**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**October 10, 2021 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**RH 404 Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me**

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

**RH 302 Have Thine Own Way, Lord**

**RH 85 Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise**

**Call to Worship**

Come from east and west, north and south!
**From everywhere God has placed us,
with everything God has given us,
as the people God made us—we come.**
Come, receive again the gift of grace!

**Not for owning, not for boasting, but for celebrating—we come.**
Come, discover again the way that leads to life!
**Remembering who we are, seeking who we are yet to be—we come.**

**Opening Prayer**

God of Good News,
we are reminded this day
that our faith is always personal but never private.
Bless our worship this day that we might leave this place
to live out our faith in tangible ways that change lives.
In all that we do, may we do it for your Gospel. **Amen**.

**Call to Confession**

Recognizing our need for true peace,
both with others and within our own selves,
let us confess those ways we have distanced ourselves from God.

**Confession
Merciful God,
you call us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.
But often we ignore that wisdom.
Instead of listening, we talk past one another.
Instead of exercising patience, we become hotheaded and irritable.
Instead of practicing kindness, we hand out judgment and malice.
Help us rid ourselves of wickedness and embrace steadfast love in its place.
Forgive us of our sins so that, when we look in the mirror,
we see the disciples you are calling us to be.  *~silence~***

We pray in the name of the One who emptied himself in order to live your will.**Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**Hear and live this good news: Christ brings forgiveness and hope to all people.

Friends, Believe the good news of the Gospel.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen!**

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 22:1-15**

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

**O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;**

**and by night, but find no rest.**

Yet you are holy,

enthroned on the praises of Israel.

**In you our ancestors trusted;**

**they trusted, and you delivered them.**

To you they cried, and were saved;

in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

**But I am a worm, and not human;**

**scorned by others, and despised by the people.**

All who see me mock at me;

they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;

**"Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver —**

**let him rescue the one in whom he delights!"**

Yet it was you who took me from the womb;

you kept me safe on my mother's breast.

**On you I was cast from my birth,**

**and since my mother bore me you have been my God.**

Do not be far from me,

for trouble is near

and there is no one to help.

**Many bulls encircle me,**

**strong bulls of Bashan surround me;**

**they open wide their mouths at me,**

**like a ravening and roaring lion.**

I am poured out like water,

and all my bones are out of joint;

my heart is like wax;

it is melted within my breast;

**my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,**

**and my tongue sticks to my jaws;**

**you lay me in the dust of death.**

**Prayers of the People (prayer written by Richard Einerson)**

Eternal God, we bow this day aware of all of the mysteries of life which will always be beyond our understanding and comprehension.  We all either have or will stand in the company of Job and utter our complaints.

When days go bad we feel as abandoned as did Job and we ask “why?” When life is unfair and we feel you are being heavy-handed with our destiny we also complain bitterly. When there are no answers we too wonder how you could feel so far away from us and we too wish to know where we might find you. When we feel faint of heart and beaten down we too sink into depression and despair.

O God, be near in such times even when we cannot feel you are near.

Give us strength and courage and fortitude in the middle of life’s most difficult moments.
Give us the courage to bring our anger and our frustration before you.
Give us courage to raise our fists in anger and keep conversation with you in our turmoil.
Give us courage to be open and transparent and honest in our search for you.
Give us courage to face our fears head on and not wish to hide or deny them.

O GOD, GIVE US COURAGE.  GIVE US COURAGE FOR ALL OF LIFE’S STORMS.

Through whatever storms life presents we pray that you will give us the ability to trust though we cannot see the way ahead, to maintain hope though life momentarily would drag us to despair, to believe that you will provide us with victory and triumph.  Be our God and our guide.  Amen

**Offering**

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

**Time out for Teaching: Elements of Christian Worship – Justin the Martyr Explains All**

I’d like to introduce to you today a VIP of the Early Church. His name was Justin Martyr.

His nickname is “martyr” because he was eventually beheaded for his faith, along with six of his students in the late 160s. Let’s not also forget that the word “martyr” literally means “witness” in Greek.

Here is an excerpt from his “First Apology” in which he explains to skeptics what Christian worship looks like. Listen and tell me what sounds familiar to you, like maybe it’s something we do today.

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things, Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying, Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.

And those who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.

But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world, and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn [Saturday]; and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them those things, which we have submitted for your consideration.

**Job 23:1-9, 16-17**

1Then Job answered: 2"Today also my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy despite my groaning. 3Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his dwelling! 4I would lay my case before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. 5I would learn what he would answer me, and understand what he would say to me. 6Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power? No; but he would give heed to me. 7There an upright person could reason with him, and I should be acquitted forever by my judge.

8"If I go forward, he is not there; or backward, I cannot perceive him; 9on the left he hides, and I cannot behold him; I turn to the right, but I cannot see him.

16God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me; 17If only I could vanish in darkness, and thick darkness would cover my face!

**Hebrews 4:12-16**

12Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

14Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. 15For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. 16Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Gospel Mark 10:17-31**

17As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 19You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" 20He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." 21Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." 22When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." 26They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" 27Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

28Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." 29Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, 30who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age — houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions — and in the age to come eternal life. 31But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

**Sermon “The Cure” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

 The man who seeks answers from Jesus is given a prescription – the cure for his condition – and what he learns causes him shock and grief. See, his concern was to inherit eternal life. And he asks, “What must I do?” Jesus’ answer greatly saddens him: sell what he owns and give away the money to the poor. And after that, follow Jesus. This is the cure. It is what YOU can do to inherit eternal life.

 But it is a troublesome question this man asks of Jesus. “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” I suppose, if you are concerned with whether or not you must do something to earn eternal life, then GOOD LUCK! What seems so funny to me about this brief conversation is the young rich man thinks that he has to qualify for God’s gift of eternal life. But it seems to me that eternal life is God’s gift to us, something that is impossible for any of us to earn. None of us qualify. That’s the condition we all are in.

 But the rich young man thinks that Jesus has given him an impossible task. The cure for his condition seems far too painful to try. He tried to imagine letting go of all of his earthly possessions and just couldn’t bring himself to do it. Maybe he eventually tried it and we didn’t hear about that part of the story. But here, he didn’t realize that eternal life already WAS possible. He thought it was something he had to work for, if he would just fulfill of every bit of God’s law. Sometimes we do similar things. We think that if we do something for God, then God will do something for us. I’ll scratch your back if you give me eternal life. Quid Pro Quo, perhaps. But if we think we must earn that priceless gift of eternal life, then we certainly have to let go of everything we value over Jesus. But you can’t buy God’s love. It is already there.

 This fact is couched in a larger story. For we are being told to think more like God thinks and less the logic of this world. He tells us how hard it can be for the wealthy to enter God’s kingdom, harder than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. And his listeners exclaim, “Then who can be saved?” They sound about as surprised as that young man. But that’s when Jesus nails home the message – “For mortals it is impossible. But for God, anything is possible.” Who can be saved? No one, not on their own merits. But with God, anything is possible.

 We often take this story as one that says you are not allowed to have any property or possessions at all. But I think the real problem is that riches and possessions, can certainly get in the way of our relationships – to others and even to God. And we can hold these riches too tightly to share. I guess it is also safe to say that those who are living a life of poverty might seem closer to God, just because they have nothing else to rely on. However, let’s not glorify poverty, nor assume that this is always the case. It’s more complicated than that. But what I do know, from personal experience, is when someone comes through for you in your time of need, it can provide a stronger assurance of God’s love. Therefore, we take up special collections to help a person in trouble. We pull together meals to comfort a family in grief. We open our homes to welcome a lonely person for fellowship. We give someone a ride to a doctor’s appointment. We give, to help people out of their hard times. But we give also, so that they and we all feel closer to Jesus! We give, not because we think it will earn us a spot in heaven. We give, because we already know that God has done everything to save us.

 That rich young man still had a few things to learn about grace. Grace is a slippery subject until you run right into it and find the freedom and joy of remembering it once more. The young man thought he was supposed to DO something in the first place to gain God’s favor. We are told right there in the text, after he tells Jesus all that he has done so far to fulfill God’s Law, that “Jesus loved him.” Jesus already loved him, as this young man sought answers. And as that young man walked away disappointed, Jesus continued to love him. Grace is the fact that we are loved, no matter where we are in this journey of life, and grace is the only cure for our condition. Rest in Him! Amen.

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Amy (Glenna Gray’s daughter) chronic medical issues
Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (paralyzed) – Glenda’s sisters
Dorothy Randals – at Autumn Blessings, for strength and comfort
Elmer Schuster - leg pain
Ernest (Susie's uncle) - prostate cancer
Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer, grief at loss of husband, Larry
Glenda Coles – shoulder surgery (likely to be on 10/8)
Gloria Martinez (Teresa Gallegos’ sister) – recovering after leg surgery
Jazzie's mom (friend of Laro) - stroke
Jenna Morris – injured knee, doctor's visit end of the month
Keith Bond – grieving for Lavone

Leroy (Susie's cousin) hospitalized with COVID in Arizona
Lissa – Glenda’s granddaughter (high risk pregnancy)
Lucy Jasper  – Dementia
Lynn Hawkins – still seeking a home closer to her doctor
Odelia Moya - hospitalized with COVID, on life support
Pat Sieglen – health and strength; please pray she can go home
People seeking jobs, and people seeking employees
Rex Maddaford - had a second stroke
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, training for EMS school
Travelers
All those suffering from COVID19

**Announcements:**

**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!

**Potluck Fellowship is Next Sunday**…After church, please plan to stay after and share a meal with one another. If 2 or 3 are gathered in His name, then you can expect to meet Jesus.

**Special thanks to everyone** for helping at yesterday’s service for Lavone.