



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

217 E. High Ave, New Philadelphia, OH 44663

330-343-7114

www.newphilapc.org



Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

Sunday Worship Service

November 30, 2025

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (December 3) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (December 3) at 8pm.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will be meeting next Sunday (December 7) at 9:15am. We are currently reading through "The Practice of the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence. See Rev. Joe if you want to join!

Today is the last day for the November special offerings to benefit the Friends of the Homeless and Church World Service- to benefit those homeless and displaced in our community and world. Thank you to everyone who participated!

Next Sunday (December 7) is our 'First Celebration Sunday' with Communion in service and our monthly church brunch. All are welcome!

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Creator, as the promise of your Son to come into the world is realized, may his revelation illuminate all in our lives you have us to see. So we might focus on what is most important for your rule over us. **Amen.**

Prelude *Wake, Awake, For Night is Flying* arr. B Price

***Call to Worship** (Psalm 122)

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

Now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity with itself; to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, the assembly of Israel, to praise the name of the LORD.

For there are the thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you.

Peace be within your walls and quietness within your towers.

For the sake of my kindred and companions, I pray for your prosperity.

Because of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek to do you good."

Hymn #427 *Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service

Lord whose love in humble service
Bore the weight of human need
Who upon the cross forsaken
offered mercy's perfect deed
We your servants bring the worship
Not of voice alone but heart
Consecrating to Your purpose
Ev'ry gift that You impart

Still Your children wander homeless
Still the hungry cry for bread
Still the captives long for freedom
Still in grief we mourn our dead
As O Lord in deep compassion
Healed the sick and freed the soul
use the love your Spirit kindles
still to save and make us whole

As we worship grant us vision
Till Your love's revealing light
In its height and depth and greatness
Dawns upon our quicken sight
Making known the needs and burdens
Your compassion bids us bear
Stirring us to tireless striving
Your abundant life to share

Called by worship to your service
forth in your dear name we go
to the child the youth the aged
love in living deeds to show
hope and health good will and comfort
counsel aid and peace we give
that you servants Lord in freedom
may your mercy know and live

***Prayer of Confession**

Our faith teaches us the importance to be watchful, vigilant, and engaged. But often we retreat into ourselves when fear and uncertainty overwhelm us:

LORD, our Creator, your coming into the world is a celebratory moment, but we admit we do not watch for it. Your reign, your life, your salvation promises to repair and heal all around us, but we do not exercise it the way we should. Help us to see what it means to step out in faith and love, and make your name known to those who need it. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

The time is near and the signs are around us; Jesus Christ makes it known what we can do that is acceptable to the LORD.

Let the words, the attentiveness, the example of our savior renew us for what is coming.

Hymn #579 *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.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Reading of the Scriptures

All Scripture lessons come from the Revised Common Lectionary. Prescribed lessons are underlined, with pastoral inserts to preserve the integrity of the passage.

Hear the Word of the Lord:

Isaiah 12:1-6

12 ¹ You will say in that day: I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, and you comforted me. ² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. ³ With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. ⁴ And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted. ⁵ Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. ⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Romans 12:1-13:14

12 ¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. ³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶ We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸ the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. ⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. 13 ¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; ⁴ for it is God’s servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in

vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. ⁶ For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. ⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. ¹¹ Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹² the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³ let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Matthew 24:32-25:51

³² "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁴ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³⁶ But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴² Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour. ⁴⁵ Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. ⁴⁷ Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But if that wicked slave says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' ⁴⁹ and he begins to beat his fellow slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know. ⁵¹ He will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 25 ¹ Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them

were foolish, and five were wise. ³ When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷ Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹ Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹² But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' ¹³ Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. ¹⁴ For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵ to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷ In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸ But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' ²¹ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²² And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' ²³ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴ Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶ But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹ For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰ As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ³¹ When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

This is the Word of the LORD. **Thanks be to God!**

Sermon *The First Sunday of Advent*

The season of Advent, the season of Christmas, is a time to prepare ourselves for the coming of our savior. A time to reflect on what it means to get ready to encounter the divine, prepare for what it will show and challenge us with in terms of our lives, and demonstrate what all in this world is about and accountable too. With the hindsight of history, we know who is to be born and who is to come on the twenty-fifth of December. There will be no surprise who we will expect to meet! However, what will this meeting inspire within us? What will this encounter, this hope of the season, speak about the response of the LORD to the issues and problems of our lives? The prophet Isaiah speaks about how the LORD has “become our strength and salvation” and how the LORD through his chosen one has “uncovered the wells of salvation” for us. This is a hope, a guarantee, an assurance to move forward for the people of LORD both then and now. Life is made available and salvation is within our grasp, but how will we choose to respond to it?

Jesus teaches the way of that response as he gives his parables in Matthew on watching, waiting, and remaining aware of how the LORD chooses to visit, and how not to miss out on salvation visiting us in this time. Many choose to look at these various parables as warnings of judgment, condemnation, and punishment for those who are not in the right place at the right time. Of course, the “Day of the LORD” will come at a time we least expect it and will reveal all the hidden sins and atrocities within the heart of humanity on that day. But these parables are also instructions for how the LORD’s people, the inheritors of salvation, are to act here and now for the purpose of introducing salvation to a world in need.

The parables build upon themselves; the wicked and wise servants, the ignorant and expectant bridesmaids, the use of talents, and judgement of the nations all speak about the disciple's need for engagement within this world. It is not enough to just sit back and wait for the LORD to come and handle all the world, if we know who is coming then we must act and conduct ourselves in a manner that invites preparation. Our lives, actions, and relationships indicate how we believe the LORD's response to the world will change and orient others back to what is better. At the end of it all the LORD will not punish based on what actions we have done and not done, but how we have either opened or covered the waters of salvation for the world to drink. How have we made the oil available for others to fill their lamps by. How we have enabled others to contribute to the work of managing the estate. How we have allowed love and care to color all our actions and priorities. How are we living right now in a way that demonstrates what is better without the need for coercion? That is what the LORD seeks, and what Jesus comes to inspire.

St. Paul takes that life and puts practical example upon it as he describes to the Roman church the kind of new life available, and what it means to live in the world by the Gospel of Christ. He describes being unified in common purposes of building each other up, inspiring acts of love and service, not seeing ourselves as more worthy than anyone else, and bringing about a wisdom and teaching that will prepare the world for the coming kingdom. It is not getting bogged down in what the powers of this world are up too, but trusting the LORD is demonstrating the way forward through both good and evil examples. No matter who sits on the throne at the time, what ideology is determining things in the present society, the LORD has a handle on it as the power behind the power. Reminding us that human rule is still finite and temporary, and revolution will never solve all the problems in the way the LORD has and can. Live in a manner that even the government cannot interfere with, by love and support of those in your immediate presence. The time is coming when all things will be held accountable, all answers of justice will be given, but how do our actions indicate whether salvation has truly changed us?

The Gospel of Christ has been present in this world the last several thousand years, the LORD's revelations in place longer than that, for the right way of living has always been present for others to see and experience. The question is not whether we have already accepted it, but how much we have accepted it and allowed it to change us. To make us holy, different, and beneficial to the world around us. Are we a source of wisdom, good teaching, solid community, and trustworthy to anyone who seeks us out? And if the answer is anything but 'yes' then how can we look forward in a way that gets us back on track? This season is about celebration, but also about personal introspection. Christ has come not just for the whole of creation, but for every one of us. To prepare, set us up, entrust us, and send us forth to be a means which the world can become better, more orderly, and more open for others to access. Have we done enough to open the well for others who cannot? And how can we be better at providing for a thirsty world instead of just criticizing it and wishing it was better?

Prayers of the People

Let us remember in prayer:

Dominic Aquino, Tom & Amy Aquino, Mary Ellen Beans, Terry Carpenter, Fritz Chambers, Michelle Chamberlain, Mary Jane Dougherty, Don Eberheart Jr., Allison Folly, Kay France, Jamie Frank, Pam Hykes, Judy Hass, Alice & Errol Jacobs, Victoria Kasten, Amber Loftis, David Mackey, Breanne Mathias, Will Long, Tom Netting, Ruth Patrick, Bob Pierre, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, Josh Shaeffer, Marlene Singhaus, Dane & Cindy Smith, Derrick & Mandy Smith, Dean & Heidi Unzicker, Simone Villarruel, Holly Waldenmyer, The Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County & The Homeless of Tuscarawas County.

LORD, our Creator, in the busyness of our lives and the season we prepare for it is easy to become distracted. With so much to do, so many depending on us, and expectations galore it is so easy to retreat into ourselves. We want to preserve the little light we have which eases our fears, frustrations, and grants relief from all our struggles. But in retreating too much, in backing away from others too often, and insulating our lives from all which scares us we suffocate this light. Your Son reminded us a light is not meant to sit under a basket or in a closet but set on a table to give light to the whole house. Our lives are not just our own anymore but a means for your salvation, your way, to reach and change all around us. We are not responsible for changing the world but representing what it can be when we let go of those things, those expectations, which distract us from the true rule coming closer each day. May you remind us that the coming, the birth, of Jesus Christ is an assurance that you are not silent in the wake of trouble or disaster. But a mighty example of what we can be and do so those better things are known.

But we also know that you are our light and salvation, and we must be taught even in the face of our own troubles. For all our joys, concerns, and unspoken prayers may your Spirit teach what we can do to bring newness of life and purpose...*Reading of the Prayer List...*LORD, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Moment of Silence

We rejoice in the fact that light is coming into, and already in, the world and darkness can never snuff it out. Give us courage to live and broadcast this light to all who come across us, and let the prayer you gifted be realized:

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Offering our Gifts

All we have is a use to the LORD when given in love and expectation of new life, so let us not hold back in contributing to the renewed age among us!

Offertory *My Lord What A Morning* arr. C Callahan

Hymn #592 *Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

LORD, our Creator, your works and salvation are not meant to be hidden away just for ourselves but shared with the world. Not to demonstrate our righteousness, but your capability. May all we receive, and share, be a sign to all what salvation means. **Amen.**

Hymn #8 *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates,
Behold, the King of glory waits;
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here!

Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple, set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide
My heart to Thee: here, Lord, abide.
Let me Thy inner presence feel;
Thy grace and love in me reveal.

***Benediction**

Hear now, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind; you will love your neighbor as yourself.

With the gospel of Jesus Christ guiding you, go into the world to live this sole purpose.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

***Postlude** *Rejoice, Rejoice Believers* arr. H Hahn

Be blessed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ wherever you may go!

All hymn lyrics and prayers are reproduced and printed with permission from The Presbyterian Hymnal: Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs (Westminster John Knox Press, 1990), and original writing of Rev. Joseph Svancara.

All Scripture lessons are reproduced and printed with permission from the New Revised Standard Bible (NRSV).

All worship messages, devotions, and church news are available on the First Presbyterian Church website (www.newphilapc.org).