**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**November 14, 2021 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**RH 144 I Greet Thee Whom My Sure Redeemer Art**

**RH 236 Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart**

**BH 322 Spirit of the Living God (Prayer for Illumination)**

**RH 303 Be Thou My Vision**

**Call to Worship**

Today we sabbath, we take rest in the Lord our God.  
**We put aside productivity to wonder and worship.**  
Today we sabbath, to do a different kind of work.  
**We have gathered to do liturgy, the work of the people.**  
Today we sabbath, for the world does not revolve around us.  
**We revolve around God and God’s goodness and grace.**  
Come, let us worship God!

**Opening Prayer**

**Help us, Lord, to turn toward your way,  
to fill our minds with your thoughts,  
to fill our hearts with your love,  
to fill our footsteps with your will.  
Guide us as we seek your vision of success,  
though it will mean letting go of our own.  
We pray in the name of the One who turned success upside down.  
Amen.**

**Call to Confession**

Friends, let us confess the ways that we have failed to live up to God’s bountiful invitation.

**Confession  
God of justice,  
in baptism you anointed us  
to live boldly in the reality of your coming kingdom.  
We confess that we have not fulfilled our calling.  
We have not used your power to serve our neighbors.  
We have walked away from oppression and injustice.  
We have turned our backs on your beloved children  
who hunger and thirst in a world of plenty.  
Forgive us, Lord.  
Make us courageous servants  
of your justice, peace, and wholeness,  
in Jesus’ name. *~silence~*  Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**Hear and live this good news: Love could not be contained in the tomb and will not be constrained by our understanding! Christ is risen, bringing forgiveness and hope to all people. **Alleluia! Amen!**

Friends, Believe the good news of the Gospel.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

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.**

**1 Samuel 2:1-10**

Hannah prayed and said,

**"My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is exalted in my God. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in my victory.**

"There is no Holy One like the LORD, no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.

**Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.**

The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength.

**Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.**

The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.

**The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts.**

He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor.

**For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world.**

"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by might does one prevail.

**The LORD! His adversaries shall be shattered; the Most High will thunder in heaven.**

The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king, and exalt the power of his anointed."

**Prayers of the People**

Holy One, in your love and mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Holy One, Spark of Life,  
creation was envisioned by you and is sustained by you;  
in gratitude we pray for the world:  
that its riches and resources be used responsibly and fairly;  
that its rulers and leaders may govern with justice, compassion and humility;  
that humankind may live with understanding and respect,  
noticing what unites us;  
In your love and mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Holy One, Prophet of Love,  
you lived among us to teach us – to show us – how to love;  
in humility we pray for siblings around the globe:  
for those dehumanized by their struggle for existence, may we listen;  
for those overshadowed by the constancy of death, may we notice;  
for those besieged by fear, anger and relentless peril, may we show up;  
for those ensnared by systems beyond their control, may we demand change.  
In your love and mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy One, Breath of Being,  
you are here – in this very moment – as constant presence and insistent voice;  
in gratitude we pray…with boldness we pray:  
inundate the world with humanity,  
overwhelm the world with truth,  
flood the world with kindness,  
upset our indifference,  
accelerate our action,  
fortify our resolve,  
compel us to authentic discipleship  
that nurtures creation, embodies love and breathes life.  
In your love and mercy, **hear our prayer.**

**Offering**

**Prayer for Illumination BH 322 Spirit of the Living God**

**Time out for Teaching: More Thoughts on Aging – How to Make a Friend**

How do you make a friend?

It is a proven fact that as we get older, we need to work harder at keeping friendships and making new ones. I heard the other day from someone named Kendra Oglesbee that “the Church is the keeper of the relational arts.” What do you think that means?

We may see relationships fall apart in other areas of life, but here in the Church we have a common calling to serve the same Lord. And part of that service is to proclaim God’s goodness through relationships. And relationship-building is not just a skill – it’s an art.

Author Sue Johnson asks, “Where do we get the idea that a healthy human is someone who needs no one?” Good question.

Not only is having friends a proclamation of God’s goodness. Having friends is healthy for us, even for those of us who are introverts.

Loneliness has health consequences for us as we grow older: Cognitive decline, Dementia, impaired executive functioning, depression, neuroticism or even hallucinations, disturbed sleep patterns, heightened anxiety and possibly suicidal thoughts, metabolic imbalances, higher chance of cardiovascular disease.

Real friends: give constructive feedback, help us define “normal,” shape our self-image, identify our strengths and weaknesses, help us be braver in facing the world… “A man of many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” Proverbs 18

From a book, “Created for Connection” some suggestions on making friends:

1. Say yes to invitations
2. Extend an invitation
3. Do the things you love and find others who love those things too
4. Try something new
5. Look for someone who needs a friend
6. Make space, be interruptible
7. Think “Board of Directors.” (We can have friends for different things and don’t have to have just one best friend! As we get older, this is a good thing.)

You need to have had at least 30 contacts with someone to be able to go from acquaintance to friend! Practice: Receptivity, reciprocity, trustworthiness, then repeat.

And stop using the word “social distancing” and change to “physical distancing.”

Books on the topic:

The Book of Proverbs – by The Lord

Created for Connection – Sue Johnson

Joy Starts Here – James Wilder

Living with Purpose in a Worn Out Body: Spiritual Encouragement for Older Adults – Missy Buchanan

Making Friends (& Making Them Count) – EM Griffin

Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in the Digital Age – Sherry Turkle

**1 Samuel 1:4-20**

4On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; 5but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. 6Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. 7So it went on year by year; as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. 8Her husband Elkanah said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

9After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the LORD. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. 10She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly. 11She made this vow: "O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head."

12As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. 13Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk. 14So Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine." 15But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. 16Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time." 17Then Eli answered, "Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him." 18And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your sight." Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer.

19They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. 20In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the LORD."

**Second Reading Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25**

11And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. 12But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, "he sat down at the right hand of God," 13and since then has been waiting "until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet." 14For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. 15And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying, 16"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds," 17he also adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." 18Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

19Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, 20by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), 21and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. 24And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, 25not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

**Gospel Mark 13:1-8**

1As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" 2Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

3When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, 4"Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?" 5Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. 6Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. 7When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. 8For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birthpangs.

**Sermon “Just a Little Apocalypse” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

You heard a little apocalyptic literature just now. I like apocalypticism. It is exciting stuff, mysterious and the imagery is meant to really grab our attention! It speaks of something that we cannot see with our eyes, but God reveals to us in some other way. Jesus does this in his conversation with four of his disciples, sitting amid the olive trees on the Mount of Olives. Mark describes it as if the Temple and the Mount of Olives are just side by side. From a Big perspective, like God’s point of view, they do look close to each other. But for a human to get from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives it is a good 30 minutes on foot – you have to travel down the Temple Mount (Mount Zion) across the Kidron Valley where the graves are, and then back up the Mount of Olives. Unlike when I was there, Jerusalem didn’t have tour buses yet. This story takes place just one chapter before Jesus stands trial before the Sanhedrin. Jesus reveals to them that there shall be “birthpangs” of something new happening. Birthpangs HURT, by the way. If you have known what birthpangs feel like, I’m sure you have another name for it!

The rest of chapter 13 continues to describe what to expect, but with a very important lesson to these four disciples: Watch out that you are not deceived and to hold fast to God’s Word, for God’s Word endures forever. Early Christians read this little apocalypse and found comfort in it. As believers they were being persecuted and threatened with their lives, so this could give them comfort in knowing that their suffering for the faith would not last forever. That all the hurt and anguish they may feel right now would one day give way to healing and joy. Just like giving birth…

The traditional way that we understand this story is as a prediction of some future time, the end of days, when God’s kingdom will finally prevail. It FEELS like good news. It can be good news to those who are feeling burned and beaten down today. It is a comfort to us who believe that eventually “all things must pass.”

We need a little apocalypse sometimes. We could use a little glimpse of what is to come. We are anxious to see that God has everything under control and that all shall be well. A little apocalypse will put everything back into perspective again. It will remind us of just who is in charge of all of this craziness!

A traditional interpretation of Mark’s “Little Apocalypse” is that this is a prediction of the end of times. What will those times look like? Will it be scary? What will happen to everyone? How shall we react? Some of us listen to the news and witness world events and say to ourselves, “Gosh, the world today looks just like what Mark said it would.” Then we wonder, are we now in those end times? It seems like it. We have wars and rumors of wars. Check! We see families breaking apart. Check! We see earthquakes and fires. Check! Check! Famines. Check! We have it all. No wonder so many of us think that the end is near!

In a way it is. And it has been for some time. We live between the now and the not yet. For when Jesus was talking to his disciples about this, those things were also happening. Jerusalem and much of the Middle East, which sits on the Great Rift Valley that extends from Turkey, south through the Jordan River Valley, on south all the way to East Africa, was an earthquake zone. People were already experiencing catastrophes. That’s not even the big news anyways. The bigger news is about what God has already done through Jesus Christ. For the last 2,021 years or so, we has been given a choice as to whether to believe in Him.

Sometimes we forget what apocalypse means anyway. It means “revelation.” The unveiling of what is happening, which is ordinarily invisible to the naked eye. The name of the Book of Revelation in the Greek is “Ho Apocalupsis.” It may speak to what the end of times could look like. But more importantly, it speaks to what is happening NOW in heaven, as we bear witness and try to respond faithfully to the catastrophes happening around us. It reveals to us that no matter what is going on, God’s Word endures forever. And so we too are charged to keep calm, remain watchful, take heart, and of course, hold fast.

In closing, I want to share with you a little something I learned about anxiety. We have the choice as to how to dealt with the world, as we witness the birthpangs Jesus describes. We have the choice between being reactive and responsive. Reactivity means we might do something less faithful, more out of our own fears, possibly in a damaging way to ourselves or others. Responsivity means we deal with everything from a place of peace, prayerfully, trusting God. We have a part to play in God’s kingdom, as we live between the now and not yet. As we await a better day, let us also live as if that better day is here. Now. For God’s Word endures forever. Amen.

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Amy (Glenna Gray’s daughter) chronic medical issues  
Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (paralyzed) – Glenda’s sisters  
Bill Assini – fell, broken rib, in a lot of pain

Dorothy Randals’ Family in their loss

Elmer Schuster - leg pain

Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer   
Glenda Coles – awaiting shoulder surgery (early December)  
Gloria Martinez (Teresa Gallegos’ sister) – healing after leg surgery

Jenna Morris – recovery from knee surgery (2 weeks)  
Lissa – (Glenda’s granddaughter) thanksgiving for new baby   
Lucy Jasper – Alzheimers/Dementia  
Lynn Hudson – grief for Jim, helping Misty’s family  
Misty Tompkins – stiff person syndrome, seeking experimental program

Pablo Benavidez Family in their loss

Pat Sieglen – health and strength; a new medical concern  
People seeking jobs, and people seeking employees  
Ruth Johnson – for general health  
Sarah Hittson's daughter Marie - surgery  
Schools, students, teachers and families  
Sharon and Wayne Huffman – general health  
Shay – Julie Sursa’s daughter

Susie – still seeking a car, planning for EMS school  
Teresa Gallegos-Brake – for the health of her foot and toe

Tommy Morris – for health and strength  
Travelers  
All those suffering from COVID19

**Announcements:**

**October Bible Study:** Rev. Amy is looking at starting up a brief, Fall Bible Study. Try to make time for an evening, weekly study of 1 Corinthians. This wonderful, 16 chapter letter discusses life together as a Christian community and how we can live our lives in light of the grace of Jesus Christ. Stay tuned for more details.

**No October Rummage Sale:** This fall, the Presbyterian Women will not be having our usual Fall Rummage Sale. However, we plan to have a sale and could use your help. We will be selling items through Facebook and eBay. Please let Marjorie McKenzie know if you are able to help us make it a success!