**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, September 29, 2019, Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**RH 15 Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above Marjorie McKenzie, Accompanist**

**RH 350 Onward Christian Soldiers**

**RH 110 (first tune) There’s A Wideness in God’s Mercy**

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

**Prayer of the Day**

God of Creation,
all of the world proclaims your praise,
from the highest heavens to the deepest recesses of the sea.
Make our voices true and faithful
as we join the voices of all of creation to sing your praise. **Amen**.

**Call to Confession**

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, Believe the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

Healing God,
when dismay
is our daily companion,
you come to touch us
with your healing hope.
When grief falls on us
like a wall of bricks,
you rebuild our joy
with your comfort and love.

Jesus Christ,
Faithful Spirit,
when bullies pick on us,
you stand by our side.
When neighbors taunt us
for choosing to be faithful,
you commend us
for our wisdom.

Teaching Spirit,
when we are heart-sick
over the brokenness of our lives,
your compassion races
to bring your gentle balm.
When our joy is gone
and we are stained
by the world's cruelty,
you bathe us in the tears
flowing from God's broken heart.

God in Community, Holy in One,
hear us as we pray as Jesus has taught us,
**Our Father . . .**

**Time Out For Teaching: Exploring Psalm 91**

I would like for us to look back at Psalm 91 today. It is often a good idea to have one or two psalms in your back pocket when you’re having a bad day. Let’s look at it together for a few minutes, talking about what it says about God to us.

1 - What imagery do you see?

2 – What emotions do you sense from the writer of this psalm?

3 – How does it move from start to finish?

**Prayer for Illumination**

O God of wisdom,
you delight in deep truth.
Let these words of scripture teach our hearts,
that we may hear your joy and gladness,
for the sake of Christ, your wisdom for us. Amen.

**Luke 16:19-31**

19"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. 23In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. 24He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' 25But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' 27He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house-28for I have five brothers-that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' 29Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' 30He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

**Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15**

1The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of King Zedekiah of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. 2At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah, 3awhere King Zedekiah of Judah had confined him.

6Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came to me: 7Hanamel son of your uncle Shallum is going to come to you and say, "Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours." 8Then my cousin Hanamel came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, "Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself." Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.

9And I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. 10I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales. 11Then I took the sealed deed of purchase, containing the terms and conditions, and the open copy; 12and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard. 13In their presence I charged Baruch, saying, 14Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, in order that they may last for a long time. 15For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.

**Sermon: Jeremiah Bought the Farm**

On the night of August 9, 1992, firefighters outside Seattle, Washington, faced a disaster. Three churches were engulfed in flames at the same time just a few miles from each other. When they arrived at Trinity Lutheran, the flames were shooting above the very large sanctuary. The next morning, parishioners arrived Sunday morning to find their church in ruins. Reverend Rouse made an unusual decision. He conducted services anyway. They turned the parking lot into a church and amidst the smoking embers, the congregation held their Sunday service. Rev. Rouse remembered, “As I looked into the faces of many of my parishioners, you could see the sorrow, the disbelief.”

 When I first saw this story on the popular TV show, “Forensic Files,” my heart immediately felt stuck in my throat, and tears in my eyes. Our church is no stranger to devastation. We remember the damages done to this building and next door when we had a break in. The side entrance to our sanctuary still bears the wounds. When you look at the outside of that beautiful big, heavy wooden door, you can see the marks of a sharp blade from their attempts to get inside. What would we have done if this place had been damaged beyond belief? I truly hope that we would have done the courageous and hope-filled act of proceeding with Sunday morning worship, even if it were outside.

 How would you act in the face of such a devastating situation? Step through that door in faith and hope or shrink away, overcome with fear?

 This is, in one sense, what Jeremiah is instructed to do when Jeremiah bought the farm. I joke about that, but Jeremiah did something that looked foolhardy to many, that Jeremiah bought some land in Anatoth, belonging to his uncle. Foolhardy, because Jerusalem was in the middle of a siege by Babylon and they were about to lose the fight. By all appearances, all the land was about to belong to Babylon, no matter who bought it from whom. Jeremiah’s choice to buy this land, was done in secret. The process of purchasing Hanamel’s land was witnessed by members of the palace court and by members of Jeremiah’s family and legal witnesses. It was a public act, foolish to some and yet a declaration of faith to others.

 We really don’t know a lot about the circumstances of this purchase. We don’t know why Hanamel’s family needed to sell the land. Maybe they needed money. Maybe someone in the family died and was a wage earner. The city was under siege by the Babylonians, the Temple was about the fall, and so it’s no way for us to know for sure. But it is obvious that they are asking Jeremiah, imprisoned in King Zedekiah’s palace, to purchase the land. Jeremiah is acting as a “goel” or “kinsman-redeemer,” a role usually taken on by an older male of the family, to help out the family in their times of need.

 So, Jeremiah is helping his family… at his own expense of 17 shekels in silver. It may even appear that he is throwing his money away on a piece of land that he will never be able to use or take care of, nor even to pass along to the next generation in his family.

 And…another reason it was not so foolish as it might have seemed, was because the Lord told Jeremiah to do this. If we were to take a long view of Jeremiah’s story, this is not the only time the Lord tells Jeremiah to buy something. The Lord has told Jeremiah to do a lot of things that would seems strange to us. But in this book, this land purchase was the third time the Lord told Jeremiah to purchase something, in order that the purchase be a sign of God’s plan to redeem Israel, a sign that tells them that no matter what horrors they are facing now, they will see freedom, and that God is not just planning for this. God has already begun the process.

 This is why we can sing the hymns we sing. Like “Onward Christian Soldiers.” A hymn which declares the might of God and the courage we have even when things look bleak to others. “Onward Christian Soldiers” probably reminds us of times past when the church was big and powerful, seen as something with authority in its community. “Onward Christian Soldiers” is not foolish however. In my opinion, we probably need it more than ever before, to remind us of the charge God has given us to stay the course, hold the line, trust in God’s faithfulness to us, for we can be confident in God’s providence. For the process of redemption has already begun.

 So, Jeremiah bought the farm. But not in the sense that we think of when we say someone bought the farm! He bought it to declare that all is not lost. God is in charge. The process of redemption is already underway. Reverend Rouse and his people boldly declared this too when their church building was burned down. But I guarantee you the church wasn’t destroyed. Only the building. They fearlessly carried on with worship that day, tearfully, yet faithfully. This means that we can live into that hope as well. And when all seems to be lost, we can still do something bold and faithful, even if through our tears. Thanks be to God! Amen.

**Announcements:**

**Rummage Sale is coming!** We need your help in the way of donations, and to take some time out to help us get ready for the sale. Do you know where we send our “leftovers” after the sale? Ministry of H.O.P.E. The Sale is October 4-5 from 9AM-3PM.

<https://blog.seattlepi.com/seattle911/2009/11/12/how-was-serial-seattle-arsonist-paul-keller-caught/>

<https://www.yousubtitles.com/Forensic-Files-Season-7-Ep-34-Fire-Proof-id-2447017>

<https://products.kitsapsun.com/archive/1993/05-06/282693_arsonist__victims_propose_75-ye.html>

**Claim:**   The death benefits paid to the beneficiaries of soldiers who died in battle were often enough to pay off the mortgage on the family home or farm, hence the deceased was said to have “bought the farm.”

**Status:**   ***Undetermined.***
**Origins:**   This term has been part of the English lexicon since at least 1955, but its origins are unclear. Some theorize that an American soldier’s G.I. insurance was sufficient to enable his family to settle the mortgage back home, thus a death in battle was succinctly described as “He bought the farm.”

From snopes.com