



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

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Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

**Sunday Worship Service
May 18, 2025**

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Today is our Graduation Sunday service, with a reception afterward for our graduates. Please stay for refreshments and to offer your congratulations!

Session will meet this Tuesday (May 20) at 7pm.

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (May 21) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (May 21) at 8pm.

The Tables of Eight dinner group will be meeting May 23 at 6pm. The cost is \$10 per person and RSVP is required either to Carolyn Berry or the church office.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will meet on Sunday (May 25) at 9:15am. We will be covering Chapter 11 "Foxe's Book of Martyrs". See Rev. Joe if you wish to attend!

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Father, your Resurrection is an assurance of unity with you and each other. In the same way Jesus teaches us to live with you, he also teaches us to live with each other. Help us see the sacredness in our relationships and how we grow by the ones you place us with. **Amen.**

Prelude *How Excellent Is Thy Name* arr. Doran

***Call to Worship (Psalm 24)**

The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world and those who dwell therein.

For the LORD has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD, and who may stand in God's holy place?

**Those of innocent hands and purity of heart, who do not swear on God's being,
nor do they pledge by what is false.**

They shall receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of their salvation.

Such is the generation of those who seek you, O LORD, of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O gates; and be lifted up, O everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!

Lift up your heads, O gates; and be lifted up, O ever lasting doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory? Truly, the LORD of hosts is the King of glory.

Hymn #111 *Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing!

Good Christians all rejoice and sing!
Now is the triumph of our King!
To all the world glad news we bring:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The Lord of Life is risen today!
Bring flowers of song, bedeck the way;
Let every tongue rejoice and say:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise we in songs of victory
That Love, that Life, which cannot die,
And sing with hearts uplifted high:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thy name we bless, O risen Lord,
And sing today with one accord
The life laid down, the Life restored
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***Prayer of Confession**

We strive to honor the LORD by all we do, but often we overlook the smallest examples of holiness and consideration between ourselves:

LORD, our Father, you give us a guiding example through Jesus on how to serve and love you with all we have. But we confess that we often fall short in terms of our neighbors, and our family in Christ. We still attempt to control and overpower others with what we want, and wrench control away from you. Help us to be mindful, considerate, and attentive of the impact we have and how we affect your fellowship here and everywhere. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

The LORD promises holiness to us out of his holiness, and various ways to dedicate ourselves to the greater task out of all we do.

Let us strive to see the new heaven and earth in our midst, and how we might witness its unfolding by how we love and encourage each other.

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:

Leviticus 19:1-37

19 ¹ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ² Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. ³ You shall each revere your mother and father, and you shall keep my sabbaths: I am the Lord

your God. ⁴ Do not turn to idols or make cast images for yourselves: I am the Lord your God. ⁵ When you offer a sacrifice of well-being to the Lord, offer it in such a way that it is acceptable in your behalf. ⁶ It shall be eaten on the same day you offer it, or on the next day; and anything left over until the third day shall be consumed in fire. ⁷ If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination; it will not be acceptable. ⁸ All who eat it shall be subject to punishment, because they have profaned what is holy to the Lord; and any such person shall be cut off from the people. ⁹ When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God. ¹¹ You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another. ¹² And you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am the Lord. ¹³ You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning. ¹⁴ You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. ¹⁵ You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. ¹⁶ You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord. ¹⁷ You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. ¹⁹ You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your animals breed with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; nor shall you put on a garment made of two different materials. ²⁰ If a man has sexual relations with a woman who is a slave, designated for another man but not ransomed or given her freedom, an inquiry shall be held. They shall not be put to death, since she has not been freed; ²¹ but he shall bring a guilt offering for himself to the Lord, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, a ram as guilt offering. ²² And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of guilt offering before the Lord for his sin that he committed; and the sin he committed shall be forgiven him. ²³ When you come into the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall regard their fruit as forbidden; three years it shall be forbidden to you, it must not be eaten. ²⁴ In the fourth year all their fruit shall be set apart for rejoicing in the Lord. ²⁵ But in the fifth year you may eat of their fruit, that their yield may be increased for you: I am the Lord your God. ²⁶ You shall not eat anything with its blood. You shall not practice augury or witchcraft. ²⁷ You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard. ²⁸ You shall not make any gashes in your flesh for the dead or tattoo any marks upon you: I am the Lord. ²⁹ Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute, that the land not become prostituted and full of depravity. ³⁰ You shall keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord. ³¹ Do not turn to mediums or wizards; do not seek them out, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God. ³² You shall rise before the aged, and defer to the old; and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. ³³ When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. ³⁴ The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the

land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. ³⁵ You shall not cheat in measuring length, weight, or quantity. ³⁶ You shall have honest balances, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. ³⁷ You shall keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and observe them: I am the Lord.

Revelation 21:1-8

21 ¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." ⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

John 13:31-38

13 ³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." ³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward." ³⁷ Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." ³⁸ Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times."

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

Sermon *The Fifth Sunday of Easter*

Understanding how to love and be committed to the LORD and the teachings of Jesus Christ involves understanding how to love and live with each other. The Resurrection teaches us what it means to be reconciled and made right with the divine, but also sets the example about what it takes to be made right with each other. What the lessons

this week teach us is how we must understand, treat, and live with those who are our fellow Christians. Because if we cannot live with each other in a right way, conduct our own houses properly, then how are we any different from any other organization in the world? How is the world to take us seriously if we cannot represent Christ to each other? That is an idea I feel takes on special importance as we gather to recognize those who are graduating from high school or college and taking their next steps into the world. How are we empowering them to represent the faith out of what we are feeding into them?

In John 13:31-38, those who call themselves disciples take on a special responsibility in the eyes of the world. Those who are devoted to Jesus and his teachings, see his importance in all matters, will by their actions show what it means to love and care.

Many will speak and parrot the talking points about what it means to be 'holy' and 'righteous' in society, but just speaking it is not enough to bring life. A disciple is one who represents the living Christ in all they do and looking for opportunities in all their various forms to broadcast it. And even in failure, like the example of Peter, learning and opportunity brings wisdom. Peter had to be humbled and shown dedication to what is important, and that it might be challenging and require much. But that is what allows one to be integrally true toward what they see as important.

In Leviticus 19:1-37 we are also shown the way of love and commitment toward the LORD, in a way we might want to gloss over. Typically, we see the Hebrew Scriptures as lists of rules and ordinances; the 'shalls' and 'shall nots' of everyday life. But the laws, the instructions, of the LORD are not just there to order us around but to make us aware of how everyday life and actions impact our purpose. Leviticus is a book meant to teach Israel what it means to worship the LORD, after having gone hundreds of years unable to do so while in Egypt. More than just the rites and rituals, it brings everyday life into the equation of what it means to represent the divine. From farming, to eating, to how we talk to others everyday will be a sign of what motivates us. Some of the examples used can be applied today, and some are practices which remain in the ancient past. But they all talk about how we treat others, their property, and what are the signs of trustworthiness. About what it takes for others to take what we claim seriously. When we speak unkind and inconsiderate words, perform a mindless action, it impacts how others interpret what we believe and if it is worthy to be considered. How we love, and fail to love, others and be dedicated to their well-being will signal if divine intervention has truly reached down and impacted us.

The goal of the people of the LORD, of Christians, is to bring about the vision of Revelation 21:1-8. There is a new heaven and new earth awaiting those who have struggled through life's ordeals but have held onto the promises of the Gospel. Who have let the teachings of Jesus Christ guide them to a new identity and purpose beyond what anyone else can provide. That is not just for the end of life or the end of the world, but for here and now. We can pull back the shroud and allow others to see what is possible, who is the Creator of all, and the will of the divine as it is. By our very

beings we can reveal a new life made by the LORD, demonstrated by the Resurrection of Christ, and how all people can take part in that new opportunity of human life as it should be. But when we allow actions and speech which deprive the opportunity to heal and better others, when we choose ourselves before all else, when selfishness becomes the deciding factor, we disqualify ourselves from experiencing that which is better. We cover over what the LORD can do, because we take the spotlight for ourselves. When we elevate our own words and ideas do we truly consider the long-term impact they can make? How our actions can feed into the sin and destructiveness already out there?

That is a challenge for Christians every day, and for our graduates just understanding the world beyond their immediate home. It is a challenge of consideration, of possibility, of realizing that all we do in this life can have a positive or negative impact. Actions done intentionally, and unintentionally, can impact how others view and accept what we know to be true. It is easy to fight for our ideas and reputations, but does winning for ourselves mean anything in the end? Is it not better to place people first before all else, understand and accept how the LORD has made them, and see how we can feed into them without trying to change who they are? When we cannot control others, or the world, then we must focus on how we can control ourselves. That is the divine instruction as it is meant to be, a check on our actions first, if they are Gospel-inspired, and what is needed in that time and place. That care and dedication is what fosters trust, a sense of trustworthiness, and creates relationships which can last a lifetime. It may not be popular, but a trustworthy character is worth itself in gold for the long run. Remember that Jesus has trusted us with a special purpose in all we do, and how we live it out and tend to it should never be taken for granted. It is what we are, knowing what we can be, and what the world can appreciate with our assistance.

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, Judy Hass, Alice & Errol Jacobs, Barry Jacobs, Victoria Kasten, Amber Loftis, David Mackey, Breanne Mathias, Peg 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, Jay Watt, The Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County & The Homeless of Tuscarawas County.

LORD, our Father, our lives are always unfolding before you and demonstrating what it is we value and desire most. You have seen our mentalities, our interests, our desires, and work your will to be present within them. You guard all things with your love, and your mercy is what enables us to act in ways that heal and help. We confess that we have not been able to love as we should, using your instructions as ways to be proud and not humble. To not consider our own actions before anyone else's, to judge others

before we judge ourselves, and make the way of the divine too high for others to reach. But your holiness is present within all places, entices us with its beckoning call, and makes us consider what is the better way. We thank you that you have made a way not too high so that we are stranded, and not too low so we cannot grow. But you challenge us and make us considerate of all in our lives, and what message you send us and others.

Help us to exemplify your way better than we have before, and to look more closely at those who you send to us. Let us see every interaction, every relationship, and every action as an opportunity to see what your Resurrection can show and what the Gospel provides. Even in the lives of those who are hurting, and those who we hurt for, your Spirit speaks...*Reading of the Prayer List*...Let your Spirit speak and show us the signs of what awaits in our efforts in waiting on you.

Moment of Silence

You send us out to do good works and make your name known, and your promises always come through. In all we imagine and set out to do let your holy imagination guide the way, set us up to demonstrate you, so harmony and peace is what the world sees of us. So your prayer may come to life:

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.

Graduate Recognition

Let us honor and pray for those who are going out to take their divine gifts to the world!
Michael L'Amoreaux • Sidney Vandal

Offering our Gifts

All that we have is the LORD's, and is an opportunity to practice love and mercy in its many forms.

Offertory O How I Love Jesus American Melody

***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, as the King of glory you exemplify a better way and life for us to have. You bring it out within us by our actions and what we dedicate ourselves too. By what we give may your lessons come to life, and allow us to see what we must strive toward before all else. **Amen.**

Hymn #435 *We All Are One in Mission

We all are one in mission,
we all are one in call,
our varied gifts united
by Christ, the Lord of all.
A single, great commission
compels us from above
to plan and work together
that all may know Christ's love.

We all are called for service
to witness in God's name.
Our ministries are different,
our purpose is the same:
to touch the lives of others
by God's surprising grace,
so ev'ry folk and nation
may feel God's warm embrace.

Now let us be united
and let our song be heard.
Now let us be a vessel
for God's redeeming word.
We all are one in mission,
we all are one in call,
our varied gifts united
by Christ, the Lord of all.

***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 *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus* arr. Parks**

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

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