



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

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Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

Sunday Worship Service

June 28, 2026

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Our church secretary will be returning this Tuesday from vacation. Rev. Joe will be keeping regular office hours, but please call ahead for any needs!

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (July 1) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (July 1) at 8pm.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will be meeting next Sunday (July 5) at 9:15am.

Next Sunday (July 5) will be our "First Celebration Sunday" with Holy Communion in worship followed by a church brunch. All are welcome!

We are accepting special donations to aid the local Dress-A-Child program to provide clothes and school supplies to low-income families for the next school year. Donation envelopes are available on the back mission table! The final week of collection will be July 12!

Our Organist is taking requests for music during worship! If you have a favorite hymn, song, or arrangement you would like her to use in worship please let her know!

From July 1-15 there will be construction on our new parking lot. The current parking area will be off limits, but alternate areas are available on the grassy area on the side of the church and street parking along E. High Ave. If you need help or require special arrangements, please let someone know!

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Creator, you have called us by Jesus Christ to a life of obedience to your immortal promises. May we understand what it means to live under those promises, accept them, and allow them to rule us that we might further understand who you are and what you invite us to participate in. **Amen.**

Prelude *The Old Rugged Cross* Arr. Jeff Bennet

***Call to Worship (Psalm 13)**

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long shall I have perplexity in my mind, and grief in my heart, day after day?
How long shall my enemy triumph over me?

Look upon me and answer me, O LORD my God; give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death; lest my enemy say, "I have defeated you," and my foes rejoice that I have fallen.

But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart is joyful because of your saving help.

I will sing to the LORD, who has dealt with me richly.

Hymn #433 *There's a Spirit in the Air

There's a spirit in the air
Telling Christians everywhere
Praise the love that Christ revealed
Living working in our world

Lose your shyness find your tongue
Tell the world what God has done
God in Christ has come to stay
Live tomorrow's life today

When believers break the bread
When a hungry child is fed
Praise the love that Christ revealed
Living working in our world

Still the Spirit gives us light
Seeing wrong and setting right
God in Christ has come to stay
Live tomorrow's life today

When a stranger's not alone
Where the homeless find a home
Praise the love that Christ revealed
Living working in our world

May the Spirit fill our praise
Guide our thoughts and change our ways
God in Christ has come to stay
Live tomorrow's life today

There's a Spirit in the air
Calling people everywhere
Praise the love that Christ revealed
Living working in our world

***Prayer of Confession**

The call of the world is strong and confusing, chaotic and full of enticements, and we often give ourselves over in our worst moments because of confusion and misunderstanding:

LORD, our Creator, the world is full of powers that call us to obey and partner with them in their vision of the world. We are enticed by their promises, their shows of strength, and clever words. And we realize too late that we fall under the trap and spell of sin which makes us complicit in things which revolt us. But by the voice of Jesus Christ, of love incarnate, we are given an opportunity for freedom and liberty- if we choose that small voice calling, and the life embodied for us to live from now on. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Even when trapped under the weight of sin the LORD is powerful to pull us from the wreckage of the world, set us high and secure, and proves who we can be by our acceptance.

We confess the world does not truly know us, only the LORD knows us, and secures our identities and life in his hand alone.

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:

Genesis 22:1-19

22 ¹ After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." ⁶ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. ⁷ Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. ⁹ When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³ And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided." ¹⁵ The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶ and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸ and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice." ¹⁹ So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham lived at Beer-sheba.

Romans 6:15-23

6 ¹⁵ What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, ¹⁸ and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. ²⁰ When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 10:40-42

10 ⁴⁰ “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴² and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

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

Sermon *The Sixth Sunday of Pentecost*

There is an aspect to being a disciple which is a hold up to so many people; to those who see it for the first time, or after many years of commitment: obedience. We are called to obey the LORD and no one else, to obey the calling and teachings of Jesus Christ and receive eternal life, or else to suffer the consequences of not following orders. And the world has come up with this idea that obedience means to accept authority 100% and never to go against it. That your identity is tied to loyalty as a condition for acceptance and continued acceptance in a group. It makes membership conditional, able to be taken away the moment you show the slightest weakness or questioning. This kind of ‘blind obedience’ or ‘blind faith’ is not a virtue and could be considered a sin in itself because one places their identity in the hands of someone or something else other than the LORD. The Creator is the only one who can establish and call forth our identities and purposes, for he is the one who holds our names in the palm of his hands (Isaiah 49:16; Revelation 2:17).

Obedience to the LORD is tied to how much we know the LORD, are willing to know him, listen to him, and internalize in our beings and lives what is revealed and taught.

In fact, when the word “obedience” is translated from the Hebrew (*‘sn*) and Greek (*akouo*) languages of Scripture both refer to the act of hearing and listening. There is the implication that the act of listening causes a submission to the restraint or command of authority, but one first listens to one they know to be true. That is what St. Paul flushes out as he continued to teach the Roman Christians in Romans 6, asking what it means to live under sin versus living under righteousness. And it starts with the act of obedience, of hearing and listening, to the power you know to be true. There is a version of the Bible which translates this meaning out very starkly: “You belong to the power which you choose to obey, whether you choose sin, whose reward is death, or God, obedience to whom means the reward of righteousness” (Romans 6:16; Phillips version). There is the warning that actively hearing and accepting the things of the world, the various rival powers within it, cause us to become trapped within the reality they are attempting to create. But exercising obedience to the LORD, actively listening and accepting divine promise, frees us from that trap and allows us to spring forth into new life and chance. It is not ‘mindless thinking’ but ‘careful listening’ and considering what is being promised and who has the true strength to enforce it.

That is the challenge Abraham faces as the LORD ‘tests’ his faith in the narrative of Genesis 22, titled the “Binding of Isaac”. We are challenged in the reading because it says that the LORD “tested” Abraham by asking him to sacrifice the son of promise given to him. It makes us uncomfortable because it appears that the LORD asks of us things which pain us, to make us prove our worth in following him. Either we do 100% of what is asked or we are out. But we know that true love is not conditional like that and will not be removed based off a single transaction. Another way to describe what the LORD asks is that he was ‘proving’ Abraham in this act, another way to describe the Hebrew term of testing. The LORD was uncovering the hidden motivations within Abraham, demonstrating why Abraham would even entertain this request amid his own inner turmoil. And it was the fact that Abraham knew the LORD, walked and talked with the LORD, was promised by the LORD, and by knowing that character knew this was for a reason beyond understanding. In the act of obeying, of hearing and listening, Abraham’s faith was exercised and given deeper dimension. Proof that listening would uncover deeper truths and understandings that would allow us to participate in even greater ways within the LORD’s creation and story. That the LORD only acts and suggests in ways that will set us up in allowing divine wisdom to flow freely within the world.

Jesus promises in Matthew 10 that the disciples, then and now, by the act of following and listening to the truth in front of them will allow for others to recognize the one who is the guarantor of true love and purpose. Even when we do something small as offer a cup of water it allows that one receiving it to see what is motivating us. They are revealed what is inspiring us to act in this way, who is instructing us to act in this way, who is instructing those who are instructing, and to see the Creator who moves all reality to get to them in that moment. When we act according to that purposeful hearing and listening, that careful consideration of what is offered we become part of love itself

which invites a consideration and change within another. A moment for their conscience to weigh who they will listen to, what they will be a part of, and realize the silent yearnings deep in their beings.

Obedience is more than just an action that others wield as a weapon or intimidation tool, but another manner of prayer where we exercise and test what this divine revelation is and offers. Moments in our lives where the LORD peels away what others, or ourselves, have covered us in just so we can belong with the crowd. To realize what has truly been implanted within us since the very beginning, has been nurtured and fertilized with the experiences we have had to date, and to decide what we want to become. It is a decision we can make for no one else and cannot force, but by nurturing prayer and safe community can open up possibilities and truths never considered but speak to the deepest needs known only to the divine.

Prayers of the People

Let us remember in prayer:

Mary Ellen Beans, Fritz Chambers, Michelle Chamberlain, Mary Jane Dougherty, Don Eberheart Jr., Allison Folly, Kay Frantz, Jamie Frank, Judy Hass, Alice & Errol Jacobs, Victoria Kasten, Amber Loftis, Will Long, Tom Netting, Ruth Patrick, Bob Pierre, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, 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, the life of a disciple is not easy and asks much of us in terms of our loyalties, resources, actions, thoughts, and more. But is a way that is not unduly harsh or depends only on self-denial and throwing away the things of this life. Rather it is also a way which clarifies, instructs, informs, and proves what your power is capable of making us into and saving us from. We know the world is full of toxic ideas and people, elements that seek only to use for their benefit and throw away. You cherish and restore us, you exercise our power to listen and to choose, and create opportunities by which we can demonstrate what is better and answers the truest needs of creation. You call us to know you first, and by that knowledge act to instruct and warn others what must be asked and considered to know what is true and makes us better. You ask us not for 'blind faith' but careful faith, considerate faith, faith which realizes we become what we accept. Help us to keep the example of Jesus Christ in mind at all times, so we might choose the wise way to act amid false promises and guarantees with hidden costs.

Help us to listen to you amid our own problems and concerns, to see how you would have us respond to the needs of our lives...*Reading of the Prayer List*...LORD, in your loving mercy, hear our prayer.

Moment of Silence

We thank you, LORD, for giving us ears to hear your good news, hearts to accept your promises, and bodies to articulate and prove what you can make possible wherever we go. All so your prayer is no longer just worship rites or words, but a guide for discovering what is true and what we are becoming:

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

Obedience is more than just giving for the sake of giving, but exercising our ability to imitate what the divine has shown us.

Offertory *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us* Arr. C Berry

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, you have given us beings capable of exercising your ways and articulating what you deem important. By what we offer may all who participate, and watch, see what you prove about us in this decisive action. **Amen.**

Hymn #408 *Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear thy voice, O Son of man.

In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of thy tears.

From tender childhood's helplessness,
From human grief and burdened toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
Thy heart hath never known recoil.

The cup of water given for thee
Stills holds the freshness of thy grace;
Yet long these multitudes to see
The sweet compassion of thy face.

O Master, from the mountain side,
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
Among these restless throngs abide,
O tread the city's streets again;

Till sons of men shall learn thy love,
And follow where thy feet have trod;
Till glorious from thy heaven above,
Shall come the City of our God.

***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 *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* Arr. Fred Bock**

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

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