**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**May 30, 2021 Trinity Sunday**

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

RH 525 Come, Ye Thankful People Come

RH 433 Christ is Made the Sure Foundation

RH 399 Love Divine, All Love’s Excelling

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

**Opening Prayer**

**Spirit of life, you long for the world’s transformation. Your vision is grander than anything we can imagine, and so we thank you for the privilege of participating in your mission. May these gifts be a blessing that speaks the language of this community, and may that blessing multiply out to every place. Breathe in us again this day, that our whole lives may be an offering for your glory. Amen.**

**Call to Confession**

Friends, we are made in the image of God, but that does not make us God. Though we often prefer to pretend we are perfect, when we ignore our sin we deceive only ourselves and there is no room for God’s truth to dwell in us. When we confess our sin, we experience the grace and mercy of God in the here and now. Before God, with the people of God, let us confess to our faults and our failings. Let us pray.

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

In the beginning, God planted goodness deep within creation—and through the grace of God, poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we are able to live as the Body of Christ, showing that goodness to the world. Friends, live and believe this good news:

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!**

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 29:1-11 (Please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People (responsive)**

Holy One, in your love and mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Holy One, Spark of Life,
creation was envisioned by you and is sustained by you;
in gratitude we pray for the world:
that its riches and resources be used responsibly and fairly;
that its rulers and leaders may govern with justice, compassion and humility;
that humankind may live with understanding and respect,
noticing what unites us;
In your love and mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Holy One, Prophet of Love,
you lived among us to teach us – to show us – how to love;
in humility we pray for siblings around the globe:
for those dehumanized by their struggle for existence, may we listen;
for those overshadowed by the constancy of death, may we notice;
for those besieged by fear, anger and relentless peril, may we show up;
for those ensnared by systems beyond their control, may we demand change.
In your love and mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy One, Breath of Being,
you are here – in this very moment – as constant presence and insistent voice;
in gratitude we pray…with boldness we pray:
inundate the world with humanity,
overwhelm the world with truth,
flood the world with kindness,
upset our indifference,
accelerate our action,
fortify our resolve,
compel us to authentic discipleship
that nurtures creation, embodies love and breathes life.
In your love and mercy, **hear our prayer.**

**Offering**

**Time out for Teaching: 7 Marks of a Vital Congregation (Part IV)**

(see handout)

**Prayer for Illumination**

Let the fire of your Spirit shed light on your word, O God. As we open these pages, may we find a breath of fresh air, a word for our hearts, a light for our path. **Amen.**

**Gospel John 3:1-17**

1Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” 3Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” 4Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” 5Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ 8The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” 9Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” 10Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

11“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. 12If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

16“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

**Romans 8:12-17**

12So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ — if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

**Sermon “Just Keep Dancing” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

We are debtors, Paul says. If we live according to the flesh, then we are debtors to God. But if we focus ourselves on being led by the Spirit, then we become God’s children. Paul talks about the differences between living according to the flesh and letting the Spirit of God lead us. When we are baptized, we say yes to God’s parenting. We agree to allow God to lead us, and we are called then to shed our ways of living which are not acceptable to our God. Our debts are wiped clean, by saying yes to God. This should give us cause to dance for joy.

God does after all invite us to this dance of faith, if we let Him lead. We are often the dance partners who try to take over the leading. It is hard to let God be leader. But belonging to God means we place ourselves in God’s care, and we enter a training program to learn how to do this dance. A life in Christ leads us on a lifelong dance of learning, growing, making mistakes and then learning and growing some more. To be continually reminded of what God wants from us, not as in a spirit of slavery, which causes us to freeze with fear. God asks us to this dance with a spirit of adoption.

I don’t believe that our God wishes to scare us into following Him, for that dance would not be in earnest. Here, Paul the apostle is saying that God does not want to manipulate us into following Him out of fear. That’s what others do to us, and that the way this world works. God chooses to invite us, claims us with love with a spirit of adoption. It takes a community to shape our beliefs, it takes time too. As that saying goes, “It takes a village to raise a child.” For us, it takes a Trinitarian God to shape us into God’s people, so that we are interconnected, humble and courageous. Ready to adjust to this changing world, led by the living God.

In a documentary called “The Amish and the Reformation,” narrated by a former member of the Amish, Joseph Graber recounts the history of his people, the Old Order Amish, emerged from the Reformation Era about 500 years ago. They are products of the Reformation, specifically the Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli. Before they were called the Amish, they were called “Anabaptists.” They Anabaptists broke away from the Roman Church because they believed that 1- they should be allowed to read the Bible in German instead of Latin and 2 – they believed that infants should not be baptized. They believed people cannot choose to be baptized until they are adults. We Presbyterians, on the other hand, have some ways to justify infant baptism. But the Anabaptists fell out of the Reformation because they were being persecuted by other Protestants. And so they formed a very closed society of Christians who used only the German Bible for all of their worship and all of their sermons and hymns were in German. Led by Joseph Amman, where we get the name “Amish,” they became inwardly focused. Even today, the Old Order Amish who live in America shun the use of the English Bible. Still today, all of their worship is in German, even their hymns and sermons.

500 years since, former members of the Amish now criticize them. For you could get in trouble with the leadership if you want to use an English Bible to study or worship. They were an educated society of believers who stood up against the Church and were persecuted, because they believed they should read Scripture in their own language. But now they dictate to their own that they cannot use English Bibles. Many of them don’t know nor speak German, so they don’t understand a lot of the sermons, nor what the Bible actually says to them. There are people in their communities who want to understand the Bible better, and secretly read it in English. Former Amish say that the Amish have failed to be missionaries in the world because they are so closed off from the world. They say that the Old Order of Amish are focused so much on their own works, that they’ve lost sight of salvation by faith and grace. The way they have put it, it has gone from being a lively religious sect who boldly chose their own way of life to one that seems more like they rely on a spirit of fear.

Growing up in Virginia, and traveling along the East Coast, you see Amish from time to time. I used to get a kick out of their buggies with the big orange triangular safety sign on the back. I don’t have a lot of personal reasons to judge their faith. But, I see a group of people who have placed so much emphasis on one aspect of their faith that other areas are much weaker, anemic even. A closed society of Christians seems to fly in the face of what we are about – missionaries to the world. But it is difficult to be flexible with differences between one another if we are so used to doing something the same way for 500 years. The Trinity, exemplified often by symbols that are interconnected, can teach us something about the dance of God. The relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One God, Three Persons, tells us about balance, about humility, about love. It calls for us to join the dance of God. And in our baptism, we promised to put our entire lives – body and soul – into God’s loving arms. We are not in the lead. He is! Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer – Perfection! Even when we step on His toes.

Maybe take a lesson from the Amish, that we may start out feeling we’re doing right by God, we have to remain open to God’s leading. We cannot stop God’s kingdom in its tracks. Belonging to God calls for us to make adjustments along the way. The life of the Trinity could be a little bit like having a lively dance partner who might dip you, spin you, and also hold you and guide you. It is anything but stale. It can keep us light on our feet, while we seek ways to stay close to the one who claimed you in the waters of your baptism.

As a small church with a big sense of responsibility to God’s world, we find ourselves dancing with each other, trying to reflect in our own lives the interwoven relationship of the Persons of the Trinity. We have different points of view, different opinions, different areas of expertise, different ways of communicating, different gifts from the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we step on each others’ toes when we to serve God together. But what unites us is that we love God and God loves us. God’s hand is stretched out to each one of us, beckoning us to join in the dance. Let’s discover that the life of Christ is not stale at all. In fact, sharing this life with you is just the opposite. I’m not much of a dancer myself. I can be a little stiff and stuck in my ways. But, let’s dance anyways and learn to move with God’s lead. Amen.

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (paralyzed) – Glenda’s sisters

Don White - stent

Dorothy Randals – at Autumn Blessings, for strength and comfort

Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer, prayers for her husband, Larry too

First Responders

Dr. Jean Corey, losing to employees, looking for new hires

Julie Sursa – pain with walking

Lissa – Glenda’s granddaughter (3 months pregnant, health concerns)

Lucy Jasper – Alzheimers/Dementia

Lynn Hawkins – looking for a new home in town

Marty Garcia – severe pain, awaiting doctor’s report

Rain - thanksgiving and please send more :)

Ruth Johnson – for general health, preparing to move to Wisconsin

Sharon and Wayne Huffman – general health, Wayne preparing for surgery

Shay – Julie Sursa’s daughter

Susie Martinez – may need eye surgery, foot pain, planning for EMS school

Teresa Gallegos-Brake - healing from leg surgery, about to get stitches out

Travelers

All those suffering from COVID19, for the recent spike in local cases

**Announcements:**

**2:00PM Creative Crafters are called!** Working on a project? Need some motivation? Let’s get together this afternoon and show each other what our projects are. Bring your art supplies, knitting, sewing, and show off what you’re making 😊