**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, November 4, 2018, 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

You are the God of all Creation,

The Living Rock upon which our ancestors depended

And today we remember

Your constant providence throughout generations.

Turn our hearts again today

To gratitude,

To humility

Towards your everlasting love.

In Christ, through Christ and in Christ our Lord

Our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

**Call to Confession**

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

Friends, hear the good news! Though thousands upon thousands of our ancestors did not follow God’s ways perfectly, we have hope in the one who did! Jesus, a man of a particular people in a particular time, taught through his words and deeds that God has already forgiven us. Thus, we and all who have come before us are rightly known as saints – the holy ones of God! Thanks be to God for God’s mercy, grace, and love! **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 146:1-10 (please see bulletin)**

**Time out for Teaching: Focus on Ruth**

We are going to take a little look at our reading from Ruth today. Let’s turn in the New Testament to Ruth chapter 1 and remember the situation they were facing.

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Mark 12:28-34**

28One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" 29Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; 30you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 31The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that '"he is one, and besides him there is no other'; 33and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'-this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

**Ruth 1:1-18**

1In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. 2The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. 3But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. 4These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, 5both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

6Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had considered his people and given them food. 7So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. 8But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. 10They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." 11But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? 12Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, 13would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me." 14Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16But Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; Where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17Where you die, I will die-there will I be buried. May the LORD do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!" 18When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

**Sermon: With All Our Hearts**

“Where you go, I will go, where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God my God...” Thus declared Ruth to her mother-in-law, Naomi. These are some of the most beautiful words you might ever find in the Old Testament. So beautiful, they are popular in weddings, because of the promise to always be together. Even though nowhere in this book will you hear Ruth actually say the words, “I love you” to Naomi, her words and subsequent actions are clear to us. She follows through on her promise and eventually, following Naomi all the way back to Judah, Naomi ends up making good for Ruth, helping her find a kinsman who will marry and redeem her forever. But Ruth didn’t know that was going to happen. Not yet at least.

No wonder this is so popular at weddings. Love is blind, unable to see where it will ultimately lead.

But this devotion, according to the customs of the day, was purely unnecessary by society’s standards. No one expected Ruth to pick up and move with Naomi. But true love, as in the case of Ruth and Naomi, can cause a person to do big gestures, like travel to a foreign country just to stay together. Naomi’s life was as good as over – her husband died first, then both of her sons. Her world had turned tragic in a short period of time. And to make matters worse, she was a widow alone in a foreign land. She had no blood relatives there, not even a grandchild to keep her in Moab. Naomi wanted Ruth and Orpah to return to their own relatives too, and it was for their own survival. Ruth and Orpah still had a fighting chance to have children, but Naomi did not. You go home to your family and I will go home to mine. It’s the way things are done.

Naomi gave them the chance to leave her. One did and one stayed. Orpah did the socially-acceptable thing and left. But Ruth remained. Ruth makes a pledge that we may see as a loving promise of fellowship. Ruth’s promise – to go wherever Naomi goes, that Naomi’s God is now her God, that she will be buried wherever Naomi is buried – that’s not just a beautiful fellowship and friendship. That’s a miracle of faith, which defies social expectations and binds them together as family.

The Saints of old get our honor and praise for miracles of faith. There are formalized protocols which tell us how we mortals become saints – beatified, affiliated with miracles. But the biggest and most important miracle we could be a part of is when we love so much we would move heaven and earth in order to remove another’s pain. We don’t perform miracles; we participate in them. God makes miracles happen. We are just blessed to enough when we notice them, and become a part of God’s activity.

It’s a myth to think we ourselves perform miracles. If we think we alone defy evil’s hold on our lives, even if we think we are the ones who comfort the lonely or lost. But we participate in God’s work, when we contribute our perseverance. You and I have an extraordinary opportunity to watch out for signs of God’s handiwork, then jump in and try to do the right thing.

It’s a step of faith for us to jump in and do right, because we don’t often know how God is going to use us, and it might surprise us.

A close friend of my family had a father who served in World War II in France. He was mortally wounded in battle. His leg had been so badly wounded that he was sure he was going to die. Sure he would no longer need his weapon, he gave it to a fellow soldier so his buddy could use it to defend himself. He relinquished his own defenses because it felt like the right thing to do in face of certain death. Miraculously, the medics were able to get him out of there even though his leg got amputated. But he lived, raising children and living a long life. More recently, in a nursing home, an elderly gentleman walked by. It was his buddy from the battlefield! They visited and it was a joyous remembrance of that moment when each was striving to do what was right.

When we do the right thing, we are also trusting in God that He too is doing the right thing. With us, for us and for the world. It is the how and the why we modern Saints persevere through some of the hardest and the easier times. We can trust God is always doing right, so we can muster the strength to do right too.

Ruth the Moabite didn’t have to do what she did. But she claimed, “your God is my God…” It was her call to do the honorable thing, and not just what this world expected of her. She didn’t know where this new God of hers was leading them, but she knew what she should do next. None of them knew yet that Naomi would help her meet Boaz, and 2 generations later Israel would be ruled by King David.

See what happens when we trust God and do what is right? When we participate in doing the honorable things, and trust God is also doing good, then that is a life worthy of sainthood. Like Ruth, like Mike’s dad on the battlefield, seek out what honorable act or gesture of devotion you’re called to do. You can do it! Because God is working with you. Amen.

**Service of Holy Communion**

**Invitation**

Come. God calls you – to bring your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole mind and all your body to join with the One Body of Christ. This is not our table. It is the table of God who invites all to join in this meal of celebration.

**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

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

With our whole heart and our very being  
we praise you for you are a wise and wonderful God.  
With nothing more than a word,  
you created the whirling planets  
and breathed life into all of creation.  
You made us in your image,  
that we might be stewards of this good earth.

Together, with all of creation, we sing your majesty:  
**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

You blessed us with the promise of abundance and grace  
if only we lived within the bounds of your mercy.  
But we pushed those boundaries and neglected your earth,  
mistreating one another and failing to care for creation.  
So you sent your Son, Jesus Christ,  
to redeem us for we were unable to redeem ourselves.  
In the flesh he came among us and preached the Gospel  
not only in word but in deed.

We give you thanks that the Lord Jesus,  
on the night before he died, took bread,  
and after giving thanks to you, he broke it,  
and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat. This is my body, broken for you.

In the same way Jesus took the cup, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,  
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

We gather this day, God of all majesty and power,  
to lift up your holy name and proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Giver of Every Mercy,  
send us the presence of your Spirit  
that she might bless us in this holy meal,  
sending us forth into the world  
to be both hearers and doers of your Word.  
Unite us this day with our sisters and brothers around the world  
as we preach the Gospel and grow in our understanding of discipleship.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,  
all glory and honor are yours, Holy God,  
both now and forever more.

And now with the confidence of the children of God we pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven…” **Amen**.

**Announcements:**

**Women of the Church:** Wednesday, November 7th around 6:00PM, the Green Chile Gals are meeting after work for a fellowship meal at the church. We’re doing it potluck style. Invite a friend! Please take note that we changed this recently from Monday to Wednesday evening. However, several of us will run off at 6:55 to Cantata practice!