



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

March 29, 2026

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

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

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

This Thursday (April 2) there will be a Maundy Thursday Service at the Uhrichsville Presbyterian Church at 7pm with our parish churches. All are welcome!

This Friday (April 3) there will be a Good Friday service at 12pm in our church open to the community. All are welcome!

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

Due to Easter falling on the first Sunday of April we will be having communion in worship that day, but the after-church brunch is canceled for that day.

During the Lenten season we are taking up a special collection for the PCUSA. The One Great Hours of Sharing benefits the development ministries of the denomination. Donation envelopes and information are available on the mission table.

Order forms are available for Easter tulips! Simply fill out the form and drop in the offering plate with your payment, or turn into the church office.

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Creator, as we welcome your Son in triumph we also welcome in anticipation for what he will show and reveal. Prepare us for this coming week, to experience all truth and reality revealed in our lives by the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Prelude *The Palms* Arr. V Vevenger

***Call to Worship (Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29)**

Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good; God's mercy endures forever. Let Israel now declare, "God's mercy endures forever."

Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them and give thanks to the LORD.

"This is the gate of the LORD; here the righteous may enter."

I give thanks to you, for you have answered me and you have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

By the LORD has this been done; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Hosanna! O LORD, save us! We pray to you, LORD, prosper our days!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; we bless you from the house of the LORD.

The LORD is God and has given us light. Form a procession with branches up to the corners of the altar.

You are my God, and I will thank you; you are my God, and I will exalt you.

Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good; God's mercy endures forever.

Hymn #89 *Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

Hosanna, loud hosanna,
The little children sang;
Through pillared court and temple
The joyful anthem rang.
To Jesus, who had blessed them
Close folded to His breast,
The children sang their praises,
The simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed
'Mid an exultant crowd,
The victor palm branch waving,
And chanting clear and loud;
The Lord of earth and heaven

Ride on in lowly state,
Nor scorned that little children
Should on His bidding wait.

"Hosanna in the highest!"
The little children sang;
For Christ is our Redeemer,
The Lord of heaven our King.
O may we ever praise Him
With heart and life and voice,
And in His blissful presence
Eternally rejoice.

***Prayer of Confession**

Even as we welcome and celebrate the one who comes in the LORD's name we also remember when we ignore and turn against him:

LORD, our Creator, as we anticipate the works of Jesus Christ coming about we also see ourselves in the story. In the moments we celebrate and embrace, and when we turn against. But his Passion is one that reveals all things so we might witness your grace. By your Spirit, aid us to see and accept all that will be shown. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Even when the people, the disciples, turned away they were still restored by the newness of life revealed and promised in their darkest actions.

The LORD's mercy endures forever and welcomes us in a way nothing else can.

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 50:4-11

50⁴ The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. ⁵ The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. ⁶ I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. ⁷ The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; ⁸ he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. ⁹ It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.¹⁰

Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant, who walks in darkness and has no light, yet trusts in the name of the Lord and relies upon his God?¹¹ But all of you are kindlers of fire, lighters of firebrands. Walk in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled! This is what you shall have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.

Philippians 2:1-18

² ¹ If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy,² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you,

enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without murmuring and arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. ¹⁶ It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you— ¹⁸ and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.

Matthew 21:1-11

21 ¹ When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” ⁴ This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, ⁵ “Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” ⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” ¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹ The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

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

Sermon Palm Sunday

As Jesus rides on into Jerusalem he is not simply making a statement about himself but about those he is coming too. Holy Week, or Passion Week as it is sometimes known, is a period of time in which we are dealing with the fickleness of human nature. The same people who were praising Jesus as he rides along are the same ones who will call for his execution. But it is not because they are ungrateful to Jesus, ignoring the miracles and teachings he has given in his three-year earthly ministry, but because they lack the understanding of what the Messiah is supposed to be doing. The “Son of David/Son of God” is both a religious and political title for one who represented the LORD to his people, and exemplified the holy instruction for the people to take in and guide them. That one was as much a teacher and instructor as a ruler, which is why Jesus expressed himself as such so many times. Even the act of riding on a donkey emulated how Solomon, the successor of David in Israel’s history, traveled to be installed and recognized in Jerusalem as king. And later became a ritual act of humility for everyone who was enthroned, not coming to conquer on a horse but to bring good news to the inhabitants like a trader. And in this instance, there is a clear distinction

between Jesus riding in such a humble way compared to the temple police and Roman legion garrisoned within the city.

One of the events of Holy Week is Jesus clearing the temple after he arrives in the city, a major challenge to the authorities who claimed to be the religious leadership of the people. Jesus was not clearing the temple because of the idea of money, or to enthrone himself in any manner, but to clarify what the temple was supposed to be and what the Church was to become. The traders and currency exchangers, who did charge 'fees' to the already poor worshipers just to enter the temple, occupied a place called the "Courtyard of the Gentiles". It was a place where non-Israelite worshipers could come and be taught and offer their due to the LORD, but they were crowded out by those selling to the native worshipers and allowed to by the temple authorities. You can almost hear in the background of these actions, "You don't belong here." Jesus rectified this in a direct challenge and moment of teaching that this place was a house of prayer for ALL peoples. Money, politics, and more are necessary to run any sort of institution that others rely on. But when those elements crowd out the original purpose and change the mission then the LORD will force a confrontation. But even in that confrontation, and in anticipating being on the losing side of it, wisdom and instruction still shine.

Isaiah 50 is the "Third Servant Song" of the prophet, an anticipation and promise of one who is a true servant of the LORD will act. This one will endure the harsh criticisms and action of those against them, and accept the humiliation and degradation forced upon them- represented by the detail of "pulling the beard", a particular insult in that culture. But the servant is not 'losing' that fight, rather is winning for a completely different reason. That humble state forcibly unmasks those on the other end as to who they are, what they are doing, and what they value. And in Jesus allowing himself to be arrested, tried in an illegal court, beaten, humiliated, and left to die in public view presents a radical distinction of what those in charge represent and value. Further, to have those same ones proclaim to Pilate, "We have no king but Ceaser!" and in their prayers say, "We have no king but the LORD" confronts who they truly claim to serve.

That is why St. Paul goes back to the "Mind of Christ", which is thought to be an ancient hymn of the Church sung in the households as an instructional creed. That what Christ did, represented, taught, and gave himself for is how the people are to conduct themselves too. To not be caught up in the tangles, confusion, and corrupting influences of others. To work out their own salvation with "fear and trembling"- meaning, with careful consideration to whom you are listening and obeying in life. If Christian's proclaim the LORD's salvation as our own only hope, then it means to entrust his way and instructions with everything and not seek to supplement it just to 'keep up appearances' with others.

Jesus' final actions are instruction, challenge, and warning to those who are looking to him. To see that trust in the LORD is everything, and is clarifying for what makes life

and possibility for us. We will always have those, then, now, and tomorrow who will claim this is what God means to fit some sort of agenda. And they will attack and smear those because the divine way will always be at odds with human nature. But if we are willing to be steadfast, persistent, and trusting of the LORD's character we will be surprised and fulfilled by what it brings out. Jesus is coming to teach us again, to clarify in a final way what the world is capable of, and how the LORD will save and deliver in a manner to change and reset everything.

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, this world is filled with your love and mercy, with a voice that resonates throughout the ages about righteousness, justice, and embodying your will and purpose. There is nowhere to go that is devoid of this promise and possibility, for you make truth known to all people that they may choose for themselves. You do not drop judgment right on our heads but help us exercise the conscience you have given us and the free will created since the beginning. As Jesus goes forward on his journey to the cross his actions challenge every presumption and false thought around him. He calls out examples and allegiances and if they are truly the best for us. He even accepts the backlash of our sinful nature by enduring betrayal and hostility, knowing your love breaks through all of that. Be patient with us as we endure our own doubts, hostilities, and resistance to your way as we encounter what you have to show. All so we might be silenced and accept divine power in a manner which cannot be argued.

Make us ready, hollow us out of everything false, and fill us with a Spirit of acceptance and eagerness for who you are. And even to see your possibilities played out within our desires and needs...*Reading of the Prayer List*...LORD, in your everlasting mercy, hear our prayers.

Moment of Silence

Thank you for being the host who sets the table, prepares bread and cup, and welcomes us into renewed relationship and partnership with you. So we might become ones who live, and understand, the prayer you have gifted us:

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

Jesus' arrival was a signal to all about where they place their loyalties and who was truly loyal to them. In our giving we announce who is worth our time and efforts.

Offertory *Beneath the Cross of Jesus* Arr. L Smith

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, we give in the hope of imitating your free love and grace to all. Aid your Church in imitating your message, to present the Jesus all people need, and can approach without cost. **Amen.**

Hymn #94 *An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare

An upper room did our Lord prepare
For those He loved until the end:
And His disciples still gather there
To celebrate their risen Friend.

A lasting gift Jesus gave his own:
To share His bread His loving cup.
Whatever burdens may bow us down,
He by His cross shall lift us up.

And after supper He washed their feet,
For service too, is sacrament.
In Christ our joy shall be made complete:
Sent out to serve, and He was sent.

No end there is! We depart in peace,
He loves beyond the utter most:
In every room in our Father's house
Christ will be there, as Lord and Host.

***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 *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* Arr. J Garber**

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).