

First Presbyterian Church
Las Cruces, New Mexico
8th Sunday after Pentecost
Blessing of the Backpacks Sunday
July 21, 2024 - 10:30 A.M
Enter to worship – Leave to serve



PRELUDE

"Children of the Heavenly Father" (Swedish melody) J. Wayne Kerr (b.1958)
"Little Children, Little Children Who Love Their Redeemer" (Jewels) Larry Shackley (b.1956)
"This Is My Father's World" Van Denman Thompson (1890-1969)

**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

"Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these "nobodies" to expose the hollow pretensions of the "somebodies"? That makes it quite clear that none of you can get by with blowing your own horn before God." (1 Corinthians 1:27-29 *The Message*)

CHORAL INTROIT

"Here in This Place"

Gather Us In

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Bill Akins

(Psalm 119 NSRV)

Leader: Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are those who keep his decrees, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.

People: O that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. How can young people keep their way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

Leader: Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous ordinances.

People: Let your steadfast love come to me, O LORD, your salvation according to your promise. I revere your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes. My lips will pour forth praise, because you teach me your statutes.

*HYMN OF PRAISE #15 “All Creatures of Our God and King” Lasst Uns Erfreuen

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

God of grace, you pour out your blessings upon us, and your faithfulness has no ending. We praise you for the mysteries of life and the goodness that surrounds us. We praise you for the order and wonder of nature, for the beauty and bounty of the earth, for day and night, summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, for the varied gifts of loveliness that every season brings. We give you thanks for all the comfort and joy of life, for our homes, for our friends, and for love, sympathy, goodwill and compassion. Help us to worship you in spirit and in truth this day, we ask in the name of Jesus, who taught his 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 “Forgive Us, Lord” Confesion
Chancel Choir

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

God of hope, we confess that we struggle to grasp the truth of your love for us. We want more proof of your existence. You have granted us a chance and invitation to experience new life, and yet we fear and avoid those opportunities for change that would lead to significant spiritual growth. Forgive our inability to seek the gift of a new life and share it with others. Forgive our reluctance, and even failure, to have sympathy for others and offer our help to those who are hurting. Holy Jesus, you are our present and living hope. Holy Spirit, enable us to have a genuineness of faith and a renewed sense of your peace, so we may witness to all the Good News and redeeming truth of your gracious love.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION AND REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S LOVE AND MERCY

Leader: There is no brokenness that God cannot heal, no sin too terrible for God to forgive. The proof is this: Christ's death and resurrection have made us a new creation set free from brokenness and the hopelessness of sin. Friends, believe the good news, all our sin is forgiven. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

People: Alleluia! We are forgiven! Thanks be to God! Amen.

Leader: Now cleansed from sin, what would God have us to do?

People: The Lord has told us what is good; and what does the Lord require of us, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.

HYMN OF ASSURANCE #630 "Fairest Lord Jesus" Crusader's Hymn

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS AND
GOOD NEWS TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES Rev. Norm Story

- Children are asked to sit on the carpet squares in the front.
(Any students, teachers, aides or others involved in education are invited to come up as we seek God's blessing upon this new school year.)

CALL TO PRAYER #435 "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy" In Babilone

PASTORAL PRAYER

ANTHEM "I Will Call upon the Lord" I Will Call

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSONS Matthew 18:1-6 Luke 18:9-17 Rev. Nick Koontz
Matthew 18:1-6 (New Revised Standard Version)

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Luke 18:9-17 (New Revised Standard Version)

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee

and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. But Jesus called for them and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON "The Opinion and Perspective of Jesus" Rev. Norm Story

*CLOSING HYMN #39 "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" Faithfulness

GO IN GOD'S NAME

BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL BENEDICTION "Jesus Loves Me!" Jesus Loves Me

*Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong; they are weak, but He is strong.*

Refrain: Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

*Jesus loves me! He who died heaven's gate to open wide;
He will wash away my sin, let his little child come in.*

*Jesus, take this heart of mine, Make it pure and wholly thine;
On the cross you died for me, I will try to live for Thee.*

*When the nights are dark and long, in my heart He puts a song.
Telling me in words so clear, "Have no fear, for I am near."*

*Jesus loves me, this I know, though my hair is white as snow.
Though my sight is growing dim, Still He bids me trust in him.*

*POSTLUDE

Hymn Tune Improvisation

Howard A. Smolleck

Liturgist- Bill Akins Deacon Captain-Gracia Class
Sound System-Rusty Smith Video-Brent Brewer

Greeting before Worship Service:

Wanda Mattice-E Robert Distlehorst-W Debra Smith-O'Neal-S

Greeting after Worship Service:

Rev. Nick Koontz-E Rev. Norm Story-W Bill Akins-S

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

Fellowship

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 In-Betweeners.

7/22 Vanessa Medina 7/22 Barry Sullivan

7/23 Linda Ward 7/24 Jim Ward

7/26 Vicki Kuper 7/26 Mary Jo Billiot

7/27 Debra Smith 7/27 Delfina Zertuche



Please Remember in your Prayers

- *Linda Ward, our Moderator of Deacons, for a quick and smooth recovery.*
- *Teachers as they return, and students as they prepare to return to school.*
- *The Al-Hanfoosh Family, friends of Veronica, in the loss of their 17 yr. old son.*
- *The Perez Family, family of Veronica, in the loss of their 4-month-old daughter.*
- *Chase Hartung, Rich Lally, and Ken Shannon.*
- *The Morales Family.*
- *Charlotte Brockway, who is recovering from a sprained shoulder.*
- *Mark Jenkins and Velma Harbaugh, who are currently hospitalized.*
- *Nolan, Nancy Cowan's sister-in-law's grandson, who has to continue radiation therapy for a year.*
- *Anya's family in the loss of her father Jonathon Francisco.*

Continued Prayer List

Jack and Joyce Curry, who are at home; Jerry and Rayma Claessen at Grace Village; Arnold McMillan; Jessica Borchert-Stout; Jeremy Borchert; Millie Conrad; Dorris Hamilton, Mel Parish, and Ann Miller at The Heritage.

WELCOME

Our Worship services are available:

- 1.) In-person, with Covid19 precautions
- 2.) Live-stream on YouTube, First Presbyterian Church Las Cruces, NM
- 3.) Video archive on the church website, our Facebook site or YouTube

CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS:

- **Seating in the 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 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.**

***Contributions to support your church can be done in a variety of ways.**

1. Cash or check in the purple offering box.
2. Check sent by mail.
3. Online at fpc.lc/giving or via the QR code on the right.
4. Using the app "Church Center".
5. Text 84321



CCLI License No. 540727

More information can be found on our website fpc.lc



Thank you for your continued generosity and faithful giving.

In the Life of the Church

In-Betweeners



At 6 PM on our regular 4th Friday, 7/26, we plan to get together in Watkins Fellowship Hall for dinner. The meal will be catered this time (cost, \$15/person). After dinner, we will be going to the Sanctuary for a short piano concert presented by Gustavo Morales, whose artistry has been a fine addition to Sunday Worship for the last few months. Please let us know that you plan to attend by Monday, July 22nd, by contacting the Ames at 575.526.3247 or jkames@q.com.



Salt & Light



Help Wanted

Jacque, Karen, Tom and Helen will be leading our kitchen teams this year, but they need your help! Tom will be bringing pizza nights back, while the rest of the teams will be cooking up some delicious meals that will have you wanting to come back for more. The sign-up sheet for kitchen crew volunteers is now available in the Jones Hall Fellowship Area. Please sign-up for a team and help us make this another successful year!





Sunday, July 21st

- 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School with Catie Brewer is viewing and discussing the video series "Epic of Eden: Psalms" by Sandra Richter in Jones Hall Library
- 9-11:45 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
- 9:30 AM Choir rehearsal with Beth Thomas in the Sanctuary
- 10:30 AM Worship together in the Sanctuary
- 11:45 AM After-Worship Fellowship in Jones Hall (see announcement)
- 12:00 PM After-Worship sermon discussion with Rev. Norm Story

Monday, July 22nd

- 12:00 PM Deadline for The Good News

Tuesday, July 23rd

Wednesday, July 24th

- 9:30 AM Staff Meeting, office will be closed during this time
- 12:00 PM Deadline for submissions for the Sunday Bulletin

Thursday, July 25th

- 1:30 PM Listening Prayer in Jones Hall Parlor

Friday, July 26th

- 6:00 PM In-Betweeners in Watkins Fellowship Hall (see announcement)

Saturday, July 27th

Sunday, July 28th

- 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School with Catie Brewer is viewing and discussing the video series "Epic of Eden: Psalms" by Sandra Richter in Jones Hall Library
- 9-11:45 AM Childcare in Branigan Hall
- 9:00 AM Sunday School for grades K-5 in Branigan Hall
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