**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**September 12, 2021 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

**RH 389 Open My Eyes, that I May See**

**RH 216A Jesus, Lover of My Soul**

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

**RH 399 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling**

**Call to Worship**

The universe is full of God’s handiwork,  
**God’s Holy Wisdom is the source of life.**We celebrate your works, O Holy One,  
**for you are our Creator, your Spirit gives us life.**We will sing God’s praises as long as we have a voice,  
**We bless you God with our whole being!**

**Opening Prayer**

All-encompassing God  
This hour is devoted to worshipping you  
Though it is our whole lives that you require.  
Set your spirit loose among us today  
That we might be free from all which binds us  
And all which divides our focus:  
The lure of football games,  
The rush to get on to lunch,  
The chores and responsibilities awaiting us at home.  
Let our worship be unhindered,  
We ask in Jesus’ name. 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 Mercy and Steadfast Love,  
You gave us our tongues that we may speaks words of love, wisdom, and grace.  
But often our tongues are the vehicles of other things:  
instead of love, hatred,  
instead of wisdom, foolishness,  
instead of grace, rage.  
Like a small fire that sets a forest ablaze,  
too often a word can set forth a flood of fear and anger.  
Help us use our tongues to start other things:  
kindness, compassion, and courage.  
In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**We love the Lord because God has heard our voice and our supplication.  
In the name of Jesus Christ, I announce to you this day: our sins are forgiven!  
**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.**

**Proverbs 1:20-33**

Wisdom cries out in the street;

in the squares she raises her voice.

**At the busiest corner she cries out;**

**at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:**

"How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?

How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing

and fools hate knowledge?

**Give heed to my reproof;**

**I will pour out my thoughts to you;**

**I will make my words known to you.**

Because I have called and you refused,

have stretched out my hand and no one heeded,

and because you have ignored all my counsel

and would have none of my reproof,

**I also will laugh at your calamity;**

**I will mock when panic strikes you,**

**when panic strikes you like a storm,**

**and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,**

**when distress and anguish come upon you.**

Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;

they will seek me diligently, but will not find me.

**Because they hated knowledge**

**and did not choose the fear of the LORD,**

**would have none of my counsel,**

**and despised all my reproof,**

**therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way**

**and be sated with their own devices.**

For waywardness kills the simple,

and the complacency of fools destroys them;

**but those who listen to me will be secure**

**and will live at ease, without dread of disaster."**

**Prayers of the People**

Loving God,

we come this day with gratitude for the gift of life,

for the beauty of your world and your people around us.

We also come this day with hurt, with grief, with confusion—

and we lift up to you those who are in pain,

those who suffer, those who live with illness.

We ask for your comfort to surround your people who sorrow,

your peace to surround your people who live with violence,

your hope to surround your people in despair.

There are many things we do not understand,

and so we pray for your wisdom.

Even as we watch news

of riots and typhoons and shooting in our streets,

we call out for your kingdom of justice and peace and love.

And yet we do not always act as if your kingdom is at hand.

Remind us, Lord, to keep our attention on you.

Set our minds on divine things, that we may be agents of your healing.

Focus our eyes on you, that we may not be seduced by other gods.

When our hearts turn to other ways, call us back to your way.

Help us, O God, to follow you, to live like you, to seek your will,

that the world may know your grace.

Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.

*(silence)*

You have called us to let go of our own vision to follow yours,

and have promised to be with us on the way.

Walk with us and help us to be faithful.

We pray these, and all things, in the name of our Risen Lord Jesus,

who taught us to pray together… *The Lord’s Prayer*

**Offering**

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

**Time out for Teaching: Elements of Christian Worship – Music for the Soul**

Our Presbyterian Church Book of Order has a section in it called “Directory for Worship,” which provides for us guidelines on how to maintain decent and orderly worship services. It is fairly clear on some things but leaves a lot of flexibility for us to determine how to conduct worship in a way that befits our own context. It talks about forms of prayer to be used during the service. It also says, “Music can be a form of prayer.”

So, let’s talk about music today. How does music help you worship? Last week it was mentioned that our sanctuary has good acoustics.

When we sing a hymn that is different or new to you, how does that affect your worship?

When we have a special anthem, sung or played on instruments, what does that do for you?

I like trying new hymns to sing from time to time, because it forces me to think more about the words as I try to figure out the tune.

There are a number of hymns which after we sing them on a Sunday, they come back to me later in the week, almost like a reprise of the service. They play over and over in my head!

**Psalm 19:1-14**

1The heavens are telling the glory of God;

and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

2Day to day pours forth speech,

and night to night declares knowledge.

3There is no speech, nor are there words;

their voice is not heard;

4yet their voice goes out through all the earth,

and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,

5which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,

and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

6Its rising is from the end of the heavens,

and its circuit to the end of them;

and nothing is hidden from its heat.

7The law of the LORD is perfect,

reviving the soul;

the decrees of the LORD are sure,

making wise the simple;

8the precepts of the LORD are right,

rejoicing the heart;

the commandment of the LORD is clear,

enlightening the eyes;

9the fear of the LORD is pure,

enduring for ever;

the ordinances of the LORD are true

and righteous altogether.

10More to be desired are they than gold,

even much fine gold;

sweeter also than honey,

and drippings of the honeycomb.

11Moreover by them is your servant warned;

in keeping them there is great reward.

12But who can detect their errors?

Clear me from hidden faults.

13Keep back your servant also from the insolent;

do not let them have dominion over me.

Then I shall be blameless,

and innocent of great transgression.

14Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

be acceptable to you,

O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

**James 3:1-12**

1Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. 2For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. 3If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. 4Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. 5So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! 6And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. 7For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, 8but no one can tame the tongue-a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. 10From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. 11Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? 12Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

**Mark 8:27-38**

27Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" 28And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." 29He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." 30And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

31Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

34He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. 36For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 38Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

**Sermon “Planted” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

As I child, I learned the rules of basketball from my father. He was my coach in the Braddock Road Youth Club. On chilly mornings, he would take my brother and me to a nearby school playground and we would practice, playing 2 on 1 – Jason and I versus Dad!

Jason and I have always been kind of competitive, although we aren’t as bad as we once were. Even though we were on the same team against Dad, sometimes we would have to have a time out and Dad became ref instead. Dad taught us the basics. So many of basketball’s rules, outside of sportsmanship, have a lot to do about remembering where your feet are, and making sure you legally move about the court. You never start dribbling the ball until you know where you want to go. You never stop dribbling until you know you are done moving to where you want to be. If you stop dribbling it, you can’t start again, or that’s double dribble. If you commit a foul, it is pronounced “foul,” not “fowl!” And, a very fun rule is to remember to pivot. If you are stuck, and you can’t start dribbling, and you can’t take a shot at the basket, then it’s time to pass. If you don’t see anyone, you pivot on one foot, just one foot only. In order to turn about and see 360 degrees around yourself, looking for the right teammate to receive your pass, stay planted with one foot. When you’re looking around, stay planted.

When planted in God, we are invited to take root, look around, and find out what God wants from us.

Jesus asks the disciples, as they walk through Ceasarea Philippi, “Who do people say that I am?” The disciples have very interesting responses. Like a surveyor, Jesus receives their guesses: Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others say one of the prophets. Clearly people have been talking and they are wondering if Jesus is the reincarnation of one of these great prophets, including John, Jesus’ own cousin, who had been killed in prison by Herod. And when he asks, “Who do YOU say that I am?” No one says, “Well, you’re Jesus, son of Mary and Joseph, that guy from the neighboring town.” Peter pipes up, “You’re the Messiah.”

All of this takes place, remember, in Caesarea Philippi. It is a beautiful region in Israel, in the Golan Heights. Rocky cliffs, babbling brooks, fig trees spreading wide their branches. Green plants are all around. And at the base of the cliffs, there is a shrine to the Greek god Pan, a god of fertility and nature. They say you can hear his laughter in the Banyasi, the waters which flow out from the caves and eventually meet up with the River Jordan. Before the Romans conquered the area, it was called “Paneas,” after that Greek deity. Jesus was somewhere near this well-known cultic spot, when he drops that famous question, “Who do you say that I am?” It is an interesting location to ask such a question. As they walked through a region well-known for worship of this foreign god, Jesus invites discussion about a greater God. A God of All things. Not just a god of a few things. A Lord of Time, not just a god made over time.

Interestingly, even Peter, on whom Jesus promised to build His church, forgot what that means. Soon after his famous confession that Jesus is the Messiah, Peter fails to accept at first Jesus’ message, that the Messiah will suffer and die. Peter foolishly rebukes Jesus for saying such things, thus missing the fullness of God’s wisdom being shared right then and there. Peter forgets his place, and Jesus puts him right back in it, “Get behind me, Satan!”

Jesus is our own pivot foot. Our Messiah is the one around which our entire lives should revolve. Who do You say that He is? Savior, Lord, Friend, God of all. Our Companion on the Road of life. He is the center of it all, and when we set our minds on heavenly things, and not just on what we ourselves want, we might find that we also are centered in God, our feet planted in the one who is the source of all life and joy. Jesus has been often equated with the spirit of wisdom – in the Greek that Spirit of Wisdom is “Sophia.” Proverbs reminds us that Wisdom is everywhere, just like Jesus. It is accessible to all who are willing to talk to her. Sometimes Sophia is surrounding us with wisdom, when we need a nudge in the right direction. To not have wisdom is foolishness in and of itself. But to not listen when Sophia is trying to speak to us is twice as foolish. Planted in the word of God however, we are able to move about this world and be so very many things. Remembering around whom we pivot, then it can save us a lot of worry and hassle. For in Jesus Christ, we have direction, we can better understand the rules of play, and we can stay grounded while reaching for the stars.

Friends, the wisdom of God could be trying to speak to you right now. Are you listening? I hope we all are.

**\*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, final dental surgery  
Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer, prayers for her husband, Larry too  
Glenda Coles – torn right rotator cuff and bicep, getting an MRI on 9/7  
Glenna Gray's husband, hospitalized with COVID  
Gloria Martinez (Teresa Gallegos’ sister) – needing leg surgery

Jenna Morris – injured knee, doctor's visit end of the month  
Dr. Jean Corey – seeking employees  
Lissa – Glenda’s granddaughter (high risk pregnancy)  
Lucy Jasper  – Alzheimers/Dementia  
Lynn Hawkins – still seeking a home closer to her doctor  
Odelia Moya - hospitalized with COVID, not doing well  
Pat Sieglen – health and strength; please pray she can go home  
Paul Estrada - amputation of lower leg, undergoing therapy  
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  
Tammy Lucero –treatment for cancer  
Travelers  
All those suffering from COVID19

**Announcements:**

**Ruling Elders:**  Our next Session is today, after church.

**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.