**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

The Church With the Holy Spirit Window

**Sunday, December 27, 2020 First Sunday in Christmas**

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

**Hymns:**

**RH 163 Hark, the Herald Angels Sing**

**RH 155 There’s a Song in the Air!**

**BH 29 Go, Tell it on the Mountain**

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

**Morning Prayer**

Baby Jesus, we take a peek at your holy beauty, contained in the small and tender body of an infant asleep in the manger. And our hearts can barely comprehend it. You are our God, our Savior, but right now, we can identify more with your vulnerability than with your power. Fill us again today with wonder and excitement. We are to worship you with all our heart, soul, strength and mind and our neighbors as ourselves. If our energies are flagging, lift our hearts, so that we too may rejoice in your might and power! Amen!

**Call to Confession**

As we continue the season of Christmas,
let us confess our sins,
our actions and our inactions,
that are contrary to the kingdom of the newborn King.

**Prayer of Confession (Responsive)**

Almighty God,
The verbs of Psalm 147 remind us of your actions:
you strengthen, bless, grant, fill, send, give, make, and declare.
But we confess that our verbs do not always match yours:
we argue, fight, lie, steal, oppress, ignore, refuse, and silence.

**Forgive us, Lord, for what we’ve done to tarnish your holy name.
Give us courage, merciful God, to make our actions match yours.
Help us to shed our sin and join you in your redemptive work.
This we pray in your good and gracious name.  Amen.**

**Assurance of Forgiveness**

The prophet Jeremiah reminds us that our sin does not have the final word.
God will turn our mourning into joy, God will comfort us,
God will give us gladness for sorrow.
Friends, in the name of the Jesus Christ, you and I are forgiven!
**Alleluia!  Amen!**

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 148:1-14 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

We rejoice in you, O God,
all the earth rejoices and sings glory to your name;
we sing praise and glory to you, O God.
As Christ’s beauty shines forth,
we praise your great salvation
and celebrate the merciful love that reconciles us to you.

As the new year dawns around us,
we pray for the welfare of the earth:
for the healing of the climate;
for the preservation of the beauty and balance of nature;
for the lives of the creatures whose very being sings your praises.

As Christ calls us into renewed discipleship,
we pray for the needs of your people everywhere:
for the forgiveness and redemption of the sins that bind and wound us;
for the deliverance of those who face chaos, despair, and sorry;
for the comfort and courage of all who mourn or face death.
We pray for the lives of the nations:
keep watch, Sovereign,
and teach us to work for justice and lasting peace.

We especially name before you:

Dominique, granddaughter of Dora Maes

For our community and state leaders, that we find social and economic stability during the pandemic

For travelers, particularly those heading for the holidays

For the healing of our nation

Betty Faye Ragan at the loss of her son, Robert

For Ryan’s grandpa, Francis

Ruth Johnson

Our schools, teachers and students, as well as all of their families

Redeemer of the world,
we pray for the church you have gathered.
You call us out of the world’s ways
and plant us deep in the life of Christ.
We celebrate that the gospel has reached far and wide,
through faithful ministry
and despite human unfaithfulness.
We pray for the church in a time of upheaval and change,
when it seems like our life is uprooted
and our institutions are torn down.

We bless you, O God,
and we join all peoples in praising you,
in the name of Jesus our Savior, our Lord,

who teaches us to pray as we say together:

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Presentation of Offering and Offertory**

**Time out for Teaching: “Telling it on the Mountain”**

“Go Tell it on the Mountain” was one of my childhood favorites. I didn’t understand what it meant for a while there, since when I heard “I’m telling on you!” as something more like tattling on another kid. But I always liked the rhythm and gospel flair. It’s not hard to sing and it’s rather forgiving when you make a mistake.

“Go Tell it on the Mountain” is not about tattling about a naughty kid in school, however. It is about telling the truth about Jesus Christ and that He is Born!

A few years ago, I attended a talk by a man named Dr. Darrell Guder, who is a missiologist and minister. Dr. Guder points out something interesting about the Bible. That the entire point of the Bible is to tell it on the mountain. The entire reason why the books of the Bible were written down was in order that someone else would read it and know about God.

All of the different kinds of books we have in Scripture are expressing the message that God has had for us since Genesis: God wants to connect with us. And does so by telling us the many different times in history when God has reached out to us, into this material world. We have a long history with our God and Scripture tells us that history.

So, let’s practice telling the story. What would you say to someone who needed to hear a lift up?

Maybe we could begin with saying something like this. God has been reaching out to you in love ever since the beginning. God has been reaching out to all humankind, to help us and heal us. Jesus is the sign of that love and the seal of His covenant with us. Our salvation has been born!

Just as the Bible is the historical proof of God’s love for humanity, Jesus is the physical evidence of God’s love.

**Prayer for Illumination**

Eternal God, we are listening for your gracious Word,
made flesh for us in Jesus Christ.
Call us to come and see where he leads,
and teach us to believe in his name.
Help us to do as he tells us
so our lives might be signs of his glory.
We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Isaiah 61:10-62:3**

61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
          my whole being shall exult in my God;
     for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
          he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
     as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
          and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
11  For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
          and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
     so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
          to spring up before all the nations.

62:1 For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent,
          and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
     until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
          and her salvation like a burning torch.
2   The nations shall see your vindication,
          and all the kings your glory;
     and you shall be called by a new name
          that the mouth of the Lord will give.
3   You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
          and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

**Gospel Luke 2:22-40**

22When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), 24and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

25Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. 26It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. 27Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, 28Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,
29  “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
          according to your word;
30  for my eyes have seen your salvation,
31       which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
32   a light for revelation to the Gentiles
          and for glory to your people Israel.”

33And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 34Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed 35so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

36There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

39When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

**Sermon: “Song of Simeon” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

 My name is Simeon. I have been waiting for the Messiah. I have been a pious Jew all of my life. I have tried to live a life reflecting what the Lord wants of me. I have been praying for many years that one day the Messiah would come before I die. It has been a mission of mind to hold vigil for our people. And now, I am free of that responsibility, for my prayers have been answered!

 There was another person of faith there, a prophetess named Anna, who is from the tribe of Asher. I didn’t know her until recently, when we were both at the Temple at the same time, when the baby King Jesus, came to Jerusalem for his first time. Well, Anna, whose name reminds me of Hannah the mother of Samuel, has also been praying for the Messiah for years. The Tribe of Asher is one of the more distant tribes of Israel, but even they have been diligently praying for the Messiah.

 But I digress. Anyway, when they came into the temple, he was just about a month old. He had already been circumcised and named on his 8th day, according to the Law. They were there to fulfill other requirements of the Law, since his mother had to make the proper sacrifices for purification. I noticed that they only sacrificed the two turtledoves, and not the yearling lamb. Obviously, they could not afford the lamb. So, I surmised that the new king of Israel was born a pauper.

 I am not surprised. Our Lord has often brought up leaders from the unlikeliest of places. Look at our great king David. He was the runt of the family and a poor shepherd boy. He’s the one who killed Goliath with a slingshot. He was chosen by the prophet Samuel and became a great leader. Our new king is a direct descendant from King David, so even though he is poor, authority and power rests on his shoulders. The Spirit of the Lord shall nurture him, as he rises to the throne!

 Now, I get to rest in peace, knowing that this child shall lead us. I no longer need worry for our nation. But before I leave you, I would like to tell you of my greatest joy. I got to hold him in my arms and say a blessing for him. As I looked at him, I remembered with joy holding my own son, who was a tiny miracle. But the one whom I held in my arms that day, is our newborn king. And it was our Lord who gave me the distinction of getting to hold the child. He was a busy little tyke, eyes looking all around him with curiosity about where he was, arms and legs moving constantly. He seemed acutely interested in the Temple – the curtains, the colorful decorations and columns, the high ceilings. He seemed acutely interested in me too, probably because I was a stranger who met him with so much excitement!

 But he seemed like a child of peace. A happy child. A baby who right now seemed curious about everything but not afraid of anything. After blessing him, I told his mother, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” Even though what I said sounded rather shocking, she did not look surprised at all. But I meant it. I don’t know just how this will happen, but I know that when he rises to the throne, because he was chosen by God, some will oppose him. And those who oppose him will be judged accordingly. How we receive him shall reveal much about ourselves. His word shall be God’s Word, and his kingdom shall have no end.

 He shall rule us with righteousness, compassion and wisdom, because Our King has been given to us by the Lord’s very hand. Finally! Not given to us by the Romans, nor appointed for us by the Jewish leaders, who are fighting for their own interests lately. And I and Anna both are free from our prayer vigil. And we are the most blessed generation, for we have beheld his glory. But instead of resting from our prayers, we now have a new purpose. To tell everyone that our King has been born. And to give him all of the honor, glory and support as he grows into his throne. Let’s give ourselves to praising his name and thanking the Lord for sending us our Savior. Amen!

**THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

**Social Distancing and Personal Protection.** Please respect one another’s space, observing the 6-foot distancing between one another. Please remember to wash your hands on the way out today. If you need a protective face covering, please notify the pastor and she can help you.

**Thank you to all who helped us pull off two Christmas services this year!**

To our musicians, Emily, Marjorie, Kenna, and Robin (in alpha order…)

To all of our readers, decorators, as well as David Goldston, who makes sure our sanctuary is comfy and warm.