



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

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Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

**Sunday Worship Service
July 20, 2025**

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Finance will be meeting this Tuesday (July 22) at 7pm.

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (July 23) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (July 23) at 8pm.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will not be meeting next Sunday at our regular time due to a special event happening that morning.

The Tables of Eight dinner group will be meeting this Saturday (July 26) at 6pm. The cost is \$10 per person and RSVP is required either to the church office or Carolyn Berry.

Next Sunday (July 27) some members of New Pointe Church will be hosting a breakfast for the residents of Friends of the Homeless at 9am. Members are also invited to come enjoy breakfast before worship!

During July we will be taking up a special collection for Dress-A-Child, a local effort to provide back-to-school supplies and clothes for children in our area. This will be matched by our mission budget. Donation envelopes are available on the back mission table.

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Creator, you call your people to meet the world and work for its salvation and recognition of true life. Help us to welcome and make a home for those struggling and show what is the better part to choose. **Amen.**

Prelude *On Eagles' Wings* arr. Smith

***Call to Worship (Psalm 15)**

LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle? Who may abide upon your holy hill?

Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right, who speak the truth from their heart; they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends; they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear the LORD.

They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.

They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

Hymn #332 *Live Into Hope

Live into hope of captives freed,
Of sight regained, the end of greed.
The oppressed shall be the first to see
The year of God's own jubilee!

Live into hope the blind shall see
With insight and with clarity,
Removing shades of pride and fear--
A vision of our God brought near.

Live into hope of liberty,
The right to speak the right to be,
The right to have one's daily bread,
To hear God's word and thus be fed.

Live into hope of captives freed
From chains of fear or want or greed.
God now proclaims our full release
To faith and hope and joy and peace.

***Prayer of Confession**

As the Church we are to work and organize for the purpose of fulfilling the LORD's purposes. But often we obsess over this work and miss what our actions are truly for:

LORD, our Creator, you have made and called us to reflect your purposes and remind all of their place with you. But we focus too much on our own works, our own reasons, and make your purposes our own to fulfill our demands. Remind us of the better part in our life with you, how you call us to meet the world, and the true purpose of our works. So we might never forget all you have done for us first. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

The ones who may dwell with the LORD are those who strive for a blameless life, fulfill their word, honor the weak and struggling, and are considerate of how the gospel radiates from all their actions.

In the want to confess, in the want of what is better, we experience what the Spirit revives us for.

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 18:1-15

18 ¹ The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. ³ He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said."
⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three

measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.”⁷ Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it.⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.⁹ They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.”¹⁰ Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him.¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?”¹³ The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’¹⁴ Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.”¹⁵ But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “Oh yes, you did laugh.”

Colossians 1:15-2:5

1¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;¹⁶ for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.¹⁷ He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,²⁰ and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.²¹ And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,²² he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him—²³ provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.²⁴ I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.²⁵ I became its servant according to God’s commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,²⁶ the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints.²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.²⁸ It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.²⁹ For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me. **2**¹ For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face.² I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ himself,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.⁴ I am saying this so that no one may deceive you with plausible arguments.⁵ For though I

am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

Luke 10:38-42

10³⁸ Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴² there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

This is the Word of the LORD.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon *The Seventh Sunday of Pentecost*

As the Church strives to engage with the world, attract the world to the hope of gospel, and fulfill the duties as disciples of Christ we discover the tasks are more than just work to accomplish. Simply setting up a special worship service, having particular music, organizing interesting programs, and taking stands on certain issues only gets us so far. Direction in the Church does not come from following some program or set of step-by-step instructions but living lives which strive to embody the welcoming purposes of the LORD. Which seek to keep the divine the center and focus of all that is done to know who we are and why we have been placed here. It is learning to distinguish between our priorities and wants and what has actually been set up for us. Because in the process of that realization we are changed.

When Jesus is visiting the home of the sisters Mary and Martha, he points out this mentality in Luke 10:38-42. Whenever Jesus, or any kind of well-known teacher shows up, social convention was to welcome and cater to them. Martha seems to take this on with gusto and arrange everything for this visit, while Mary sits at the feet of Jesus along with the other disciples. In ministry Mary and Martha stand out as examples of the kinds of work in the Church which need done; there are the practical workers who do things behind the scenes, and the students who champion the teaching and life of the fellowship. There is the trap some fall into in thinking one is better than the other, "I want to be Mary, and not Martha!" But both are necessary to create an environment purposefully designed to allow people to experience the divine Spirit who lives within the disciples present. When Jesus speaks to Martha in her request he is not putting her down or lifting Mary above her, but is saying there is always a chance to remember and practice what is best in either work. Instead of fretting HOW to do the work, we should be thinking for WHOM are we doing it?

That is the basis for a lost art in Christian practice called hospitality. Sure, our society has the 'hospitality industry' which caters to making people comfortable and entertained- but that is only half of what it means to be hospitable in the LORD's eyes. In Genesis 18:1-15, the man Abraham is lifted up as the example of how someone who is hospitable for the LORD conducts themselves. It followed the culture of the time and what it meant to welcome others into your care, for the purpose of engaging with others outside of your clan. The practice of hospitality was meant to disengage hostile intentions between parties, allow them to meet in the middle (so to speak), and foster a sense of security and trust.

The way things happened in Abraham's time was much different than ours. There was no going up and knocking on the tent door and going right in. One stood at a distance with their party and waited to be recognized, was met by the host, and invited inside. Weapons and other articles were left outside at a distance, a cleansing ritual would be offered, and then food brought out. Abraham did all these things and more, even standing as a servant as the strangers ate. And in return he received a promise and blessing from them for his wife. Through this welcoming act Abraham was able to receive blessing and wisdom in a way that would have been cut off if he refused them.

This whole section of Genesis also contains the stories of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and this break with Abraham shows why he was favored by the divine. About what his actions did to warrant the LORD's mercy and grace.

That is also how St. Paul conducted his ministry, pointed out in Colossians 1:15-2:5. In the same way that St. Paul points out how Christ reconciled the world to himself through his body the apostle was doing the same for the churches. He celebrates the sufferings of the persecution he undergoes because it allowed him to demonstrate a power which unites all the LORD's people together. It was one thing to teach and write about all that, but in the persecution St. Paul demonstrated it and made it come to life. Believers were able to see, and hear, about all what the apostle went through for the sake of speaking the truth of Christ. It allowed them to see and understand what the gospel looked like within the world and how it affected others. It was that kind of willingness to engage, give of oneself, and entertain those who came near which made the Church stronger and produced an example that could be followed effectively. That kind of hospitality was demonstrated when the LORD came into the world by the Incarnation, and is given to the people to confront the world in its mistakes. But also to teach the people how to teach and make come to life the promises of the gospel by their own actions.

Hospitality is more than just a singular, one-time action. It is a way of life that can be implemented anywhere so long as there is a willingness to engage on both sides. It is not Christian's just giving away the store to anyone; throwing their pearls before swine. But seeking out those who truly watch us and wonder about who we are and what we do. It makes space to cultivate trust, relationships, security, and learning. It teaches the Church what we should prioritize in meeting with people and cultivating the fellowship

in such a way that people can find a home- and not just an organization or performance. Our actions should allow people to learn how to trust again when the world, and others, have disappointed them. And when we choose to listen to the 'better part', trust in the words and actions of the one who was vindicated from the destruction of evil, then we can live as quality disciples making difference in the lives of people and not just giving the illusion of productivity.

Prayers of the People

Let us remember in prayer:

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

LORD, our Creator, we recognize the chaos of the world and the difficulties which exist within it. Trust is low, willingness is waning, and there is difficulty in connecting with those we see as 'different'. We strive, and agonize, about how to connect and show what is available to those who join us. We can become obsessed about the work and miss the point about why we act and allow our devotion to become about something else entirely. But in the same way you have welcomed us you show how we can welcome others, demonstrate willingness and trust, and elicit confidence that others can find what they need in our midst. Your hospitality is our hospitality, a way of life which can eliminate fear and bring your Church into better contact with those who need help. We need both workers and students of the Word, and by your Spirit you give the right balance to your fellowship.

In the joys and concerns of our lives, our communities, our world, you help us realize what we can do to keep the attention solely on you and your holy instruction. May your Spirit speak and remind us of our capabilities in the midst of struggle...*Reading of the Prayer List...*

Moment of Silence

We thank you, LORD, that we can meet with you and receive your generosity. Remind us of what you have placed within us, help us rediscover what we have been able to do since your initial call, and how we as disciples can live to fulfill the words of your prayer:

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

Out of our abundance, in our willingness and generosity, we demonstrate the One who provides for all people.

Offertory *My Jesus I Love Thee* arr. Gordon 1876

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, out of your heavenly treasury you bestow provision and blessing beyond measure. In our want to share and contribute, in consideration of what we can truly do, may your Church remind those around us what is possible through right faith and trust. **Amen.**

Hymn #358 *Help Us Accept Each Other

Help us accept each other
As Christ accepted us;
Teach us as sister, brother,
Each person to embrace.
Be present, Lord, among us
And bring us to believe
We are ourselves accepted
And meant to love and live.

Teach us, O Lord, Your lessons,
As in our daily life
We struggle to be human
And search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for people,
For all, not just for some,
To love them as we find them
Or as they may become.

Let Your acceptance change us,

So that we may be moved
In living situations
To do the truth in love;
To practice Your acceptance
Until we know by heart
The table of forgiveness
And laughter's healing art.

Lord, for today's encounters
With all who are in need,
Who hunger for acceptance,
For righteousness and bread,
We need new eyes for seeing,
New hands for holding on:
Renew us with Your Spirit;
Lord, free us, make us one!

***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 *Song of Joy* arr. Boodle**

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

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