**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**Sunday, June 21, 2020 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**RH 144 I Greet Thee, Who My True Redeemer Art**

**RH 326 Nearer, My God To Thee**

**RH 208 The Day of Resurrection!**

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

God of Sarah and Hagar,  
**We praise you for protecting and guiding us.**God of Moses and Miriam,  
**We thank you for liberating your children from oppression.**God of Peter and Paul,  
**We bless you even in the midst of conflict.**God of Hildegaard and Julian,  
**We glory in your presence among us.**God of Luther and Calvin,  
**We rejoice in your Spirit’s presence in all times and places.**Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End,  
**Holy God, we welcome you to this place today!**

**Prayer of the Day**

**Call to Confession**

In all honesty and humility,  
let us confess our sins before God  
and be freed of the burdens that weigh us down for the journey ahead.

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

**Merciful God,  
you call us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.  
But often we ignore that wisdom.  
Instead of listening, we talk past one another.  
Instead of exercising patience, we become hotheaded and irritable.  
Instead of practicing kindness, we hand out judgment and malice.  
Help us rid ourselves of wickedness and embrace steadfast love in its place.  
Forgive us of our sins so that, when we look in the mirror,  
we see the disciples you are calling us to be. Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, our hearts overflow with a goodly theme:   
a theme of God’s forgiveness.  
In the name of Jesus Christ,  
I announce to you that our sins are forgiven.  
**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.**

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17 (please see bulletin)**

Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me,

for I am poor and needy.

**Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you;**

**save your servant who trusts in you.**

You are my God;be gracious to me, O Lord,

for to you do I cry all day long.

**Gladden the soul of your servant,**

**for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.**

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,

abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.

**Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;**

**listen to my cry of supplication.**

In the day of my trouble I call on you,

for you will answer me.

**There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,**

**nor are there any works like yours.**

All the nations you have made shall come

and bow down before you, O Lord,

and shall glorify your name.

**For you are great and do wondrous things;**

**you alone are God.**

Turn to me and be gracious to me;

give your strength to your servant;

save the child of your serving girl.

**Show me a sign of your favor,**

**so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame,**

**because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.**

**Prayers of the People**

We sing to you, O Lord, with all the earth!  
We bless your name because of your saving work every day!  
Make your glory known among all people,  
and share your wondrous works with everyone who calls out to you.  
Reveal your strength and beauty in all things.  
Share your gifts with all creation in your love.

Lord, you set the world firmly in place,  
so nothing can be shaken.  
Work your justice for those who cry out to you;  
heal the skies, the earth, the sea, and everything that lives;  
restore the cities, countries, and peoples of the world;  
and be especially gracious to these we name before you…

Then all the trees of the forest will shout joyfully,  
when you establish justice  
and redeem your world,  
in Jesus’ name, who taught us to pray, saying…

*The Lord’s Prayer*

**Presentation of Offering and Offertory**

**Time out for Teaching: Understanding Ishmael and Isaac**

Who knows the story of Ishmael and Isaac?

Ishmael was born earlier than Isaac, both the sons of Abraham. Ishmael was the child of Hagar, their slave. Isaac was the child of Abraham’s wife, Sarah.

They had Ishmael just in case they were unable to conceive a son. Then, the Lord blesses them with Isaac. Isaac’s name means something having to do with laughter.

Isaac becomes known to us as part of the genealogy of the many saints of the Holy Bible.

As for Ishmael…

His mother nearly ran away before he was born. God found her in the wilderness and encourages her to return to Abraham. It is then that Hagar names God, the first time in the Bible when a person gives God a name. She says He is the God who Sees, and the place where this happens is called “Beer Laharoi.”

Ishmael is born… Then Sarah wants to get rid of Ishmael so that Isaac gets all of the inheritance. So the story will go when we hear the reading from Genesis. The story is about the way that the roots of Islam and the roots of Judaism go their separate ways.

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Romans 6:1b-11**

1bShould we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?2By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?3Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?4Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.6We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.7For whoever has died is freed from sin.8But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.9We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.10The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.11So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**Gospel Matthew 10:24-39**

24"A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master;25it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

26"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known.27What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.28Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.29Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.30And even the hairs of your head are all counted.31So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

32"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven;33but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

34"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.35For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;36and one's foes will be members of one's own household.37Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;38and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.39Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

**Genesis 21:8-21**

8The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.9But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac.10So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac."11The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son.12But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you.13As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring."14So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

15When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes.16Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, "Do not let me look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept.17And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.18Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him."19Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

20God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow.21He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

**Sermon: “The God Who Sees” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

Our story of Ishmael and his mother, Hagar, is wrapped up in this story of the victory of Isaac, the biological son of both Sarah and Abraham. On this Fathers’ Day, it probably seems like a strange story for us to hear. What a difficult position Abraham had found himself in! Remember that he and Sarah are both very old at this point in their lives. Sarah wants to make sure that her son, Isaac, would receive all of the inheritance they had built up for themselves. She did NOT want Ishmael to get anything.

Remember that Ishmael was Abraham’s son, born to their slave woman, Hagar. Sarah wanted Abraham to have a son, and urged him to do so with Hagar. This is how Ishmael was born into their household. So, Happy Fathers’ Day, Abraham. God has given you a second son, the promised one to assure that Abraham’s people would flourish and populate the world as numerously as grains of sand or stars in the skies. God saw this need, provided you with two sons. Now you’ve got trouble. Sarah wants Hagar out.

Some would say this is a terrible thing. Kicking a slave woman and her small child out of the house, sending them away into the wilderness. Perhaps Hagar saw it coming. She may have. Abraham listens to God, for Abraham surely had strong feelings against sending away Hagar and Ishmael. And God says, "Do not be distressed… do as Sarah tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you.As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring." God’s words must have been a bit comforting to Abraham. Knowing that even as a dad, if Abraham could no longer provide for Ishmael and Hagar, God already had plans for them. God honored Abraham, in a way, for God makes this promise because of his relationship to Abraham. “Because he is your offspring,” says the Lord.

I imagine that dads around the world – those who try so hard to provide for their families – have moments when they become scared or feel a bit unable to fulfill their duty. I’m sure many parents have those moments. Just a bad day, or a difficult time in life can cause other things to fall apart. A few weeks ago, our church received a call from a man here in Tucumcari who had 1) lost his job, 2) had his wallet stolen containing a little money from a recent contract job, and 3) still had not yet received his first unemployment check. He had 2 daughters. He explained, “One of my daughters isn’t my biological one, but she still calls me ‘daddy.’” He was worried. He said, “I’ve got to figure out how to feed my girls for the next 3 days before my unemployment kicks in!” Fortunately, our church family is a generous one and we were able to make his day. I ran by with food from our pantry and a couple of gift cards to a local restaurant. One of them is for Watson’s BBQ. I intentionally picked that one, since he casually mentioned that it seemed like in the past, every time he needed to find a job, he heard about jobs there. He met me at his front gate on Hines Avenue. He appreciated that I met him mid-afternoon, so his daughters would not see that he was getting help from a stranger remarking that he didn’t want them to worry or be afraid. They are quite young children.

Parenting is not for the faint of heart. Parents are called upon to make difficult choices on behalf of those they love most dearly. It’s not a job. It’s an adventure. It’s a little like the Army. It’s a vocation. You have others’ lives at stake. And sometimes… it’s terrifying.

Hagar has been sent away with her small child into the desert. They have a pack with bread and water, but only as much as they are able to carry. This is a parent’s nightmare. She is ready to give up, and wait for death. But God sees them. God knows what they need. Happy Fathers’ Day. God makes a pool of water in the wilderness. God provided, when she no longer could. I wish I could say that God would avert every possible tragedy, or prevent any misfortune which could befall us. God does not for God’s own reasons.

But this is the God who sees. God saw her tragedy and pain. God gave her help. God made a plan for her. And I do believe that God makes plans for us, even while we are presently trying to figure it all out. When like Hagar we are thrust into a situation where we think there is nothing left we can do, God sees us trying. And when God does step in and give us a second chance, it means we have a destiny to fulfill. Just as Ishmael became the start of a new people, so we all, with our second and third and fourth chances we are given in life, we too have a vocation, a whole new reason for living.

God sees us, sees deep inside of us, and knows all that we need, knows even better than we ourselves understand. And that also means that we get to see, even if in just bits and pieces, the way God sees from time to time. I was really touched by a story I heard recently of two guys who met in 9th grade. They sat down at the same table in the lunchroom one day and got to know each other. One did not have a sandwich, so the other guy tore his in half and gave it to the other. It became an instant friendship. The next day, the other guy showed up with two sandwiches. This began to happen every day, and it lasted for the rest of high school, until one day the first guy showed up with his own sandwich. By now they had become very close friends. To me, this is a story of genuine friendship, which began because someone could see the other’s need.

If we could see someone else’s need a little like that, then we all would become better parents, better friends, better people in general. And if this 9th grader was able to see the need for a sandwich, how much better can God see all of us than he? God wants us to see the world a little better, a little more like God sees us all. Potential friends. Potential for adoption. Potential for being included as part of our circle of friends. As God brought along Hagar and Ishmael, promising to never abandon them. As the two boys in the lunchroom. As our church is to those in need in our community. We get a chance to see the pain of another, a holy glimpse into the struggles of someone else. This is God’s way, and to put in their pathway a little drink of refreshing, holy water. 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.

**Session Meeting Today.**  The Session will have a regularly-scheduled meeting today after worship.

**2020 Cookbook.** Kenna is nearly ready to print the cookbook. If you have a recipe for it, please get it to her asap, so that we can distribute it. Thanks!

**No Rummage Donations Yet.** The Session also requests that we hold off on donations to the Rummage Sale for the time being.