**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, August 12, 2018, 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord, we come to you today.

We come from different homes, different families and you draw us here as your family.

We praise you for including us as your kin.

Help us to remember today who we are to you,

And in your faithfulness towards us,

Let us live into your image, and live for you as the people you made us to be!

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit,

Three in one. Amen.

**Call to Confession**

As people created in the image of God, we don’t always live up to our potential. In fact, sometimes we come to our senses and realize we are living a lie. God always knows the truth, and calls for us all to open our hearts and speak the truth again about our errors. Let us come together in prayer and confess our shortcomings first together and then in silence. Let us pray.

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

Let yourself live and believe this good news:  
**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 130:1-8 (please see bulletin)**

**Time out for Teaching: Counting Verbs (2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33)**

5The king ordered Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders concerning Absalom.

6So the army went out into the field against Israel; and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. 7The men of Israel were defeated there by the servants of David, and the slaughter there was great on that day, twenty thousand men. 8The battle spread over the face of all the country; and the forest claimed more victims that day than the sword.

9Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. His head caught fast in the oak, and he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on.

15And ten young men, Joab's armor-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him, and killed him.

31Then the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, "Good tidings for my lord the king! For the LORD has vindicated you this day, delivering you from the power of all who rose up against you." 32The king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" The Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up to do you harm, be like that young man."

33The king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

**Prayers of the People**

O Lord, you are our shepherd;

we shall not be in want.

Your creative grace is visible in lush green pastures

and revealed in still, clear waters.

Your restoring resurrecting Spirit revives our souls and our communities,

and you guide us in ways of righteousness for the sake of your earth.

We pray for the earth you create and love:

for people, families, nations, and species that dwell in the valley of the shadow of death;

for all who fear the evils of pollution, violence, depredation, and illness;

for those whose suffering is on our hearts this morning, and for those whom we will never meet.

Shepherding God, be with your people;

with your rod and your staff, restore us and lead us.

Spread your table of abundance before those who hunger and thirst;

set us free from enmity and division.

Anoint us with your calling to reconciliation,

and let the cup of our life overflow

with justice and life for all your creation.

Let your goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our life,

and make this earth your home forever,

in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Gospel John 6:35, 41-51**

35Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

41Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" 43Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. 44No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. 45It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. 46Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. 47Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.48I am the bread of life. 49Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

**Ephesians 4:25-5:2**

25So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. 26Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27and do not make room for the devil. 28Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. 29Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. 31Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, 32and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

1Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, 2and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

**Sermon: To Tell the Truth**

Let us be imitators of God. And to be imitators of God, according to the letter to the Ephesians, we are to be truth-tellers.

I’ve heard it said that living in a state of sin is “living a lie” or not living up to our potential as God’s creatures.

Perhaps you remember last week’s reading from 2 Samuel, when King David covets another man’s wife, Bathsheba, and manipulates the situation by having her husband killed in order to have her. It began while David was living a lie, lazing about on his palace roof, instead of going into battle like the other kings. He was anointed king because of his many military victories, but as you remember, his downward spiral began as he no longer living up to his calling as Israel’s Commander in Chief. He slipped into that unfortunate position which happens to every one of us from time to time - not living up to his potential – not living up to who God had chosen him to be. And it hurt those who he loved most.

Ephesians certainly is speaking of people such as King David, and to us too, about whenever we deceive ourselves and others, when in fact we are living a lie. When we are telling what we think is the truth but we really aren’t. Nowadays it seems easier than ever to hide the truth or hide from it. The truth is actually hard to come by these days. A common joke is, “If I saw it on the internet, it must be true,” right? We can hide our real selves behind the lines we type on Facebook, and we don’t always know whether those we see online are being their true selves either. We take a selfie with our phones and we choose the very best possible angles and light. (honestly, I have quite a lot of selfies on my phone and I choose the best one to share!) We listen or watch our choice of news that we believe tell the truth we want most to hear – which one is your preference? NPR? FOX? MSNBC? BBC America? Each of them differently slanted, and which one is most truthful? Our role models and public figures so easily topple over with the next expose from hiring undocumented workers to the next accusation of misconduct. There are whistle blowers, truth tellers and alternate facts. We once held the media in high regard, entrusted with telling the truth, and just as we have lost faith in our public leaders, we have also lost our faith in the reporters of the news.

The truth is hard to come by these days.

In the words of Pontius Pilate, when he interrogated Jesus before turning Jesus over to the authorities, “What is truth?” Discerning the truth in the midst of all those claiming to know the truth is part of our job as Christians. And for us to tell the truth to each other not only shows respect and love for our fellows, it illustrates for the world the image of God alive in each one of us. The world of the Ephesians was also a world where the truth was also hard to come by. Their churches in that region – that is in eastern Turkey – were experiencing a type of persecution from their neighbors who really didn’t really know the truth about what Christians did and believed. People spread lies and rumors about those Christians. Ephesians is speaking to a church that is trying to resist the persecution. And we are told here, that the remedy is to put away falsehood, and speak the truth to each other. Even when we must admit that we don’t have all the answers. The great American poet, Emily Dickinson once said, “Tell all the truth but tell it slant.” Our slant on the truth is God’s faithfulness to us, God’s promise in Christ that there can be a better world where we reflect that kind of faithfulness to one another.

To tell the truth, Ephesians says, is to imitate God, to tell the truth in the way that builds up our relationships, that unites rather than divides. It can be our gift to each other and to this world which shall always be struggling and fighting over the truth. Friends, I invite you to tell the truth in love, tell each other what you need for us to be a fellowship of truthful people. Tell the truth, even if it might be scary to start, and let the truth in love be our starting point always for a world that needs to know who God is. Amen.

**Announcements:**

**This week is the County Fair!**  Let’s meet at the Fellowship Hall around 4:30PM this Tuesday, to gather items together for our church booth. If you cannot meet us there, come on out between 5:15 and 7:00PM to help hold stuff up, tack stuff down, etc. We also need helpers at 9:00PM Saturday evening to take down the items. At least 4 people are needed for each time. Thank you 😊

**Potluck Sunday is Coming!** In one week, make sure to bring a dish to share when we move our worship from the sanctuary to the Fellowship Hall to break bread together. It’s the perfect time to invite a friend (or a stranger!) to church to learn more about our congregation.