

**First Presbyterian Church
Las Cruces, New Mexico
20th Sunday after Pentecost
October 15, 2023 – 10:30 AM
Enter to worship – Leave to serve**

PRELUDE “Lord, Revive Us” (Early American hymn) Edward H. Meyer (b. 1936)
 “I Waited for the Lord; He Inclined His Ear to Me” Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
 “The Great Commission” (Based on three familiar evangelistic hymns)
 Hugh S. Livingston, Jr. (1945-2014)

**The Prelude functions like a curtain that separates our world from the worship place of peace and sanctuary. We enter prayerfully. We wait expectantly, listening for God’s Spirit and truth, which challenges us to return to the world equipped for faithful and useful Christian service.

* *Those who are able, please stand* *Please turn off all cell phones*

WELCOME, GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEDITATION IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:9-11 NRSV)

INTROIT

“This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made” NUN DANKET ALL’ UND BRINGET EHR’

ASSEMBLE IN GOD’S NAME

*CALL TO WORSHIP Eric Montgomery
 (from Psalm 40)

Leader: I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

People: **He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.**

Leader: He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.

People: **Blessed are those who make the Lord their trust, who do not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after false gods.**

*HYMN OF PRAISE #619 “Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven” LAUDA ANIMA

*PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THE LORD’S PRAYER (unison)

Eternal and ever-blessed God, the same yesterday, today, and forever, we rejoice in the order and goodness of your creation. Let the light of your love shine into our hearts and bless our worship, transforming it from its imperfections to an offering acceptable to you. Help us see new glory in the things we take for granted and lead us to praise you with our whole being. May your joy be in our hearts and your love in our fellowship. Praying as you taught your disciples to pray, **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen**

PLEASE BE SEATED

CALL TO CONFESSION

“O Lamb of God”

LAND OF REST

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Gracious and generous God, we confess that we live lives that are far less wonderful than you intend and desire for us. We have been blessed with far more than we need to live well, yet too often, fear of scarcity makes us hesitant and stingy in sharing our abundance with those in need. You first loved us, and call us to respond, letting nothing get in the way of a deep and meaningful walk with you. But sometimes we let things that do not really matter distract us. Help us, Lord, to use our lives and resources well, according to your will and purpose, and may we live faithful lives, growing more and more like Jesus day by day.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION AND REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S LOVE AND MERCY

Leader: The proof of God's amazing love is this, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And Christ rose for us and takes away all our sin. I therefore declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, all our sin is forgiven.

People: **In Jesus Christ all our sins are forgiven, thanks be to God, amen.**

Leader: What does Scripture teach and declare about God?

People: **We confess and acknowledge one God alone, to whom alone we must cleave, whom alone we must serve, whom only we must worship, and in whom alone we put our trust. Who is eternal, infinite, immeasurable, incomprehensible, omnipotent, invisible; one in substance and yet distinct in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**

HYMN OF ASSURANCE

#408 “There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit” SWEET. SWEET SPIRIT

GOOD NEWS TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

Erin Taylor

- Children are asked to sit on the carpet squares in the front

CALL TO PRAYER

“Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”

CHILDREN PRAYING

Chancel Choir

PASTORAL PRAYER

ANTHEM

“I’m Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table”

WELCOME TABLE

- To follow text see hymn #770 in the hymnal

PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Dr. Janet Loman

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Matthew 22:1-10

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (New Revised Standard Version)

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Matthew 22:1-10 (New Revised Standard Version)

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“It’s Our Choice to Receive or Reject”

Rev. Norm Story

*CLOSING HYMN

#804 “Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!”

MARION

GO IN GOD’S NAME

*BENEDICTION

*CHORAL BENEDICTION

“There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit”

SWEET, SWEET SPIRIT

*POSTLUDE

Hymn Tune Improvisation

Howard A. Smolleck

***Those who are able, please stand**

Please turn off all cell phones

Liturgist – Eric Montgomery Deacon Captain – Divine Mboh

Sound System – Rusty Smith Video – Brent Brewer



Join us for a time of fellowship and refreshments immediately following Worship this morning in the Jones Hall Fellowship area. This is a time to welcome and greet new friends and old friends alike. Fellowship this morning is hosted by the Buildings and Grounds Ministry team.

Rev. Dr. Norm Story	Pastor	Rev. Nick Koontz	Dir. of Family Ministries
Dr. Janet Loman, CP	College Ministry	Rev. Pyong San Yu	Korean Congregation
Ada Castle, Commissioned Pastor		Dr. Howard A. Smolleck	Organist
Dr. Paul Deason, Commissioned Pastor		Karen Candusso	Salt & Light Coord.
Beth Borchert-Thomas	Dir. of Music & Bells	Karen Candusso	Youth Group Sponsor

Greeting before Worship Service:

Patricia Adu-Mensah – E Sandra Abernathy – W Dennis Thomas - S

Greeting after Worship Service:

Rev. Norm Story – E Eric Montgomery – W Erin Taylor – S

Please remember in your prayers: Mel Parish; Jessica Borchert Stout, daughter of Beth Thomas; Rev. Jay Bishop; The Grant family; Mary Olberg; Wayne and Marianne Maley; Dorris Hamilton, Clyde Treat, and Norma Klein at the Heritage; Rev. Marcus Burr; all who feel isolated in these troubled times; Salt & Light Ministry; Presbyterian Church (USA); Deacons' Ministries; Gospel Rescue Mission; La Casa domestic shelter; Casa de Peregrinos, emergency food pantry; Missionaries Doug and Sherry Barron, CRU headquarters in Orlando, Florida.

Welcome!

We come together as a community at worship to experience the grace of God, who is present in our midst. This is a time to open ourselves to Him and to each other. Expect great things of God and His grace will come to you! Thank you for coming to First Presbyterian Church; we are glad that you are here. If you are not active in a church home in this community, we invite you to consider joining our fellowship and sharing in this ministry of Christ.

Our sacred space is not this building or this Sanctuary, but it is the fellowship we share, the hospitality we live, and the presence of God we see in each other.

For prayer requests during the week, call the church office to get your request on the Church-wide Prayer Chain, or e-mail Linda Ramirez at linda@fpc.lc

Our Vision: A place where Christian love is modeled

Our Mission: To be a place where Christian love is modeled through:

1. Understanding, celebrating, and sharing God's Word.
2. Following obediently where God is leading us.
3. Leading, nurturing, and serving our community for Christ.

Greetings! Our worship services are now available

- 1) in-person, with Covid19 precautions
- 2) live-stream on YouTube search for: First Presbyterian Church Las Cruces, NM)
- 3) video archive on the church website, our Facebook site or YouTube

Covid19 precautions:

- **Seating in West and South sections of the Sanctuary is unrestricted. The East section is reserved for those wishing to wear masks and social-distance.**
- Hand-sanitizer and wipes are located at each door.
- **A purple box** with slots for depositing your offering is located in each aisle. Please register your presence with contact information and any prayer requests on the small slip of paper in your bulletin and place it in the purple offering box in the aisle, so that if we need to do contact tracing later, we can contact those who were present.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 10/15 – Jorge Inocencio, Karma Bromwell
- 10/17 – Kathy Story, Curtis Benaway, Lauren Mattiace
- 10/19 – Donna Farmer, Claudia Sanchez, Laura Conniff
- 10/20 – Larry Felhauer

(If we missed your birthday, please call the office at 575-526-5559 or email Marie at linda@fpc.lc)

Donations to support your church can be done in a variety of ways. Thank you for your continued generosity and faithful giving.

- Cash or check in the offering (purple boxes in the Sanctuary)
- Check sent by mail
- Church website: fpc.lc and click on the “heart” icon or fpc.lc/giving or scan QR code
- Smartphone App: Church Center
- Text 84321





Please bring a **nonperishable** food item every Sunday for Casa de Peregrinos, the emergency food bank. Baskets are located at each of the entrances to the Sanctuary. Thank you for your support.

Church Office Hours are: Monday – Friday 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

CHURCH CALENDAR

Call the church office 575-526-5559 for information on any events, or by the net: www.fpc.lc or by e-mail: linda@fpc.lc Rev. Norm Story e-mail: revstory@fpc.lc
Facebook: Look up First Presbyterian Church of Las Cruces

Sunday, October 15, 2023

- 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School led by Catie Brewer in the Jones Hall Library. We are viewing a series entitled, "Beginnings of Judaism"
- 9:00 – 11:45 AM Childcare in Branigan Hall
- 9:00 AM Sunday School for grades K-5 in Branigan Hall
- 9:00 AM Sunday School for grades 6-12 in Reeves Hall
- 10:30 AM Worship Service
- 11:45 AM After-Worship Fellowship in Jones Hall
- 12:00 PM Sermon discussion in the Jones Hall Library with Rev. Story

Monday, October 16, 2023

- 7:00 PM College & Young Adult Bible Study on Zoom (see announcement)
- 7:00 PM Bells rehearsal with Beth Thomas

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

- 3:00 PM Listening Prayer, a reflection on Scripture in Jones Hall Parlor. Contact Marsha Topley with questions.
- 7:00 PM Session meeting in Jones Hall Library

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

- 9:30 AM Staff meeting, office will be closed during meeting
- 12:00 PM DEADLINE for submissions for the Sunday bulletin
- 4:00 PM Salt & Light (see announcement)
- 7:00 PM Choir rehearsal in the Sanctuary

Thursday, October 19, 2023

The Good News Newsletter will be published on Fridays. Please send submissions by Thursday evenings to: scotty.benaway@sbcglobal.net

- 6:30 PM Deacons meeting in Jones Hall Library

Friday, October 20, 2023

Saturday, October 21, 2023

Sunday, October 22, 2023

- 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School led by Catie Brewer in the Jones Hall Library. We are viewing a series entitled, "Beginnings of Judaism"
- 9:00 – 11:45 AM Childcare in Branigan Hall
- 9:00 AM Sunday School for grades K-5 in Branigan Hall
- 9:00 AM Sunday School for grades 6-12 in Reeves Hall
- 10:30 AM Worship Service
- 11:45 AM After-Worship Fellowship in Jones Hall

Salt & Light – “Fully Rely on God”
Wednesday, October 18, 2023

4:00-7:00 PM Grades K-12th

6:10 PM - Salt & Light Dinner,
\$5.00 suggested donation for dinner, but any amount is appreciated

Menu: Chili con carne, tortilla chips, corn bread, and for dessert: a cup-o-dirt.

Please call the church office with a reservation by Monday at 526-5559 between 11am-2pm to let us know that you will be joining us for dinner.

- We are also accepting donations if you would like to sponsor a child. Contact information: Karen Candusso saltandlight@fpc.lc or 575-618-9474

Instant Church Directory

In addition to our always-available paper directory, we now have our church directory available online and in a phone app, "Instant Church Directory."

The website (instantchurchdirectory.com) can be found on the church website homepage and the app can be found on both the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store for free. Once accessed, please sign in using your email as listed in the directory. Note that this service is accessible to those listed in the directory, but locked from prying eyes outside the church. Also note that it allows you to upload a picture of yourself, and that the application serves as a great contact list for getting in touch with your church family. Reach out to Nick at nkoontz@fpc.lc with any questions or technical difficulties.



We need your help – Fellowship

We all enjoy fellowship time after church on Sunday, a time to mingle with friends and meet new ones. The Congregational Life and Outreach Support team is looking for people willing to host the following dates:

- October 29
- November 5, 12, and 26
- December 24, and 31

Families, friends, and Session committees are all wonderful hosts, and the sign-up chart is in Jones Hall.

There is a page of instructions in the kitchen area to help with set-up.

Thank you for helping out with this important and fun part of our church life.



COLLEGE AND YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY
"The Promises of God"

Trace with us salvation history and the amazing ways in which God chooses individuals and groups to be part of the divine plan. From Abraham to Jesus and on to the early church -- and still today -- God is choosing the unexpected so that we can better see the divine love and power in action. We too are called by God and given the promise of blessing and new life.

Join us each Monday at 7:00PM on Zoom!
Please email Janet for the link at drjml@me.com

(NO PREPARATION REQUIRED)
WE ARE HOPING TO SEE YOU!



Flute, Oboe, Piano Recital

A recital featuring Vicki Kuyper, flute; Holly Dalager, oboe; and Mike Rafferty, piano at First Presbyterian Church on Saturday, November 4, 2023 at 7:00 PM. Free Admission



Need a ride to and from church on Sunday mornings?

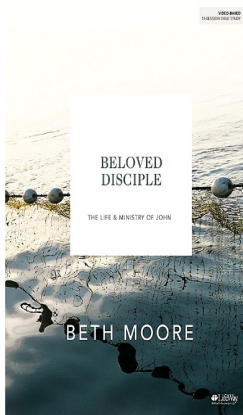
- Our church offers free rides to and from the Worship service
 - We will pick you up and drop you off at your doorstep
 - Church vans are designed for easy access
- Please call Linda Ward at 619-417-6912

Adult Sunday School

Larry Hicks will be leading an adult Sunday School class on "Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Theologian and Martyr," beginning on Sunday, October 29, at 9:00 AM in the church library.

Jennie Curry's Bible Study

Jennie Curry Bible Study will begin a study of Beth Moore's *Beloved Disciple: The Life and Ministry of*



John on November 2nd in Jones Hall.

John was there when Jesus turned the water to

wine, offered living Water to the woman at the well, yielded to His Father's will in the garden of Gethsemane, and gave His life on a Roman cross. And one unforgettable morning young John outran Peter to his Savior's empty tomb.

Every disciple and early follower of Christ left a legacy for future believers. John's legacy was love. Join our study as we find our way to the heart of Jesus. Jennie Curry meets on the first Thursday of the month in Jones Hall at 6:30 p.m. If you want more information or have any questions, please get in touch with Kathy Story via email at storyk@comcast.net.

Church office hours are now 11 am to 2 pm. With the retirement of our longtime secretary, office hours are shortened to 11am-2pm. Marie Gonzales is helping us out during these times while we continue our search for a replacement. The email linda@fpc.lc will be monitored. Thanks for your patience and flexibility.
Admin Committee,
Mary Maley

In-Betweeners Coming Up!

On Friday evening, October 27th, we'll gather in Watkins Fellowship Hall for dinner at 6 PM. After dinner, we will have a speaker from City of Las Cruces Senior Programs to tell us about the amazing selection of activities available for us to enjoy. Dinner will be catered this time (\$10/person.) Please let us know by Monday, Oct. 23rd that you plan to come; contact the Ames at jkames@q.com or 575-526-3247.

Books for Kids

The Children's Reading Alliance distributes thousands of books free to children of Las Cruces and Dona Ana County each year. Mary Martha Circle invites you to help in providing some of those books, paperback or hardbound, stories or nonfiction. Books given can be either new or used ones in good condition. So, when you shop where children's books are sold, or when you have some your youngsters have outgrown, please consider the Reading Alliance. Contributions can be placed in the blue bin you will find next to the patio door in Jones Hall, and thank you!



Trunk or Treat Is Coming!

Tuesday, October 31

What is It? Trunk or Treat is an important congregational outreach to our community, sponsored by the Congregational Life and Outreach ministry team. It is a great chance to serve our neighborhood. The essence of Trunk or Treat is serving kids candy from the trunks of our cars in a safe, fun environment. But there is much more, including music, food, crafts, and games.

It's on Tuesday, Oct 31, from 6 to 8 pm, with setup beginning one to two hours prior.

We need your help! **This event is totally dependent on our congregation to be successful.**

Further information: Contact Lon Anderson, 575-649-4108 or lonandenise@q.com

Want to help? Please complete the form below and drop it in the offering box.

tear here

tear here

tear here

tear here

Yes! I want to participate in one or more of the following ways:

	<i>Give out candy from my car trunk with optional car decoration</i>
	<i>Run a booth for a pre-planned game (ducks, bowling, bean bags, etc.)</i>
	<i>Devise and run my own game booth</i>
	<i>Kitchen duty and serving food (hot cocoa, hotdogs, popcorn, etc.)</i>
	<i>Donate extra candy (individually wrapped)</i>
	<i>Table setup (planning to set up 4 pm on the 31st)</i>
	<i>Take-down</i>
	<i>Clean up kitchen</i>
	<i>Lighting, power strips, extension cords</i>
	<i>Other (fill in the blank):</i>

Please fill out the information below:

My name is _____ My phone is _____

My email is _____