



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

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Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

Sunday Worship Service

February 23, 2025

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Today is the last week for our “Souper Bowl Sunday” collection for the Dover-New Phila Food Pantry. All donations will be matched by our mission budget. Thank you to everyone who donated!

The Finance Committee is canceled for this week.

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (February 26) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (February 26) at 8pm.

In preparation for the 2024 annual congregational meeting all committee heads should have their reports into the church office as soon as possible.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will meet on Sunday (March 2) at 9:15am.

Our annual congregational meeting will be next Sunday (March 2) following service. It will feature a pot-luck luncheon, so please bring a dish to share. A sign-up sheet is available in the church office.

We are partnering with our neighboring churches for a joint Ash Wednesday Service on March 5 at 7pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Join us as we start the Lenten season together!

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Father, your glory revealed to us in Jesus Christ demonstrates the best this life has to offer if we live by faith. May your Spirit speak, reveal to us the hidden parts of ourselves, so we might open our beings to your rejuvenating gospel. **Amen.**

Prelude *All Glory Be to God on High* arr. Manz

***Call to Worship (Psalm 92)**

It is a good thing to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praise to your name, O Most High; to herald your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night; on the psaltery, and on the lyre, and to the melody of the harp.

For you have made me glad by your acts, O LORD; and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands. LORD, how great are your works! Your thoughts are very deep.

The dullard does not know, nor does the fool understand, that though the wicked grow like weeds, and all the workers of iniquity flourish, they flourish only to be destroyed forever; but you, O LORD, are exalted forevermore.

For lo, your enemies, O LORD, lo, your enemies shall perish, and all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

But you have raised up my horns like those of a wild ox; I am anointed with fresh oil.

My eyes spy out those who watch me; my ears hear when enemies rise up against me.

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.

Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God; they shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be green and succulent; that they may show how upright the LORD is, my rock, in whom there is no injustice.

Hymn #270 *O God, in a Mysterious Way

O God, in a mysterious way
Great wonders You perform;
You plant Your footsteps in the sea
And ride upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
You treasure up Your bright designs,
And work Your sovereign will.

O fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Our unbelief is sure to err
And scan Your work in vain;
You are Your own interpreter,
And You will make it plain.

***Prayer of Confession**

The LORD gives grace without measure, but we quench that hidden seed when we fail to recognize and nurture what is planted within us:

LORD, our Father, your glory shines to reveal what we can become by our faith in you. You have planted your word deep within us, but we fail to nurture it as we should. We give ourselves over to hidden faults and wrongful ideas which poison the fruit you wish to cultivate. Help us pay attention to what we take in, what we harbor, and how our characters make the difference in understanding your way. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Even though we have all wandered from the true source of health and life, the LORD's word always brings us back to relationship and fellowship.

By the work and words of Jesus Christ, experienced in baptism, we have a hope of what awaits us within our hour of need.

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 55:1-13

55 ¹ Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. ⁴ See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. ⁵ See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. ⁶ Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; ⁷ let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. ¹² For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. ¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

1 Corinthians 15:35-58

15 ³⁵ But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶ Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹ Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory. ⁴² So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became

a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven. ⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Luke 6:27-49

6 ²⁷ “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you. ³² If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷ Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back. ³⁹ He also told them a parable: “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴² Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye. ⁴³ No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered

from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks. ⁴⁶ Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷ I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. ⁴⁸ That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house."

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

Sermon *The Seventh Sunday of Epiphany*

What we do, what we give our time and efforts toward, is a signal of what we think is important. We look at the world, the people around us, and wonder in frustration and dismay at why they do what they do? Maybe it comes from fear, a place of judgment, or a true desire for them to know what is better. And it is by the life of the fellowship, the example of believers, which allows a contrast between their lives and the life the LORD has created. We know it is the LORD who must teach, must confront, to shatter the illusions of the proud and give wisdom to the humble. It is a power outside of our control, but we are still called to play a part in it. But how?

Jesus teaches our part to play within that teaching, that redemption, and holy example in Luke 6:27-49.

The 'Sermon on the Plains', much like the 'Sermon on the Mount' in Matthew, is not meant to be a check list for righteousness. It is not enough to just do an action once and have it change you. Rather, Jesus presents the intentions and motivations which can give rise to such actions. What has already happened, and is happening, in the heart and takes form in the physical actions and words we use on a daily basis.

Jesus asks us if the standards we use for others are the standards we are using for ourselves? Is the way we are trying to guide and motivate others the same thing we desire for ourselves? How we view the LORD, and treat others, comes from the foundations we have already decided to build on. The LORD's Word, and the word of the world, are not abstract ideas but are tensions already within us. Giving us a hope that the way to abundant life, the way of the gospel, is not out of reach.

As the prophet reflects in Isaiah 55:1-13.

To the people of Israel on their way back to the land, ready to reclaim the covenant as their way of living, it was more than an idea or fantastical story. It was as real and present as the snow and rain, the mountains and hills, and the lands ready to be

tended and planted. Life will not come forth without the command of the divine and the care of those seeking it. The people were ready to see new life and opportunity, and worked to cultivate that desire in their hearts. The LORD was once again making a people who would represent to the other peoples around them what their Creator could provide.

And it is a present hope to the Church, a realized hope, seen in 1 Corinthians 15:35-38.

St. Paul addresses the beliefs of the fellowship about the Resurrection, one of those signs of the abundant life of Christ given to them. Meant to give hope and security in the future, especially about those believers who had already passed on. But also to secure this life for the believers still living it. The future of Christ's physical resurrection is our future as well, the promise of becoming like him marks what a Christian's ongoing maturity is supposed to produce.

The putting off of the old form, scarred and battered by sin, is the ability to overcome the evils and obstacles of this life by trust in the LORD. The embracing of a new form is trusting in what the LORD wants us to be, and how he chooses to make it come about. Resurrection is a future hope and present reality, one which makes us pay attention to what has already been implanted within us. And what we are willing to cultivate out of our realization of importance.

It is Jesus Christ who serves as our reminder of what is around us, what we are doing, and what we produce as a result. It is not actions we can just slightly tweak and hope for the best, but a true reset of what is our source of hope and opportunity. Seeing where the imperfections exist and how the LORD makes up the difference. The future Resurrection and correction of all things is a realization of what we allow now among us. From what Jesus instructs us about the values of his rule and guidance, what are we willing to instill and tend to within ourselves that we know the world needs? Instead of forcing everyone else to conform to an idea or desire we have, how can we live to show how close divine possibility is? We do not have to wait for a big and climatic event or time, we must simply look for what is already in our grasp and just needs that smallest bit of attention.

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, Carol Phillips, Porter Family, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, Josh Shaeffer, Marlene Singhaus, Cindy Smith, Derrick & Mandy Smith, Janis Stover, Bill Titley, Dean & Heidi Unzicker, Simone Villarruel, Jay Watt, The

Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County & The Homeless of Tuscarawas County.

LORD, our Father, it is good and right to give you the thanks and praise you deserve. You have worked deeds of great holiness and power, and bent down low to offer us a glimpse of it all. When we had nothing, when we lacked wisdom, you spoke in a way we could understand. You showed us your character and love in ways we would respond. You ignited and activated a change within us that we were not capable of initiating or sustaining. You have caused fantastic changes to happen within us, and continue to bring about, which brings us more into your way. We thank you for these efforts, and ask your help to continue to bring them about.

We know our lives are not perfect and continue to be in tension with your way. We cover over, ignore, or keep back many things from you. But we poison ourselves, and cause harm around us, in the process. May the words of Jesus be our guide to what must happen within us so we might focus on the good growth you are preparing. May those words guide us in how we might nurture others in their time of need...*Reading of the Prayer List*...Teach us how your way, your gospel, refines and sharpens within us the ability to accomplish your work.

Moment of Silence

We thank you LORD for the connection and relationship you have with us, and remains to always to keep us on the right track. From what we take from here, allow us to use for the good of those we return to in life. So your prayer may be lived and known:

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

How can we expect growth when we do not water or put forward any effort? By our gifts we demonstrate a want to participate with the LORD in what he desires.

Offertory *God Leads Us Along* (Gospel Hymn) arr. Uvretsett

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, you have planted seeds of your new life and gospel within us all. Your fellowship is a greenhouse by which those seedlings can mature. By the gifts of the faithful may your plantings be watered, weeded, and tended to be a source of life an opportunity to all who come here. **Amen.**

Hymn #288 *I Sing the Mighty Power of God

I sing the mighty power of God
That made the mountains rise;
That spread the flowing seas abroad
And built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained
The sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at God's command,
And all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord
That filled the earth with food;
God formed the creatures with a word
And then pronounced them good.
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed,
Where'er I turn my eyes;
If I survey the ground I tread,
Or gaze upon the skies!

There's not a plant or flower below
But makes Thy glories known;
And clouds arise, and tempests blow,
By order from Thy throne;
While all that borrows life from Thee
Is ever in Thy care,
And everywhere that we can be,
Thou, God, art present there.

***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 *How Excellent Is Thy Name* arr. Doran**

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

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