



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

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Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

Sunday Worship Service

January 19, 2025

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

The church office will be closed Monday (January 20) in observance of MJK Jr. Day.

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

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

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will meet on Sunday (January 26) at 9:15am.

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Father, Jesus steps into our world to reveal grace and truth for all that we do. But there are many who do not know where to find him or how to approach. Help us to learn how we might welcome others to this divine presence by our examples and how he illuminates all we do. **Amen.**

Prelude *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name* **arr. Bish**

***Call to Worship (Psalm 36)**

There is a voice of rebellion deep in the heart of the wicked; there is no fear of God
before their eyes.

**They flatter themselves in their own eyes that their hateful sin will not be found
out.**

The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful; they have stopped acting wisely
and doing good.

**They plot wickedness upon their beds and have set themselves in a way that is
not good; they do not abhor that which is evil.**

Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, and your faithfulness to the clouds.

**Your righteousness is like the strong mountains, your justice like the great deep;
you save humankind and animals, O LORD.**

How priceless is your love, O God! All people take refuge under the shadow of your wings.

They feast upon the abundance of your house; you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the well of life, and in your light we see light.

Continue your lovingkindness to those who know you, and your favor to those who are true of heart.

Let not the foot of the proud come near me, nor the hand of the wicked push me aside.

See how they are fallen, those who work wickedness! They are cast down and shall not be able to rise.

Hymn #464 *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the gloom of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Singing bird and flowing fountain,
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Mortals, join the happy chorus
Which the morning stars began;
Love divine is reigning o'er us,
Joining all in heaven's plan.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife,

Joyful music leads us sunward
In the triumph song of life.

***Prayer of Confession**

Many of us believe in and know the LORD, but act without fear in what we do, say, and think. But by stepping into his presence, acknowledging his superior wisdom and knowledge, we can return to a right respect and acceptance of his ways:

LORD, our Father, we know Jesus is your source of all light and life. By him we know you and understand what you desire of us. But we often become distracted by the examples and claims of others or doubt our own abilities to live into that standard. By your Holy Spirit, refresh our lives, reveal our hidden faults, and how you make ways when we have nothing. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

There are many talents, many ideas, and many works within the Church. But it is the one LORD, the one Savior, the one baptism which directs us in where we need to go.

Let us trust and be united by what the LORD provides, and witness how his ways win from incredible odds.

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 62:1-12

62¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. ²The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. ³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ⁴You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. ⁵For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. ⁶Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have posted sentinels; all day and all night they shall never be silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest, ⁷and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it renowned throughout the earth. ⁸The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink the wine for which you have labored; ⁹but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather it shall drink it in my holy courts. ¹⁰Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway, clear it of stones, lift up an ensign over the peoples. ¹¹The LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, "See, your salvation comes; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." ¹²They shall be called, "The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD"; and you shall be called, "Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken."

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

12¹Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

John 2:1-12

2¹On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3³When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4⁴And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." 5⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6⁶Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7⁷Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8⁸He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. 9⁹When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom 10¹⁰and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." 11¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. 12¹²After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.

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

Sermon *The Second Sunday of Epiphany*

This next week in current events presents an interesting opportunity to look at and understand the world in a different way. Not only are we getting ready to inaugurate and install a new President, but we are also celebrating the legacy of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.- on the same day! The debate on constitutional mandate verses federally declared holidays is beside the point, and it is easy to get sucked into if this is a good or bad thing. Everyone has their opinions on our new President and on Rev. King and his work, but the Scriptures for this week made me see all this by a different eye. What is the job and duty of a leader in the Christian sense? How are we to view those in positions of power from a Christian sense? What is the best way for Christians to respond and act when faced with controversial figures?

There are a number of figures and examples we could look too, but perhaps an overlooked example can be seen in John 2:1-12.

In the Protestant Christian tradition, it is easy to overlook Mother Mary. Sometimes we relegate her as a side or background character in the story of Jesus and do not give her due. In other traditions they might deify or idolize her too much, in others they pass her over too quickly. It is an easy and thin line to cross, but her example is what makes the difference. This is a woman who truly gave herself over to the LORD and his plans and allowed Jesus to change the course of her life. So when an issue came up at a wedding where the family was in attendance she quickly introduced Jesus as the one to solve and change that problem. She is the one who bears Jesus Christ to the world; and while we cannot physically give birth to the Son of God, we can introduce him to others. His presence changes the situation and elicits a reaction from everyone present. He cuts through the confusion, lies, and jargon and gets to the heart of the

issue. His turning water into wine was a sign that his arrival means celebration, that the needs of the people will now be answered. That is what inspired Mother Mary to call upon her son, and what should inspire any prophet or teacher like in Isaiah 62:1-12.

The prophet was not inspired by power, opportunity, wealth, or personality. But by promise. The prophet had seen what the leadership of the kingdom had done to the people of Israel, how the Temple failed to instruct and exemplify the covenant, and the destruction it would visit upon all. The prophet witnessed the promise of restoration and recreation, of how the LORD would rename and give new identity to his people so they might live truly and faithfully. He witnessed the potential of Jerusalem as a city that would sound out and invite all to see the glory and realization of the LORD in this world and spoke to her opportunity. To clear away the stones and obstacles in the road, to post signals to direct people from far away, to instruct watchers to always be on guard and open the gates to those desiring entrance. The LORD's power would be what fixes the situation, and the people's duty was to invite and facilitate others' entrance.

A desire for the Church given in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

Spiritual gifts, abilities, and talent are given by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, to witness and reveal truth to others. They are not to stoke egos, create personalities, or propagate systems which ensure only one action or way of thinking. That is what the church in Corinth was doing and it created harm among the people. St. Paul makes it clear that no one can decide which talent is better because we do not assign value. The LORD is the one who gifts, creates the timing, and ensures what the fellowship needs to carry out its duty. If there is ever a gift, ability, or person we feel is out of place within the fellowship we must remember this is the LORD saying, "You need this right now, so pay attention!" It is not there to make us feel guilty or inadequate, but to make us better and help us learn what it means to introduce Jesus. We can never underestimate or dismiss other's abilities and influence just because we do not like it. It is given by the LORD for a time and purpose, so we just need to look carefully for it. The LORD is the power in charge, not the individual, so what can we take from their presence at that moment?

We know the President-Elect is a controversial figure, for good and bad. But we also have to remember that Rev. King was a controversial figure in his time, and he also did both beneficial and harmful actions because he was human. That is all these figures are: imperfect humans. We will never elect, or follow, a perfect figure. But the LORD is also not so distant that he will just leave us to the devices of others. He gives the growth and gifts in all lives and places all people where they are needed. So in this time of change, of reflection on leadership, what is the good we can honestly take away to be better and what can we leave behind? The Spirit of the LORD is upon us to direct us, and how we allow ourselves to be led will aid us in bearing and introducing

Jesus to those around us. Will we embrace the opportunity before us to learn, grow, and live into the rule of the LORD right now?

Prayers of the People

Let us remember in prayer:

Dominic Aquino, Tom & Amy Aquino, Mary Ellen Beans, Terry Carpenter, Fritz Chambers, Angie Chamberlain, Michelle Chamberlain, Mary Jane Dougherty, Don Eberheart Jr., Allison Folly, Kay France, Jamie Frank, Judy Hass, Alice & Errol Jacobs, Barry Jacobs, Victoria Kasten, Amber Loftis, Breanne Mathias, Peg McIntire, Will Long, Tom Netting, Ruth Patrick, Bob Pierre, John Pittman, Carol Phillips, Janet Porter, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, Josh Shaeffer, Marlene Singhaus, Cindy Smith, Derrick & Mandy Smith, Janis Stover, Bill Titley, Simone Villarruel, Jay Watt, The Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County & The Homeless of Tuscarawas County.

LORD, our Father, the coming of Jesus into our lives and communities is a reason to celebrate and give joy. He comes with your promises, your guarantee, your power, to drive away all that is evil and destructive from our lives and fill us with good things. To bring healing, unity, cooperation, and opportunity to all who encounter him. As his disciples, as your people, you give us a special privilege of bestowing that grace and good news upon all we meet. But it is much easier said than done; we face doubt, hostility, apathy, and other obstacles to the message we bring. But just as you fill all your beloved servants; Mother Mary, the chief steward, St. Paul, and others to announce the miracle of presence so you fill us. We are many, we are different, but brought together with one goal in mind: the announcement and witness of your kingdom among us.

Sometimes it is easier to say than to do, especially when faced with crises and difficulties we cannot meet. But you call us not to fix others but provide a way others might live easier in difficult times. For those on our minds and hearts direct how we might witness to their pain...*Reading of the Prayer List*...Fill us Holy Spirit and make a new way for your change to be known.

Moment of Silence

We thank you LORD for hearing us and answering each of us as you have given ability. May we take what we have learned and go to do your will and announce hope where it is needed. So the goal of your prayer might 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

The LORD invites all to celebrate with him, and we bring what we have to contribute toward that great celebration. That the joy of the LORD might be made more complete.

Offertory *God Himself Is Light* arr. Shea

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 Father, we thank you for providing for our lives everyday by your generous bounty. We thank you for providing for our souls and well-being by your faithful servants and their examples of righteousness. And for Jesus, by whom we can see what is good and bright and joyful. Bless what we give so we might contribute toward your great, joyful gathering of all peoples to your loving reign. **Amen.**

Hymn #462 *Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Day-star, in my heart appear.

Dark and cheerless is the morn
Unaccompanied by Thee;
Joyless is the day's return
Till Thy mercy's beams I see,
Till they inward light impart,
Cheer my eyes and warm my heart.

Visit then this soul of mine;
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
Fill me, Radiance divine;
Scatter all my unbelief;
More and more Thyself display,
Shining to the perfect day.

***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 *Voluntary in Baroque Style* arr. Uppercue**

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

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