**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**July 11, 2021 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

BH 144 Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

Green Book Stepping in the Light

BH 332 Live Into Hope

Prayer for Illumination: BH 322 Spirit of the Living God

**Call to Worship**

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side – let us say together:  
**If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,**  
we would have been swallowed up alive. But such is not the case!  
**Blessed be the Lord, who is our rock and our redeemer!**  
Blessed be the Lord, in whose name is our help!  
**Blessed be the Lord, who made heaven and earth!**  
**Come, let us worship God!**

**Opening Prayer**

Show us your ways, O Lord!  
Lead us in your truth, and teach us.  
Open our eyes, minds, and hearts  
to know your will and to follow it.  
Reveal your vision for us,  
and keep us focused and faithful to what you would have us do.  
Bring us together to worship and work for your purpose,  
and move us forward into your future. Amen.

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession**

**Holy and Beloved God, you are the one worthy of praise, who fills our hearts with extraordinary joy, and who weeps with us when we lash out and hurt each other. In your infinite love, you care for us, and teach us to love each other as you do. Instead, we too often use our feelings as a shortcut for manipulation, trying to get others to do what we want instead of listening for your guidance. Help us to change, to listen to each other, trusting in you and each other to love again in vulnerability, knowing that all shall be well.** (silence) **Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

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 24**

The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,

the world, and those who live in it;

**for he has founded it on the seas,**

**and established it on the rivers.**

Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?

And who shall stand in his holy place?

**Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,**

**who do not lift up their souls to what is false,**

**and do not swear deceitfully.**

They will receive blessing from the LORD,

and vindication from the God of their salvation.

**Such is the company of those who seek him,**

**who seek the face of the God of Jacob.**

Lift up your heads, O gates!

and be lifted up, O ancient doors!

that the King of glory may come in.

**Who is the King of glory?**

**The LORD, strong and mighty,**

**the LORD, mighty in battle.**

Lift up your heads, O gates!

and be lifted up, O ancient doors!

that the King of glory may come in.

**Who is this King of glory?**

**The LORD of hosts,**

**he is the King of glory.**

**Prayers of the People**

It is good to give you thanks, O Lord,  
and to sing praises to your name, O Most High.  
We celebrate your loving-kindness to us every day  
and your faithfulness night by night.  
With every good gift you have given, we worship you.

You have made your people glad with your faithful acts, O Lord,  
and we shout for joy at your righteous works.  
Teach us to use your gifts rightly,  
to do good to all people and build them up,  
and to allow your beauty to flourish in this world.

We pray for the healing of those who are ill,  
for the guidance of those who are strong,  
for the reconciliation of those who are enemies,  
and for the comfort of those who are grieving.  
Let your kingdom flourish among us,  
O Lord, our Rock.  
We pray in Jesus’ name, saying together:

The Lord’s Prayer

**Offering**

**Time out for Teaching: Great Moments in Heresy – Writing the Nicene Creed**

(please see handout)

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19**

1David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. 2David and all the people with him set out and went from Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned on the cherubim.3They carried the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart 4with the ark of God; and Ahio went in front of the ark. 5David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the LORD with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

12bSo David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing; 13and when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. 14David danced before the LORD with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod. 15So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

16As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

17They brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before the LORD. 18When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts, 19and distributed food among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people went back to their homes.

**Ephesians 1:3-14**

3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. 5He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace 8that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight 9he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, 10as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, 12so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. 13In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; 14this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

**Gospel Mark 6:14-29**

14King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." 15But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." 16But when Herod heard of it, he said, "'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

17For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. 18For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, 20for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. 21But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. 22 When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." 23And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." 24She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." 25Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." 26The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. 27Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, 28brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. 29When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

**Sermon “Seeing with New Eyes” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

Sundays have not been easy for me. When I come here and look around, I am reminded of being married here. We moved the communion table back a couple of feet from the stairs so there was room enough for the wedding party to fit up front. The indentation on the carpet where the communion table once stood closer to the stairs here is a painful reminder of that happy day two years ago, painful – because my husband is gone now. It’s one of the little details in this building that once made me happy but now is very sad for me to see. But, if we moved the table back to its original position, covering up that spot, it wouldn’t make me feel any better. For it is not the carpet, nor the table that upsets me. I could try and ignore these details, but maybe that’s not the right thing to do either. I have to just live with it and try to adjust my focus.

The minutiae of life can upset us. There is an expression, “the devil is in the details.” I definitely think this is true. We find ourselves stressing over little things, because we also believe that little things matter so much. So, we are often prioritizing, which little things deserve our attention and which do not.

The 19th century French novelist, Gustave Flaubert, was once quoted, “The good Lord is in the detail.” He didn’t write as many novels as his contemporaries. He was known for his perfectionist style, always in search for just the right word – “le mot juste” - to express exactly what he wanted. Did he fret too much over the details? Obviously, what he did was certainly good enough to be recognized. He believed in the details, for each word, mattered to Flaubert.

For all good things on this earth and in the heavens, the good Lord is in the details. God has a big picture planned, but also has an interest in each and every one of us as individuals. The Church in Ephesus received a very special letter that encompasses all of this. Written to Christians near the end of the century, it sought to help correct their vision of God’s universe, by also bringing it down to the personal level, to the local community of believers. The community of Ephesus was hundreds of miles from Jerusalem. They lived amid people who were not so familiar with the ways of the Christians. Christians were eyed with suspicion and were not very well-understood. And the Christians feared division within their congregations because there were persons who were Gentile, uncircumcised and Jewish, circumcised. It took years for this particular problem to resolve itself, and letters such as Ephesians to remind us that God plans to gather up all things in heaven and on earth. As you just heard the big picture: “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” The Ephesians needed a correction to their vision, for if they were anything like us, they would have been a little bit scared about the world around them, hoping to live the life to which Jesus called them, and it appears, by reading other parts of his letter, they became overly focused on the wrong details. The devil IS in the details. But the good Lord is too.

It depends on our focus. John Calvin once said that the Bible provides us with “spectacles” which help to adjust our vision more closely to God’s vision. We can’t see everything God sees, but the gift of Scripture help a little like having bifocals. You can see the big picture and the little details of God’s world. For the Good Lord is in both. These spectacles of Scripture can help us see all things more as God sees them, charging us to see with the kind of love that God has for us.

There is a fascinating show called “Atypical,” on Netflix, which attempts to help us see differently. It features a family of four – two teenagers. The 18-year-old boy named Sam has autistic spectrum disorder, but is a high-functioning young man. The show attempts to help us see how hard the family works at just being a family, even though their son is labeled “atypical.” But just because Sam is “atypical,” his family must make special concessions for him: they do what they can to help him excel in school, look at colleges, create special rituals for him so that Sam feels like he has control over his life, doesn’t lose his focus, nor become excessively upset. So, in a way, because of Sam, no one seemed to be “typical.” Everyone connected to Sam begins to seem “atypical.” So, as you continue to get to know the characters better, you start to wonder what is “normal” anymore and what isn’t. The whole family carries a special kind of stress as they try support Sam. It is a sacred responsibility, a labor of love, which at times, just as with all caregivers, becomes overwhelming for them. Caught up in the details of loving Sam, their perspective is adjusted when his therapist advises them, “celebrate the small victories.”

Good advice, don’t you think? The good Lord is in the details.

God has given us what we need to cut through the stuff of this world. We have spectacles of Scripture, like Flaubert’s “perfect word,” to help us see as God wants us to see. The good Lord is in the details, in the smallest of victories, and in the details that form our faith. We have to be watchful, for the devil is in the details too, and they can overwhelm us, misdirect us, draw us away from what God wants. And when there seems to be nothing else, we have each other, to keep our focus on God’s vision, for God’s plan is to gather up all things on earth and in heaven for salvation. The God who sees all has something to show you. Amen.

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Amy (Glenna Gray’s daughter) multiple upcoming surgeries  
Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (paralyzed) – Glenda’s sisters  
Dorothy Randals – at Autumn Blessings, for strength and comfort  
Elmer Schuster - ongoing dental surgeries, leg pain  
Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer, prayers for her husband, Larry too  
Glenda Coles – injured rotator cuff  
Dr. Jean Corey, losing two 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 MRI and answers  
Ruth Johnson – for general health, preparing to move to Wisconsin  
Sharon and Wayne Huffman – general health, Wayne preparing for surgery Wednesday  
Shay – Julie Sursa’s daughter  
Susan (Susie Martinez's step-daughter) - waiting to see if she gets a new job - a good "step-up!"  
Susie - knee injury, in a leg brace, planning for EMS school  
Teresa Gallegos-Brake – continuing to heal from leg surgery  
Travelers  
All those suffering from COVID19

**Announcements:**

**Ruling Elders:**  We had a meeting scheduled today after church. Due to some other scheduling SNAFUs surrounding potluck dinners, we are still out looking for a date to reschedule. Thank you so much for your patience…