**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**Sunday, June 28, 2020 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**RH 262 Thy Life Was Given for Me**

**RH 416 Dear Lord and Father of Mankind**

**RH 397 More Love to Thee, O Christ**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

**With joy and gratitude we come before you, Lord, to worship you with all our heart, all our minds, all our bodies and all our souls. Our hearts are full, our hands lifted up, and we bring you all we have and all we are. May we bless your name in our worship today and let it overflow from this place into the world beyond these walls. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our all in all! Amen.**

**Call to Confession**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive only ourselves, and we leave no room for God’s truth to dwell in us. When we confess our sin, we are able to experience the abundant mercy of God’s everlasting grace, right here and right now. Before God, with the people of God, let us confess to our brokenness. Let us pray.

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. From before the beginning until long beyond our imagination, God’s love endures. Know that you are forgiven, loved and free.

**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 13:1-6 (please see bulletin)**

**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: Romans in Under 5 Minutes**

Paul’s letter to the Romans is considered by many to be a “masterpiece.” You might say it summarizes much of his lifework, bringing so many of his areas of thought and faith into a single letter. He was writing to the Christians in Rome, with the hopes that he would eventually get to Rome to meet them. All the other letters we have from Paul are written to churches he either planted or had gone to visit.

Romans ends with his pledge that he hopes to come see them, explaining that he writing this letter in his “own hand.” This was a way of proving to them that he himself is writing them.

Paul’s letter was probably written around 55 AD, or as early as 51 AD. We know this because he mentions taking up a collection for the widows and orphans who had been struck by an earthquake in Jerusalem and this earthquake is well-documented in other ancient literature.

Romans has many themes in it, which we cannot totally unpack today, but it preaches that God is righteous and can confer righteousness on us. But that we are – both Jews and Gentiles – corrupt and in need of God’s redemption. The goal of all this is salvation by faith alone.

Some famous lines from Romans –

8:34: Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

8:35ff “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **36**As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
    we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

**37**No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

Romans has themes in it which describes our attachment to sin as being a form of slavery. And God is our way out from that slavery. He talks about a new kind of “bond” which is to righteousness. A bond a little more like a marriage and new life, (chapter 7) and our “bond” to God can lead us to become righteous people.

Paul also talks about his own problems of trying to do the right thing, calling himself “Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death! Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (ch 7)

Ch 12: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-28232a)] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-28232b)] worship. **2**Do not be conformed to this world,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-28233c)] but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

I think that’s about all we can say about Romans for now. But it is a book chock-full of good things to get into. The hard part about it is it can be so dense with ideas, you kind of have to take a little nibble on it, digest it before you can go on. It commands our attention to detail and that’s the sort of thing that we don’t seem to have much time to spend on in this modern age. Consider a few paragraphs a day and I think you’ll find a good deal of riches in this letter.

**Prayer for Illumination**

As we come to your word this day, O God, make peace in our hearts so that we may truly hear you, and follow you, for it is in serving you that we find life abundant. Amen.

**Gospel Matthew 10:40-42**

40“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; 42and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

**Romans 6:12-23**

12Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. 13No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. 14For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

15What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, 18and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

20When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. 22But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. 23For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Sermon: “Uncut Gems” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

 When I was a child, I can remember being fascinated with my mother’s wedding ring. Whenever we were sitting near a window, or if under a ceiling with numerous tiny lights, I would catch a glimpse at the diamond on her ring. I was fascinated with the numerous lights and their own reflections within, as if the interaction of the cuts of the diamonds would create a “fire” within. It was because their facets were cut by someone who understood at what angle (please imagine using ‘geometry’ for a sec) the diamond should be cut to make that gem shine!

 I was engaged once many years ago and given a diamond ring as a promise. I would wear it proudly, and see that ‘fire’ within that diamond too. The diamond represents the uncut promise that – no matter what those two engaged people decide to do with their lives, - they will do it with the clarity of knowing God is their witness to their agreement.

 We enjoy holding up a gem such as a diamond to explore the fascinating facets of it. Similarly, we might recognize that fire within us, a fire that can be revealed when we begin to allow God to form us. A diamond begins its process by a great deal of compression and high heat to become hard enough to cut glass.

 God is in the process of shaping each one of us as we undergo both the hardness and the gentleness of this life. It can be made a little harder for those who believe, for we are called to become stronger and more courageously able to withstand the passion to sin. It is always around us, in us all. This is rather like what Paul the Apostle is discussing in his letter to the Romans. Remember that the letter to the Romans is the only letter we have that he wrote to people he hadn’t met yet. So many of Paul’s letters were written to churches he had visited or even helped build. Not so with the Romans. He tells them at the end of his letter that he is planning to come and see them. And of course, after Paul’s own style, he uses the opportunity to teach and encourage them in the faith.

 His letter to the Romans is considered by many people to be a great specimen of Paul’s body of thought, a powerful example of his beliefs summarizing so much of what he has said elsewhere. Yet, this letter is like a great masterpiece. For all he has said and taught prior to his letter is now so eloquently written right here. He is basically telling them they are a little like uncut gems, called forth to work towards sanctification, sparkling with the grace of God, not just believing it.

 He says, “thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient…and you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.” And this, Paul says, gives us a special purpose, that we can grow into sanctification.

 Sanctification is a weird word to our modern ears. You hear in it the word “sanct” which is related to the word “saint.” Becoming holy people, or saints, is our calling. Sanctification also connected to the word, “sanitize” or “thoroughly cleansed.” Some people believe you can become completed sanctified in this life. Many people believe you never fully arrive at that, for always we are tested and susceptible to forgetfulness and sin. Sanctification is a process of becoming holy, always working towards it. It can be at times a painful process but a rewarding one. Like gems, strengthened with the heat of fire, cut by the master craftsman our Lord, shaped to shine, and show the fire of God from inside of us.

 So, we have to be patient with every test. Everything we encounter in life can be a chance to let God shape us more. And as we go, doing the good works we do in Jesus’ name, we grow in holiness, fulfilling God’s ultimate dream for us all. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Paul writes: “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”

Letting someone/something (SIN being the operative noun for this scripture) have dominion over us is the same as allowing

**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.

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