**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**October 24, 2021 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**RH 437 The Church’s One Foundation**

**RH 391 Prayer is the Soul’s Sincerest Desire**

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

**RH 496 Jesus Shall Reign Where’er the Sun**

**Call to Worship**

Brother Jesus, We pray this morning that you hear, see, call and heal us.
**Jesus, have mercy on us!**Sometimes we are deaf to your voice. Other times, we can hear you so clearly that we are guides for others, pointing the way to you. Call us now.
**Son of David, have mercy on us!**Sometimes we are blind to your signs and wonders all around us. Sometimes we can see clearly where the path ahead lies. Show us your way now.
**Teacher, let us see again!
Brother Jesus, we pray this morning that you hear, see, call and heal us. Amen.**

**Opening Prayer**

Faithful God,
we present ourselves to you that

we become seeds of your new creation:
planted in the needs of the world you love;
watered by tears and hope;
fed and strengthened by the glow of Christ’s resurrection;
gathered home with joy and singing. 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~*

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

**Assurance of Pardon**The peace of Christ surpasses our understanding;
receive it, celebrate it and live into it with joy!

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.**

**Psalm 34:1-8 (19-22)**

I will bless the LORD at all times;

his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

**My soul makes its boast in the LORD;**

**let the humble hear and be glad.**

O magnify the LORD with me,

and let us exalt his name together.

**I sought the LORD, and he answered me,**

**and delivered me from all my fears.**

Look to him, and be radiant;

so your faces shall never be ashamed.

**This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD,**

**and was saved from every trouble.**

The angel of the LORD encamps

around those who fear him, and delivers them.

**O taste and see that the LORD is good;**

**happy are those who take refuge in him.**

Many are the afflictions of the righteous,

but the LORD rescues them from them all.

**He keeps all their bones;**

**not one of them will be broken.**

Evil brings death to the wicked,

and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

**The LORD redeems the life of his servants;**

**none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.**

**Prayers of the People**

Lord of glory, Savior of all who call on you,
we pray for your people who are near to our hearts today.
We rejoice with those who rejoice,
whose hopes and dreams have come true today.
Let our mouths be filled with laughter,
and let us sing songs of joy,
for you have done great things for your people.
We give you thanks!
Merciful God, we also weep with those who weep.
We call out on behalf of those whose lives are dry and barren,
for all who long to be restored.
Where there are tears, or suffering, or illness, or grief,
may there be songs of joy once again.
We lift up the prayers of your people
with longing and hope,
trusting that you will bring forth a harvest of joy.
We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Offering**

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

**Time out for Teaching: Elements of Christian Worship – The Worship Cycle**

What is the Worship Cycle?

The Worship Cycle, or Liturgical Year, is a way that we attend to the special holidays and seasons of the church, which tell the story of God’s salvation history, come to us in Jesus Christ, and the formation of the church.

We observe the ancient feast days of the early church - such as Christmas and Easter, Pentecost – and other important times that are based on the stories of Scripture.

The Lectionary texts (a set of Scriptures offered us for use on Sundays…) are there to help us think about the meaning of those important days. So, when you look at the options for Easter, you usually see at least 6-7 readings. As your pastor, I am the one who chooses what we read and I am not required to just use the lectionary. It is helpful, however.

Why do you think we need a cycle of worship in our church?

I think it provides structure and order to our worship, for one thing. And when we have structure and order, then we are better able to grasp what is going on. Then we are also better able to remember and learn things about the story of God for us.

The Apostle Paul once charged his flock at Corinth that worship should be “decent and in good order.” He said this because people were speaking in tongues during church, and no one was around to interpret this. It was unfair to others there who didn’t understand it. In Paul’s mind, I think, he wanted the experience of Christian worship to be something that everyone should be able to access and understand, to the greatest extent possible.

Another good reason I can think of for why we have a cycle of liturgical seasons is because we live the experience. As this generation of saints in the church, we now get the chance to live that cycle of life, we become a part of the story too.

Can you think of other special liturgical days/seasons? Epiphany, Lent, Christ the King, Advent…

**Job 42:1-6, 10-17**

1Then Job answered the LORD: 2"I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 3'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you declare to me.' 5I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; 6therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

10And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. 11Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring. 12The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. 13He also had seven sons and three daughters. 14He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. 15In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. 16After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. 17And Job died, old and full of days.

**Epistle Hebrews 7:23-28**

23Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; 24but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

26For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. 28For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

**Gospel Mark 10:46-52**

46They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. 47When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." 50So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." 52Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

**Sermon “Happily Ever After” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

 Wouldn’t it be nice for once to end a story with, “And they lived happily forever after. The End” ? It seems that so many of our Bible stories end on a high note. Bartimeus, for instance, goes from being a blind, roadside beggar calling for help, to able to see again, leaping to his feet to become a follower of Jesus! Praise the Lord! Is this a Happily Forever After story? It seems like it. And I suppose anyone who was once blind and now can see is living a Happy Forever After life. What a stark difference it is to go from blind to seeing, and not only seeing, believing in Jesus enough to, “follow him along the way.” It is a traditional healing story, ending with the healed person following Jesus. It has happened again and again that after Jesus heals people, they become his followers.

 I suppose that if someone had healed me instantaneously, and my life altered so immensely, I would follow that person too.

 But how often do we think more of what we want God to do for us: heal our infirmities, fix our problems... - and then we fail to recognize the wonders that God has already done? It is hard to notice these wonders, because most of us are not very good at living in the moment. Instead, we worry more about what’s wrong and what we want God to do for us. Cesar Millan - the man who also is called the “Dog Whisperer” - talks about when he first immigrated to the United States from Mexico. He started out homeless. He said that being homeless taught him about living in the moment, because he wasn’t sure where his next meal would come from, nor where he would sleep that night. It helped him become better able to empathize with others, including other animals. Living in the moment calls for us to pay closer attention to every gift that comes our way, every second of grace that grants us a little relief from whatever pain or struggle we experience. We remember those moments when we notice them.

 Here is an example – a strange one, but true story. It was the year 2001 and a dear friend was in the ICU who was on life support. My friend was about to have emergency open lung surgery. Bob, his minister, drove the 40 minutes to Dallas from the suburbs, and arrived just after my friend had been taken to the Operating Room. Bob found me there, standing in the empty hospital room, where the bed had been. The lens in my glasses fell out. Perfect timing. I was so worried that my hands were shaking. Bob saw that I was having a problem with my glasses and he simply said, “You have enough to worry about, why don’t you let me take your glasses to the eye shop and get them fixed while you wait here?” I acted as though he had just offered me hundreds of dollars. “Oh, you don’t have to do that…” But he insisted. It was one of those little moments of grace that made all the difference in the world. Someone – a man who was far above the pay grade of running menial errands for me - was offering a very small favor which would just take away one less worry. I relented, and while my friend was in surgery, I remained in the room, slightly blind, but feeling graced. Dr. Bob did return at the perfect time with my glasses, tightened, fixed and ready to wear. It was not a situation of “Happily Forever After,” for my friend eventually died. But, it was a reminder that grace comes to us sometimes not with a stamp of happy and “the end.” Grace more often comes to us in drips and drabs, moments when God’s Spirit seems to shine, moments that remind us that we are not alone.

 I have never been satisfied with ending of Job’s story. To me it has always seemed like a strange story. It started out with God and Satan making a deal to see if Satan can rock Job’s faith by causing all sorts of havoc in his life. Job wrestles with whether he had done something to deserve it. But in the end, as we heard this morning, all is going to be okay after all. Job has a new family now, lots of livestock, and lives happily forever after to a ripe old age. He has many descendants and lots of good things. This story is presented to us as if he is now being rewarded with good things after enduring so many tragedies. For some reason, this has bugged me, because even though Job ends up with even more prosperity than he started with, it still doesn’t seem like enough recompense for what happened to him. A story like this could lead us to all think that if we do everything right, we might die rich, something I personally don’t believe happens to everyone who is a saint. It also troubles me that people died to see if Job would pass Satan’s test. Many of us will never know what it was like to be Job. But we do know how hard it is to face the inevitability of pain.

 A book called “Creating Moments of Joy,” gives tips and stories about helping people who suffer from dementia, and how to face dementia with grace. The book describes a story of a nursing home where they would throw tea parties. These residents did not necessarily know where they were, but the smell of the tea, seeing the pretty tea sets on the tables spurred their memories. They immediately remembered how to hold the teacup properly, how to behave at a fancy tea party and thus creating a moment of joy, a moment of grace in their lives. What a blessing that care facility brought to their resident. For the residents there had no other choice but to live in the moment. God is using people to help us all, if we would just open our eyes.

 Perhaps Job’s story is meant to leave us a little uncomfortable. If I were Job, I would still feel the sadness at my many losses, even though I would find comfort over time with finding new family. We can take comfort in also knowing that in time, our pain can subside and give way to a different sort of peace. None of our stories have a Happily Forever After ending, as long as we have a say in it. But God always has the final say. And God sends us moments of grace, in the form of people – like my friend’s minister – to remind us of God’s care for us. Whether to heal us of a great illness, or to simply help shoulder our burdens for a little while. It could help us greatly if we tried to live in the moment more, paying attention to the small graces God sends us. 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
Glenda Coles – shoulder surgery
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 and Family

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
The Moya Family at loss of Odelia

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

Tommy Morris – for good health
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!