**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**December 19, 2021 Fourth Sunday in Advent**

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

**RH 399 Love Divine, All Love’s Excelling**

**RH 36 In the Bleak Midwinter**

**BH 322 Spirit of the Living God (Prayer for Illumination)**

**RH 147 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

**Lighting the Candle of Love**

Today we light the candle of love, along with the candle of hope, the candle of peace, and the candle of joy. On this last Sunday in Advent, we invite the fruit of love to enter our hearts. Love has looked different this year. It has been in the manufactured silence of shared screens. It has been in the wearing of masks for our neighbors. It has been in the abrupt adaptability of our daily lives.

This candle reminds us that love has no bounds in the midst of a time of strict boundaries. The active, intentional lighting of the candle of love allows us to acknowledge how love has changed us this year. How love has comforted us this year. How love has invited us into a warm candle-lit Advent Wreath through our screens as we prepare for Christmas.

**Prayer:** Holy God, we thank you for this gift of love that is found in Christ Jesus. Remind us of this love in our lives as we prepare our hearts for Christmas. Amen.

**Call to Worship**

Ours is a God of Wonder,

**Who has promised always to be with us.**

Ours is a God of Boundless Gifts,

**To whom we give thanks.**

Ours is a God of Love,

**Who has provided us community to practice peace and reconciliation.**

Ours is a God of Wisdom and Understanding.

**Who is continually here through the Word and Spirit.**

Ours is a God of Patience and God of Surprises,
**Who seeks to fill us with grace and joy.**

**Let’s worship our God!**

**Opening Prayer**

God of our Greatest Joy,
may the joy we find in you leap within us this day.
Give us the imagination to sing your praises
in all that we do and in all that we are,
for you have done great things for us.
Our souls magnify you and our spirits rejoice in you!  **Amen**.

**Call to Confession**

We are a sinful people in need of restoration,
but sometimes we are too stubborn or ignorant to even realize it.
We are capable of such evil as well as such goodness.
Let us confess our sins that we might be washed of evil
and welcome the goodness that God’s intends for us.

**Confession**Give ear, merciful God, to our confession.
**Restore us, O God!**
Forgive us for the things we have done.
**Restore us, O God!**
Forgive us for the things we have left undone.
**Restore us, O God!**
For the people we’ve hurt, and the relationships we’ve broken.
**Restore us, O God!**
For the societal illnesses we ignore, and the injustices we dismiss.
**Restore us, O God!**
Forgive us, for we are sorry and recognize our need of your grace.
**Make your face to shine upon us that we might be saved!
Make your face to shine upon us that we might be saved!***~silence~* **Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**God has given ear to our confession
and God’s face has shined upon us!
In the name of Jesus Christ, you and I are saved:
saved from our sins,
saved to our faithful savior,
whose steadfast love is gifted to the world!

Friends, Believe the good news of the Gospel.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

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 80:1-7**

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,

you who lead Joseph like a flock!

**You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth**

**before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.**

Stir up your might,

and come to save us!

**Restore us, O God;**

**let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

O LORD God of hosts,

how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

**You have fed them with the bread of tears,**

**and given them tears to drink in full measure.**

You make us the scorn of our neighbors;

our enemies laugh among themselves.

**Restore us, O God of hosts;**

**let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

**Prayers of the People**

God of Wonder,
We come before you in anticipation of what is to come;
We are excited
We are fearful
We are relieved
We are uncertain
In all these emotions, you are here with us.

God of No Limits,
We give you thanks for the boundless gifts you have given us:
This universe which you have created with its infinite mystery;
This earth that sustains us with its resources and beauty;
This created life, with all its relationships, of which we are a part;
For all these acts of love, we give you thanks.

God of Love,
We give you thanks for your Church
The community of those who came before, are here now, and are yet to come.
Help us to work together in the building of your kingdom here on earth
That we might live in justice, peace and harmony with all.

God of Many Blessings,
We call to mind all the ways in which you have blessed us individually,
With family and friends that fill us with belonging,
with studies and ministries that challenge and excite us
with good health and happiness.
In silence, O God, we give you are thanks for other blessings that you have laid before us….

God of Wisdom and Understanding,
As we give thanks we also hear the words of Scripture, urging us to bring all the concerns of our hearts to you.
And so we come with prayers of petition and intercession:
For a time when all this world might know peace
When hunger and oppression might end
When those who suffer might know freedom from pain
In our individual lives, O God, we name and offer the sighs of our hearts.
Hear them now as we call out these prayers to you……….

God of Patience and God of Surprises,
Teach us, in this time of waiting, to be open to let go of all those things
That hide your presence from us.
Catch us by surprise, catch us with wonder,
Fill us with the gift of your grace and your love
In this time of Advent and all the days to come.

In the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, your wonderful gift to us,
we pray the words he taught us to say: Our Father…

**Offering**

**Prayer for Illumination BH 322 Spirit of the Living God**

**Time out for Teaching: “Jesus Loves Us”**

I can think of 2 people whose birthdays are about to come up… Who are they?

DJ and Jesus. Who is DJ? YOU!

 But who is Jesus? Well, Jesus is God’s very own son.

Why do you think that God would have a son to be born?

 So that we would know God personally. God sent us Jesus so we would understand that God loves us SO MUCH that He gave us His only Son. Can you remember those words? “God loves us SO MUCH that He gave us His only Son.” Let’s all say it together, even all of you grown ups…”God loves us SO MUCH that He gave us His only Son.”

 Who do you know personally?

 How does it feel to know someone like that personally?

 How much do they love you? So, if they love you so much, God can love you THAT MUCH And EVEN MORE! Can you imagine that?

Let’s sing a song (e above middle c) “Jesus Loves Me”

### Micah 5:2-5a

2But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,

who are one of the little clans of Judah,

from you shall come forth for me

one who is to rule in Israel,

whose origin is from of old,

from ancient days.

3Therefore he shall give them up until the time

when she who is in labor has brought forth;

then the rest of his kindred shall return

to the people of Israel.

4And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,

in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great

to the ends of the earth;

5a and he shall be the one of peace.

**Gospel Luke 1:39-45 46-55**

39In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, 40where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? 44For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. 45And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

**All: And Mary said,
One:** my soul magnifies the Lord,
**Two:** and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
**Three:** for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
**One:** Surely, from now on, all generations will call me
**Two:** blessed (reverently),
**Three:** blessed (surprised),
**One:** blessed (excited),
**Two:** for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
**Three:** and holy is God’s name.
**One:** God’s mercy is for those who fear God
**Two:** from generation to generation.
**Three:** God has shown strength with God’s arm;
**One:** God has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
**Two:** God has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
**Three:** and lifted up the lowly;
**One:** God has filled the hungry with good things,
**Two:** and sent the rich away empty.
**Three:** God has helped God’s servant Israel,
**One:** in remembrance of God’s mercy,
**Two:** according to the promise God made to our ancestors,
**Three:** to Abraham and his descendants
**One:** forever,
**Two:** forever (more intense),
**Three:** forever (even more intense).

**Sermon “And Mary Said” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

 And Mary said, that mercy is what God is all about. Mercy and justice, forever, and ever amen. God has finally come to her in the form of a tiny baby in her womb, and the promise of mercy and justice to God’s people. Young Hugo was in search of mercy and justice. He was an orphan who lived in a clock tower in a Parisian train station in the 1920s. The movie “Hugo” is on Netflix this month, since it seems orphans are popular topics during Christmastime. After his father was killed in a fire, his Uncle Claude – an alcoholic - took him into his care. Uncle Claude was the keeper of the clock. Living there above the busy train station, Hugo learned all about mechanical stuff. But when Uncle Claude died, Hugo stayed in the clock, secretly maintaining it. No one knew his uncle was dead. No one questioned, for the clock kept on running.

 But Hugo had another secret. He was the keeper of a mechanical man - an “automaton” - which once belonged to his father. Hugo’s man was made of springs and gears to make it move. This man looked like a full-grown adult, yet was small enough that Hugo could carry it on his back wrapped in a blanket. Even though it was missing a few parts, he believed that with enough tinkering, one day it could work. He kept detailed information on his project in a little notebook. The metal man held an ink pen in its mechanical hand. On its back, was a heart-shaped keyhole. He believed that if he could get this man to work, it might have a message for him from his dad. He needed that key.

 Hugo seems like a tortured 12-year-old genius living a lonely life, driven by the need to discover what secrets this mechanical man held in that metal hand. He stole parts from the toy shop owner, who caught him and angrily tore up and burned the little notebook. Hugo was devastated and determined to rebel even more. Then one day he meets another orphan – who turns out to be the goddaughter of the toy shop owner. And around her neck she wears a necklace and on that necklace is a heart-shaped key. She is game for a big adventure, and they find – obviously – that the key works.

 *(To find out what the mechanical man draws with his pen, you are going to have to watch the film.)*

 The movie “Hugo” is one of my dad’s favorite films. It becomes a lesson in the history of early filmmaking, and a beautiful adventure story about two orphans who make an amazing discovery about the toy shop owner and his wife. But the symbolism of the heart-shaped hole was not lost on me. These two orphans found a way with the heart key to draw a family closer together and Hugo is no longer an orphan.

 We are all born with a heart-shaped keyhole. And there is only one who fits it perfectly. Mary said the Lord, in Jesus Christ, has opened the door to salvation, as she bursts into song at the prospect of becoming the mother of God, bearer of our Savior. She celebrates the fact and if she had any ounce of fear at the future, you don’t see that here. Her heart is full. Her joy complete. She has learned that the Lord’s love for all the world is finally coming to fruition and it’s happening inside of HER! And not only does she magnify the Lord with her song, she magnifies the Lord, literally, as she carries such a precious and sacred gift to the world. I am sure that like any mother, Mary was aware and careful of that growing gift inside, and felt protect Jesus, for He represents hope, mercy and justice to the world - forever. In Jesus Christ, NO ONE ever again has to be an orphan.

 You don’t have to be an orphan to have a heart-shaped hole. Everyone of us has pain and loss. In some way, I might say, we all feel that something or someone is missing from time to time. There are many who feel that hole much larger than usual during this season. Those who are “orphaned” -whether you’re still a kid or already grown up – this season can be bittersweet for you. Except for the orphaned part of the story, in a way, I would like to be a little more like Hugo. A solitary keeper of a clock, as the rest of the world bustles by on their travels. But there is no reason to be alone. For even in our aloneness, God is still there, prompting us to receive His love. Although Hugo seemed alone, he followed his heart and found a family. What are you doing during this last week of Advent? Do something that speaks of love, the unlocks your heart and the hearts of an Other. We give gifts, we invite “orphaned” people to dinner. But there is also another gift we get during this season of mercy and hope. It is the gift of time. For even though some of us work right up to the last minute for these holidays, and there are people who straight through them, Advent provides us with a different and sacred sense of time. With two holidays two weekends in a row, time to relax a little, and do extra cooking, we could lose our sense of time. In between the fun and cookie making, grab a moment to feed your soul, whatever it must be. For Christmastide is sacred season when great things happen in small moments, because God loves us! Amen.

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Amy (Glenna Gray’s daughter) chronic medical issues
Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (paralyzed) – Glenda’s sisters
Bill Assini – fell, broken rib, in a lot of pain

Dorothy Randals’ Family in their loss

Elmer Schuster - leg pain

Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer
Glenda Coles – awaiting shoulder surgery (early December)
Gloria Martinez (Teresa Gallegos’ sister) – healing after leg surgery

Jenna Morris – recovery from knee surgery (not much longer)
Lucy Jasper – Alzheimers/Dementia
Misty Tompkins and her family – stiff person syndrome, seeking experimental program

Victoria Sieglen and family – grief in loss of mother, Pat
People seeking jobs, and people seeking employees
Ruth Johnson – for general health
Sarah Hittson's daughter Marie - surgery
Schools, students, teachers and families
Sharon and Wayne Huffman – general health
Shay – Julie Sursa’s daughter

Susie – still seeking a car, planning for EMS school
Teresa Gallegos-Brake – high risk leg surgery and amputation

Tommy Morris – for health and strength
Travelers
All those suffering from COVID19

**Announcements:**

**May everyone have a safe Thanksgiving week.**

**Bible Study** will resume Thursday, December 2nd at 5:15PM. We are presently thinking of what to study next. Special Requests? Ask Amy 575-708-0860