**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**June 6, 2021 10th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

RH 2 For the Beauty of the Earth

RH 447 Let Us Break Bread Together

RH 310 Take My Life and Let It Be

**Call to Worship**

The scent of the Bread of Heaven has called us together

**For when we pray, a window to heaven is opened**

Let the joy of the feast to come fill you in this place

**For whenever we gather at this table, we are filled to overflowing with God’s love**

The Holy Bread we share with each other, for God’s gifts are for sharing

**In sharing with one another, we see the face of Christ. Let us worship God!**

**Opening Prayer**

**Spirit of life, you long for the world’s transformation. Your vision is grander than anything we can imagine, and so we thank you for the privilege of participating in your mission. May these gifts be a blessing that speaks the language of this community, and may that blessing multiply out to every place. Breathe in us again this day, that our whole lives may be an offering for your glory. Amen.**

**Call to Confession**

Friends, we are made in the image of God, but that does not make us God. Though we often prefer to pretend we are perfect, when we ignore our sin we deceive only ourselves and there is no room for God’s truth to dwell in us. When we confess our sin, we experience the grace and mercy of God in the here and now. Before God, with the people of God, let us confess to our faults and our failings. Let us pray.

**Prayer of Confession**

**Lord, you are before and behind us, around us and within. We give you thanks for your constant presence, even as we admit that we don’t always see or hear you with us. So often we find ourselves standing at the edge…of uncertainty, of fear, of society, of faith, of life. We pray for your path to be clear, to show us your way, but we confess that sometimes we see it and we are afraid and turn our eyes back instead. We long for comfort, stability, familiarity. We admit to you that we prefer the easier way of what we have always done, even if it is not where you currently call.** (silence)

Forgive us, O God.

**Forgive us for our selective memory, our tendency to nostalgia, our hearts set on self-preservation. Turn our eyes forward, to where you are leading. Remind us that you are our God, and will never leave us. Give us faith to see your way, and courage to walk it. Focus our minds, hearts, and strength on your love, that we may know you fully…for to know you is to love you, and to love you is to serve you, whom to serve is perfect freedom.  
It is with faith and hope that we ask these things in the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ, whose love casts out all fear and leads us into new life with you. Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

In the beginning, God planted goodness deep within creation—and through the grace of God, poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we are able to live as the Body of Christ, showing that goodness to the world. 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 138:1-8**

I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart;  
before the gods I sing your praise;  
**I bow down toward your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness;  
for you have exalted your name and your word  
above everything.**On the day I called, you answered me,  
you increased my strength of soul.

**All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O LORD,  
for they have heard the words of your mouth.**They shall sing of the ways of the LORD,  
for great is the glory of the LORD.  
**For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly;  
but the haughty he perceives from far away.**

Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;  
you stretch out your hand,  
and your right hand delivers me.  
**The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;  
your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.  
Do not forsake the work of your hands.**

**Offering**

**Time out for Teaching: 7 Marks of a Vital Congregation: Spirit-Filled Worship (Part V)**

(see handout)

**Prayer for Illumination**

Holy Spirit, lift these words from the pages of scripture like the aroma of freshly baked bread. Help us to hunger for these words, to be fed by your grace, and to share what you offer with all of your children on this earth. Amen.

**Gospel Mark 3:20-35**

20... and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. 21When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, “He has gone out of his mind.” 22And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.” 23And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? 24If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. 27But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

28“Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; 29but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” — 30for they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

31Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. 32A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.” 33And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” 34And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

**1 Samuel 8:4-11, 16-20**

8:4Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5and said to him, “You are old and your sons do not follow in your ways; appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations.” 6But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to govern us.” Samuel prayed to the LORD, 7and the LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. 8Just as they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. 9Now then, listen to their voice; only — you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”

10So Samuel reported all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. 11He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots;

16He will take your male and female slaves, and the best of your cattle and donkeys, and put them to his work. 17He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. 18And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the LORD will not answer you in that day.”

19But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, “No! but we are determined to have a king over us, 20so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.”

**Sermon “The Death of Expertise” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

If only the people would listen to Samuel. They begged for a king to rule them, for they no longer believed that the prophet Samuel was capable of it. They claimed that he had grown too old, and they did not approve of his sons. These were in the days of lawlessness – like the wild, wild west where there was no centralized government. There were only judges and prophets who led and governed, such as Deborah and Gideon. We might imagine it to be a little like life out here in before the 1900s. People operated on self-sufficiency and fear of invasion by bandits or other tribal peoples. The Book of Judges, a book filled with murder and mayhem – check it out because it’s pretty exciting stuff – is a book in the Bible which tries to justify the need for a king. In contrast, 1 Samuel portrays the desire for a king as a kind of faithlessness. Did they really need a king? After all, they had a prophet and the Lord of all Creation. Or was this a lack of faith in the one true king, the Lord of all Creation? What do you think? Should they have picked a king, or not?

At any rate, they crowned Saul the first King of Israel. It was a quick fix to help them feel better. We find out later, after Saul kind of loses his mind about David, begins to pursue him, wanting to kill him, that “The Lord regretted that he made Saul king” (1 Sam 15:10-11). It’s one of those few poignant moments in Scripture when we see God regret something. The Lord could have stepped in to stop them. The Lord knew that it was a bad idea. So did Samuel. It seems kind of sad to think that the whole affair ended with God feeling regret. But they asked for him and they got him.

This story has traditionally pitted the people of Israel against God and Samuel in a way. The Israelites are portrayed as “people of little faith,” and ignorant of the words of the wise Elder Samuel. We might see ourselves in them. How often do we too try to secure our own future, to ignore the wisdom of the Samuels of our time? And when we do, we often find we regretfully are forced to take the longer, more difficult path of faith, to live with the mistakes we have made. Perhaps hearing the wisdom and experience of each other can help us head off some of our mistakes – our own mistakes and the mistakes of the Universal Church. The Church itself is guilty of many horrifying acts done in the name of God, because we humans tend to be short-sighted, a bit arrogant, and fail to listen to the wisdom of others. But by learning history, including the history of our own personal mistakes, we can grow into a wisdom that is greater than all of our years.

Some social critics today are mourning the “death of expertise.” It is a post-post-modern phenomenon, with thanks to the wide availability of information to us today. In a book by Tom Nichols called “The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters,” he analyzes social media’s effect on how we weigh out information. He discusses the way we choose what we want to believe, sometimes even when we are given logical information from people who are much more educated on the subject than we are. It is one of the ways conspiracy theories and misinformation – such as those who think that vaccines cause autism – become accepted knowledge. I strongly recommend that book. It reminds us that we have a responsibility to perpetuate truth, to learn what we can from those who really do know what they are talking about.

Thank God we are given room to make mistakes. I think that is what happened with the Israelites. Even though they ignored the wisdom of Samuel, the Lord said to Samuel to go ahead and listen to them. Let them try having a king and find out for themselves what it will be like. God already could see that they were being “stiff-necked people,” so sometimes the best way to learn is to go ahead and mess up. God told Samuel to go ahead and hear them out, even though eventually God would regret it. In this story, I see that God is patient, long-suffering - an awful lot like many of those wise and faithful Samuels. In this story, God is like a loving parent, who knows that she has done her best raising her children, but understands they will have to also live their own lives, and make their own mistakes.

This is the kind of Lord we serve. One who allows us to mess up, even against God’s own advice, and still refuses to forsake us. Our Lord is one who knows that we will be headstrong sometimes and will insist on our own way. Some lessons are better learned through experience. Sometimes we also fail to heed the experience and wisdom of others and have to learn through trial and error. But when we are finally ready to listen and learn, God is ready to teach. God also provides us Ruling Elders – who have been selected by the church because of their wisdom, imagination, compassion and faith experience – and to try and reflect the same patient love that God shows the Israelites. None of us may be called true “experts,” even though I might mention that they require me to have a Masters’ degree and a lot of training (3 years of school plus internships). God provides us with our own “resident experts” in faith and life right here at home.

As we approach the table of grace today, fed by Jesus Christ our host, let us also remember in penitence, the times we ignored wisdom. Let us remember when we failed to heed the advice of our own elders, only to learn that they were right. And let us also remember God’s patience and give thanks. For the God we serve is long-suffering, and has promised to never forsake us, in spite of ourselves! Amen.

**Service of Holy Communion**

\*When it is said, “The body of Christ.” Please eat the host. And likewise with the cup.

**Invitation**

Friends, this is God’s celebration of love for God’s people who call Jesus their Savior. This meal is for all who come in search of a Savior, for those who seek a strengthening reminder of God’s eternal power. Friends, this meal is for you and for me. You are welcome here.

**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**Lift up your hearts!  
**We lift them up to the Lord!**Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

We praise and thank you, Lord,  
because you do wonderful things.  
In Jesus Christ, you make your salvation known  
for all people,  
completing the faithfulness you promised  
to the house of Israel,  
which you remember still.

Through these gifts of bread and cup,  
we join all the earth in praising you.  
Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us  
as we share in this meal.  
As you feed us,  
make us instruments of your praise  
and servants of your faithfulness.

Keep us faithful in Christ’s service  
until he comes at long last to establish justice and plenty on the earth.  
We pray with and for all people,  
joining in the prayer Christ taught, saying…  
*The Lord’s Prayer*

**Words of Institution and Receiving the Elements**

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, He took the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

“The body of Christ broken for you.” (eat)

And when his disciples were finished eating, he took the cup and blessed it, then passed it to them, saying, “This is my blood shed for you and for the forgiveness of sins. Drink this all of you in remembrance of me.”

“The blood of Christ poured out for you.” (drink)

**Prayer after Communion**

Christ our Lord,  
at this table you have given us a taste  
of the joyful feast you promise to your blessed ones.  
Let this meal strengthen us for the work of discipleship,  
and let us serve you in all that we do  
for the least of these your siblings. Amen.

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (paralyzed) – Glenda’s sisters

Don White - stent

Dorothy Randals – at Autumn Blessings, for strength and comfort

Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer, prayers for her husband, Larry too

First Responders

Dr. Jean Corey, losing to 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 doctor’s report

Rain - thanksgiving and please send more :)

Ruth Johnson – for general health, preparing to move to Wisconsin

Sharon and Wayne Huffman – general health, Wayne preparing for surgery

Shay – Julie Sursa’s daughter

Susie Martinez – may need eye surgery, foot pain, planning for EMS school

Teresa Gallegos-Brake - healing from leg surgery, about to get stitches out

Travelers

All those suffering from COVID19, for the recent spike in local cases

**Announcements:**

**Green Chile Gals is tomorrow night!**

**Session meets next Sunday after church.**