.

We lift up to you for your care the prayers in our bulletin. We pray for you tenderness to be felt towards every one who needs healing, protection, comfort.

Move our imaginations to see how we can be agents of your Holy Spirit.

Help us to befriend the friendless, empower the powerless, give voice to the voiceless, lead the leaderless. These things we ask in the holy name of Jesus Christ, who gave us the voice to pray to you, “Our Father…Amen.”

**Offering**

**Time out for Teaching: Broken Heroes**

True or false? Our Bible heroes are perfect.

If you said false, you are mostly correct. Adam and Eve, Abraham, Jacob, Noah, Kings David and Solomon, Esther and of course the Jesus’ disciples, Paul the Apostle. None of these people led perfect lives.

You know about Adam and Eve. This morning, Abraham does something that seems less than stellar, sending away a woman and her child into the wilderness. Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, was a sneaky thief but seemed to get away with things. Moses killed a man. Noah might have had a drinking problem. King David’s story sounded like a page out of Peyton Place. Solomon – wise as he may have been – was a politician.

Our New Testament heroes were also troubled. They just seemed rather dense when they were following Jesus. Peter and Paul may have had a divisive squabble over Gentiles. Paul was the one who held the cloaks of those who killed Stephen.

Why do you think God uses these goof offs to bear witness to the gospel? Why didn’t God use people who were closer to perfect? Maybe reading Paul’s 2nd letter to the Corinthians we might have an answer: “My grace is sufficient for you, for power[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2012#fen-NRSV-29016c)] is made perfect in weakness.”

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Genesis 21:8-21**

8The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.9But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac.10So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac."11The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son.12But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you.13As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring."14So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

15When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes.16Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, "Do not let me look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept.17And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.18Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him."19Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

20God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow.21He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

**Second Reading Romans 6:1b-11**

1bShould we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?2By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?3Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?4Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.6We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.7For whoever has died is freed from sin.8But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.9We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.10The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.11So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**Gospel Matthew 10:24-39**

24"A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master;25it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

26"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known.27What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.28Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.29Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.30And even the hairs of your head are all counted.31So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

32"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven;33but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

34"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.35For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;36and one's foes will be members of one's own household.37Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;38and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.39Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

**Sermon “Unbroken” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

This past week, the new superhero film, “Wonder Woman” made history. It now is the highest-grossing live action film ever directed by a woman. In other words, it has made more money at the box office than any other female-directed film, surpassing “Mamma Mia!”

The movie tells us the beginnings of the Amazonian woman who grew up with only women, and who has special powers to fight bad guys, and some cool devices, like the lasso that forces people to tell the truth, wrist cuffs that generate the power to deflect bullets and cause a shock wave to throw you a half a mile away. She can jump high in the air and give you a lick across the chin you will never forget. But she has an Achilles heel – she is innocent of the evil people can do, and she has the memory of watching the deaths of those closest to her.

We love our superheroes. Most of us do. And it’s not just because of the exciting action, seeing the bad guys get slammed, nor the slinky outfits. Part of a good superhero story is they also have a tragic side. Superman has Kryptonite. Bruce Wayne (Batman) was traumatized as a child by watching his parents murdered. Peter Parker – Spiderman too his favorite Uncle Ben was killed. These superheroes are heroes not just because they’re awesome, but because they’re forced to live with something painful. And, just like other human beings, they don’t have full control over the consequences of their actions.

Abraham was something of a superhero. What made him special was that God spoke to him and followed him all his life. But his weakness was he had grown old without a child. This was his kryptonite. A deep sadness. To resolve this, he had Ishmael, with his slave woman Hagar. But then, finally his wife Sarah bears a child Isaac. Now our hero is in a pickle. Stuck between two women and only one son would be allowed to inherit. Our hero seems less than heroic in this story. He is swayed by Sarah’s wishes to send away Hagar and Ishmael. I’m glad this wasn’t our lectionary text for last week on Fathers’ Day!

It seems that the very social system that was meant to provide a family with a son has now backfired. And the system was broken to begin with, for it allowed slavery of women and children.

The story shows sympathy for Hagar and Ishmael, as we follow them into the wilderness. She is afraid her child will die and she can’t bear to watch. If anyone is a hero in this story, God is.

We are also less than heroic at times. Most of the time we are caught up in modern-day systems of oppression, sometimes we fail to do our neighbors the justice they deserve, an inextricable web of brokenness seems to follow us around. While we might try to resist the sin and evil that confronts us, there is so much more that is out of our control. We are aggrieved by this fact – and we shouldn’t take it too lightly. God doesn’t. Our hearts are allowed to break for those things that God cares about.

During these lazy days of summer we get a chance to step out of our typical routines and see differently. To look around at the kids who are out of school. To take a break and look at what we’re doing in church, since we’re not in our usual “routine.” To find time to let our guard down and relax. We are free to ask questionst. Maybe now is the time for you to consider what new way the Church could respond to the brokenness we see around us. Maybe now is the time to break old habits that keep us imprisoned so new and better ones can form. Even though it may sound like a scary wilderness, God is still with us and ready to lead us in new directions, if we will follow.

This may be the best news we can find in this Genesis reading. Abraham is distressed that Sarah wants to send away Ishmael and his mom. God tells him to go ahead because God has big plans for them. Hagar and Ishmael are sent away to the scary wilderness with just a bit of water and food. God does not leave them empty handed or completely broken. Rather, He shows them a sign of a spring of water. And now with their physical needs met, they can now live as freed people, no longer slaves to anyone. God provides them a way to prosper.

Just when we might think that our faith has been completely broken, there is new life to be had, if we keep following God. Jesus makes this a part of his speech to the disciples in our gospel reading. “Those who lose their life for my sake shall find it.” His words rang true for the early church as they suffered through trials and persecution. He assures them that God has everything well in hand, even if from their point of view things looked bleak, even if right now they were feeling utterly broken. The saints of old are our superheroes. Their perseverance can be our super strength, our witness to the faith. We might not get a movie made about us. Nor might our names show up in books. But God remembers us, and so shall those who know us. Thanks be to God! Amen.

**\*Closing Hymn**

**\*Benediction**

**Announcements:**

**Prayer Requests:**