



**First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia**

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**Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor**

**Sunday Worship Service**

**April 19, 2026**

\*All who are able, please stand.

**Announcements & Prayer Concerns**

Session will meet this Tuesday (April 21) at 7pm.

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (April 22) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (April 22) at 8pm.

This Thursday (April 23) there will be an Open House and Ribbon Cutting for the new Jack's House of Hope from 3:30-6:30pm (Main ceremony to start at 5:15pm). All are welcome!

This Saturday (April 25) at 6pm will be our monthly Tables of Eight dinner group! The cost is \$10 per person, and RSVP can be given either to the church office or to Carolyn Berry.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will be meeting next Sunday (April 26) at 9:15am.

**Opening Prayer**

LORD, our Creator, even within the doubts and fears of our lives you are present. You do not condemn any for what the world has done and changed them into, but present opportunity to understand and live into true purpose. Teach us today, allow us to witness you in the breaking of bread and of prayer, and in the community which surrounds us. **Amen.**

**Prelude Meditation on *Blessed Assurance* Arr. S Landon**

**\*Call to Worship (Psalm 116)**

I love the LORD, who has heard my voice, and listened to my supplication, for the LORD has given ear to me whenever I called. The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave came upon me; I came to grief and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I pray you, save my life."

**Gracious is the LORD and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The LORD watches over the innocent; I was brought low, and God saved me.**

Turn again to your rest, O my soul. For the LORD has dealt well with you. For you have rescued my life from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling. I will walk in the presence of the LORD in the land of the living.

**I believed, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted." In my distress I said, "No one can be trusted." How shall I repay the LORD for all the good things God has done for me? I will lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all God's people.**

Precious in your sight, O LORD, is the death of your servants. O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.

**I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call upon the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all God's people, in the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!**

**\*Hymn #104    *Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!***

Christ is risen! Shout Hosanna!  
Celebrate this day of days!  
Christ is risen! Hush in wonder:  
All creation is amazed.  
In the desert all surrounding,  
See, a spreading tree has grown.  
Healing leaves of grace abounding  
Bring a taste of love unknown.

Christ is risen! raise your spirits  
From the caverns of despair.  
Walk with gladness in the morning.  
See what love can do and dare.  
Drink the wine of resurrection,  
Not a servant, but a friend,  
Jesus is our strong companion.  
Joy and peace shall never end.

Christ is risen! Earth and heaven  
Nevermore shall be the same.  
Break the bread of new creation  
Where the world is still in pain.  
Tell its grim, demonic chorus:

"Christ is risen! Get you gone!"  
God the First and Last is with us,  
Sing Hosanna, everyone!

### **\*Prayer of Confession**

The LORD does not condemn us or cast us away for mistakes but asks us to recognize and accept the harm we can have without recognizing:

**LORD, our Creator, you have imbued us with a capacity for goodness and holiness that we might be like you. But we cover up that capacity because of selfish and misplaced desires due to ignorance. We accept your gospel as a light by which we can see. Part the darkness of our own making so we might see what is real. Amen.**

### **\*Silent Confessions and Prayers**

#### **\*Assurance of Forgiveness**

Even in the darkest moments of the LORD's people the divine has revealed itself to provide need when nothing else was possible.

**In forgiveness we experience these miracles again and see why the LORD can be trusted.**

#### **\*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 51:1-23

51 <sup>1</sup> Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. <sup>2</sup> Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. <sup>3</sup> For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song. <sup>4</sup>

Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples. <sup>5</sup> I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope. <sup>6</sup> Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended. <sup>7</sup> Listen to me, you who know righteousness,

you people who have my teaching in your hearts; do not fear the reproach of others, and do not be dismayed when they revile you. <sup>8</sup> For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my deliverance will be forever, and my salvation to all generations. <sup>9</sup> Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! Awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago! Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? <sup>10</sup> Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of

the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to cross over? <sup>11</sup> So the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. <sup>12</sup> I, I am he who comforts you; why then are you afraid of a mere mortal who must die, a human being who fades like grass? <sup>13</sup> You have forgotten the Lord, your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. You fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction. But where is the fury of the oppressor? <sup>14</sup> The oppressed shall speedily be released; they shall not die and go down to the Pit, nor shall they lack bread. <sup>15</sup> For I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the Lord of hosts is his name. <sup>16</sup> I have put my words in your mouth, and

hidden you in the shadow of my hand, stretching out the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth, and saying to Zion, "You are my people." <sup>17</sup> Rouse yourself, rouse yourself! Stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl of staggering. <sup>18</sup> There is no one to guide her among all the children she has borne; there is no one to take her by the hand among all the children she has brought up. <sup>19</sup> These two things have befallen you—who will grieve with you?— devastation and destruction, famine and sword—who will comfort you? <sup>20</sup> Your children have fainted, they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the Lord, the rebuke of your God.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore hear this, you who are wounded, who are drunk, but not with wine: <sup>22</sup> Thus

says your Sovereign, the Lord, your God who pleads the cause of his people: See, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering; you shall drink no more from the bowl of my wrath. <sup>23</sup> And I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, who have said to you, "Bow down, that we may walk on you"; and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to walk on.

#### 1 Peter 1:13-25

1 <sup>13</sup> Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. <sup>14</sup> Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. <sup>15</sup> Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; <sup>16</sup> for it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." <sup>17</sup> If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. <sup>18</sup> You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. <sup>20</sup> He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. <sup>21</sup> Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. <sup>22</sup> Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. <sup>23</sup> You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup> For "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, <sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord endures forever." That word is the good news that was announced to you.

#### Luke 24:13-35

24 <sup>13</sup> Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup> but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup> And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup> Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" <sup>19</sup> He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." <sup>25</sup> Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of

heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. <sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup> That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup> They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

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

### **Sermon    *The Third Sunday of Easter***

The Resurrection is more than just a moment in history, a specific event that was accomplished once-for-all-time, but it represents how the LORD chooses to meet us where we are. We all have our struggles, doubts, misunderstandings, and lack of awareness about what life can be and the best way to go about it. Opinions about that are wide-spread and available in any self-help section in any bookstore or on Amazon's "Best Seller" list. But while others are enticing us to come their way, to get off our route and take the road less traveled, the LORD comes to meet us and play into what we do not know to produce better wisdom.

The Road to Emmaus narrative is one of the more famous of the Resurrection stories because of how Jesus presents himself, what truly makes him known, and what these disciples do with the information given to them. When they meet Jesus they do not know who he is, and you can almost hear the disbelief in their voices when they ask Jesus: "How in the world do you not know what has been happening the last several days?!" But Jesus asks to hear it from their perspective, their understanding, seeing first where they are coming from before starting into the teaching. Many have the view the LORD pounds information into us like a hammer and nail, an authoritative account no one has the ability to question or criticize. But we know that the LORD uses our doubts and questions as moments to uncover true faith and allow it to come into full bloom. Jesus does not take a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to his teaching but treats them first as individual students and sizing up their understanding of Scripture. Jesus walks them through the scriptural accounts of the LORD's salvation, instructs and interprets based on what they know to be true, and placed them within the story to experience. Jesus does not allow them, or us, to be idle spectators to all that is going on, he makes us experience the story and account itself. Not in that we experience all the gore, desperation, pain, and betrayal of Jesus- as if we even could! Rather, he

allows us to live through what the renewed life is casting a spotlight on. How the LORD brings the impossible to life, animates and makes alive what should just remain a story, and what we truly care about outside of what others suggest to us. Jesus reminds us of our voice, its importance, while relating all that to what we know to be true. And how we choose to entertain him, invite him in, and break bread measures the impact that reality will have on us.

The prophet Isaiah reminds the people of Israel of that same reality when he recounts the words of the LORD during their exile. The prophet reminds a people who are confused, disorganized, disjointed, and forgetful of their place within the LORD's will.

He reminds the people of Abraham and Sarah and their journey of faith into divine certainty, reminds them of when they were humble and encouraged and when they got too full of themselves and had extravagance taken from them, and who was the one that created and rescued when all else seemed hopeless. Isaiah's words also echo an ancient myth that would have been held by the Jewish people, and other peoples of the ancient Middle East, as a common creation story. That at one time the earth was disorganized, had no form, and chaos reigned. This chaos was depicted as a dragon who swam through the primordial waters and prevented order. Rahab, Hebrew for "dragon", also known as Leviathan by other cultures, was defeated by the LORD and cut into pieces to form the dry land. Rahab also is used to describe that which is prideful, insolent, destructive, arrogant- and was also a slang term to describe Egypt, since part of the Exodus account is also mentioned. The prophet speaks of how the LORD has the power, and the only power, to bring to an end and transform that which was unwieldy into something of great value. Israel is often described as a "stiff-necked" people by the way they sometimes have acted in history, and this is a promise to make them into something useful to the LORD, and the world, again.

This is the salvation St. Paul reminds the churches of when he writes, and that this is what defines them and empowers them as a people. The blood of Jesus Christ is more than just literal blood shed in a specific time and place, but a promise implanted within the deepest parts of our souls. That the divine gives ability to reach what the world around us can only allude to: holiness. Not perfection, by any means, but the ability to be different and articulate that which is important in a manner that will be understood by those placed in our path. A promise that the LORD will place within us the means to understand and make understandable what awakes goodness and righteousness within all. Even if those ways seems small, fragile, and seem insignificant that it will still carry the meaning needed to bring all people to wise and better understanding about themselves and all around them.

Salvation means knowing that there is someone in our corner, actively working to make up for our shortcomings, to emphasize what we do best, and whom we can do it for most effectively. Resurrection is more than just event, it is relationship- between the LORD and us, and between each other. A chance to make whole what has been strained, to teach what is essential and not superficial, and represent what is best and

not just the same-old-same-old. The LORD, and his Christ, are closer than we think and teaching us more than we know or realize. And now is the time to embrace, put aside what we desperately want to be true, so we can make room to be filled to the overflowing brim and never be in want again.

### **Prayers of the People**

*Let us remember in prayer:*

*Mary Ellen Beans, Terry Carpenter, Fritz Chambers, Michelle Chamberlain, Mary Jane Dougherty, Don Eberheart Jr., Allison Folly, Kay France, Jamie Frank, Judy Hass, Alice & Errol Jacobs, Victoria Kasten, Amber Loftis, Will Long, Tom Netting, Ruth Patrick, Bob Pierre, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, Josh Shaeffer, 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, we celebrate through the Resurrection how your closeness with humanity is revealed. You live with us, walk with us, teach us all we need, and remind all of the life each are a part of and integral too. Every one of us are on a journey, a walk on our own roads, to find and discover who you are. We thank you that Jesus stands as a sign and assurance that you do meet us on the way, reveal and open your mysteries as we understand them, and bring us all into fruitful and better community by which to grow and find security. You remind us of your power to change all situations in this world, bring hope and love out of despair and brokenness, and show that evil and destruction do not have the final say.

For the needs of our lives, the situations and people we have no answer for, may you reveal how our ministries with them create understanding and witness to the power of your renewed life...*Reading of the Prayer List*...LORD, in your loving mercy, hear our prayers.

### *Moment of Silence*

From your proclaimed and taught Word you prepare to send us out into the world, not to fight or battle or conquer, but to explain, tell stories, and pass on the essential wisdom of Jesus Christ so all might be informed. So they might hear, take in, and speak the words of your prayer as we do:

### **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**

In the breaking of bread and community Jesus revealed the truth of his resurrection,  
and in our giving and community that truth is revealed still.

**Offertory *Jesus, Priceless Treasure* Arr. J Cruger**

### **\*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 use the things of this creation to manifest your power and give  
your truth to all willing to hear. May you use our efforts, our charity, to reach across  
and bridge the gaps between all people so your creation may become one again.

**Amen.**

### **\*Hymn #107 *Celebrate with Joy and Singing***

Celebrate with joy and singing,  
Alleluia be our song.  
Jesus Christ has risen to save us,  
Praises to our Christ belong.  
Through great love has come the victory;  
Life, not death, can be our claim.  
Let us now declare Christ's greatness,  
Spread good news, proclaim Christ's name.

Honor, glory, praise, thanksgiving  
Give we now to God above.  
With the cross and grave Christ bought us,  
Let us now return that love.  
By our lives of dedication,  
As we teach and testify,  
May we show Christ's love around us,  
May it grow and purify.

Worship now with shouts of gladness,  
For the Christ, the Holy One,  
On this day of resurrection  
For the world new life has won.  
Let us pray and praise the Savior,  
Trust the acts, believe the word.

Our salvation has been purchased  
By our loving, risen Lord.

**\*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    *Sortie in D*    Arr. B Price**

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

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