**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, November 11, 2018, 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Call to Worship**

Come, children of the Light, come to worship your Maker.  
**We were once in darkness, but now we are light in the Lord.**  
Light produces the fruits of goodness, justice, and truth.  
**May we plant seeds that sprout forth such gifts to the world.**  
Come, let us worship God!

**Prayer of the Day**

God of Light and Love,  
help us this day to worship you  
with all of our hearts, minds, and bodies.  
Shower us with the grace of your Spirit  
that we might joyfully receive  
the message you have for us today. **Amen**.

**Call to Confession**

Listen up, Saints! Let us remember that we are also sinners in need of God’s grace. Trusting in God’s gracious ways, let us together and then in silence confess our sins and errors before God. Let us pray.

**Prayer of Confession**

**Loving God, you are always speaking, giving us instructions, directing our attention, and telling us your love. We confess that sometimes we are not very good listeners. We aren’t sure what is your voice, and what is ours, and what is just noise. We are easily distracted. We like our own ways. But even when we are too busy, you still call. We admit that we find you difficult to hear, and we ask for your help. Open our minds and hearts. Tune our ears to your voice. Help us to listen to what you have to say, and then help us to follow wherever you lead.** (*Silence*)  
**Thank you, God, for hearing us, and for speaking to us. Remind us of your love and forgiveness, and give us strength to be faithful to you. We pray in the name of Jesus your Living Word. Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Let yourself live and believe this good news:  
**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 127:1-5**

Unless the LORD builds the house,

those who build it labor in vain.

**Unless the LORD guards the city,**

**the guard keeps watch in vain.**

It is in vain that you rise up early

and go late to rest,

eating the bread of anxious toil;

for he gives sleep to his beloved.

**Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD,**

**the fruit of the womb a reward.**

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior

are the sons of one's youth.

**Happy is the man who has**

**his quiver full of them.**

**He shall not be put to shame**

**when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.**

**Prayers of the People**

Lord you are our dwelling place for generations! We thank you for choosing to be among us in your son our savior Jesus Christ.

Thank you for being our hiding place, our fortress, our Comforter.

We thank you also for women and men from ordinary places with extraordinary dreams of serving your good, protecting our nation, preserving freedoms that so many take for granted.

For those who died on the battlefield, for those loved ones who await their soldier’s return.

For those who have returned and need health care and support and understanding.

We thank you, Lord of Life!

We also lift our thanks to you for the ordinary people who have championed the cause of your Church. For your ordinary saints. For those who built this church out of their own pocket books and the dreams you fed them by your holy spirit. We stand on the shoulders of great people who trusted you enough to come when you called and learn your wisdom to do your will.

We thank you. Forgive us for forgetting that we are here because of you. We now stop and remember those who gave of themselves for our own freedoms and our own faith.

(silence)

We remember now.

Those who suffer – those who are ill with cancers and infections, difficulty with mobility, living with an incurable illness. We pray your Spirit to be with them and come alongside them to bring them comfort.

We remember our present saints – those who are helping the helpless, fighting for the oppressed, feeding the hungry. And we ask you, Lord, to increase their harvest, for they sow much of themselves, to help your world.

We lift up those who have chosen to serve. Remind us, O Lord, of the things that matter most to your heart. Direct our hearts towards what is most important to yours. Teach us to know and love our neighbors. We ask this in the name of the one who comes in the name of the Lord, and who walked this earth and taught us how to pray saying, “Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done. On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. “

**Time out for Teaching: God At Work**

One of the chief comforts I find in belonging to God’s church is God’s House is always under construction. We could confidently state with a big yellow traffic sign, “God at Work” for God’s kingdom never stops being built. We heard a brief word from Psalm 127 today which is about building a house “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who built it labor in vain…” thus a reminder that if the Lord is not an integral part of any house, that is where God directs the building and is a part of the cornerstone, then the house was built in vain.

We would say the same about anything we do in life, particularly as members of the house of God. We can remember times when this house was being built or repaired and the decisions this congregation faced when determining how to go about doing it faithfully and responsibly.

When we do it with the prayerful determination that we are being directed by God’s Holy Spirit, out of the interest in glorifying God and not ourselves, maybe that is the best way to participate in decisions for God’s house. What do you think?

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17**

1Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you. 2Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3Now wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4When he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." 5She said to her, "All that you tell me I will do."

4:13So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the LORD made her conceive, and she bore a son. 14Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! 15He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him." 16Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. 17The women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

**Gospel Mark 12:38-44**

38As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! 40They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

41He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. 43Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

**Sermon: Our Two Cents**

This past week the big news was that nearly 50% of American voters turned out for elections. This was an historic high for midterm elections, that is, for non-presidential elections. It was obvious that people care a lot about getting their voices heard, maybe more than ever before, and that they bothered to come out for elections means they actually believed that putting in their two cents mattered.

I’ve heard it before – voter apathy – when we grouse and challenge the system, and express our doubts that our individual voices will matter. Apparently voter apathy was replaced this time with a great deal of determination and hope that our two cents might actually make a difference.

I believe it. Our two cents matters when trying to make change for the better.

It’s not just in voicing our votes in the way our government ought to work. It’s in everything we do with our lives. In choosing how we spend our money, how we raise our families, and particularly in how we take part in the life of the church - if we take part. It’s a matter wise dedication and use of all God has given us, including ourselves. But we are called to recognize that all we have is by the graciousness of God, and the gifts of those saints who raised us. If we recognize that we have been blessed, then we know what we have is to be treated with Tender Loving Care. Whether you have more than two cents or just barely two cents to rub together, what you have is a gift.

Our Elders haven’t traditionally tried to challenge the church to increase your giving on Sundays. In fact, the best gift one could give to God’s house is to lead more people to know of God’s love for them, and hopefully they would come to this church to find that out. We do not wish to be like those Jesus warns us about in the gospel reading. We do not want to squeeze money or property out of a person, for it is not God’s way. God’s way is to lead us to freedom to give freely and generously, for this is the way God wants us to know Him. Free and Generous and Abundant.

What we have to give may not look like much, and it could cause us to doubt the worth of our own voices and the value of our two cents. We might downgrade our gifts and see them as just a drop in the bucket.

The woman in our gospel story did not think this. Jesus compares her two coins dropped into the treasury as of greater value to those wealthy ones who dropped much larger amounts of money into the bucket. But also compared here was the difference between her full sacrifice of her two coins and the tendency of the scribes who were using their reputation to take advantage of the poor. Jesus said, “They devour widows’ houses…” referring to those religious leaders who expected to receive special treatment because of their position.

By contrast, this particular widow gave all of her savings, to the synagogue. By contrast, she was not being devoured by those in high places. She was not even giving her required “10%” tithe. Her giving was never really about dollar amounts or shekel amounts. Her giving was about the spiritual satisfaction that comes from giving of ourselves.

Our two cents matter. Not just because the church coffers could use it. Because it’s a matter of the heart. And it adds up. Giving money is just one way of giving of ourselves because we are thankful to God. Giving our time, an hour, a month or a week, putting in our two cents during church meetings, accepting invitations to serve as an elder or deacon, all of these are ways that Jesus would love to see your two cents too. Christmas Child boxes are also a part of this.

This day when we think gratefully about the sacrifices of ordinary people, soldiers, their families, we can remember that they gave. It was out of a sense of obligation and duty, strengthened with courage. But it was and is also because so many just simply have the desire to give back to a nation they believe in and for us to be inspired to give of ourselves to all we believe in.

That widow believed in her two cents, she showed how much she valued her life in the synagogue by giving all her savings. Her two cents mattered to her, and that’s why she gave it to God. Let us also remember that what we value most is worth sharing with God and give thanks for those who demonstrate the meaning of sacrifice. Amen.

**Announcements:**

**Monday night, Green Chile Gals** are gathering for a friendship meal. Let’s meet at the church around 5:45pm and have fun!

**Tuesday Night 5:30PM Session Meeting:**  Elders of the church, let’s meet for the 2nd to last Session Meeting of 2018 in the Library. An Agenda is coming!

**Sunday, July 18th** is the 3rd Sunday of the month and you know what that means: Fellowship Dinner Sunday! Bring a friend to meet your church family.

**Sunday, December 2nd after worship is New Members Lunch and Learn:** Bring a sandwich for strength! We will meet from 12:15PM till 2:00PM to learn the ins and outs of being a member of the church. Bring all of your questions.