



**First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia**

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**Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor**

**Palm Sunday Worship Service**

**April 13, 2025**

\*All who are able, please stand.

**Announcements & Prayer Concerns**

Today after service we will be wrapping Easter gifts for the residents of Amberwood Manor. Please consider staying to help or donating toward our efforts. Any donations can be marked as "Mission".

Tonight is our monthly Friends of the Homeless dinner. A volunteer sign-up sheet is available in the church office. While meal funds are good, consider donating toward our other Friends of the Homeless efforts (FOTH Operations/Jack's House of Hope).

Session will meet this Tuesday (April 15) at 7pm.

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (April 16) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (April 16) at 8pm.

Holy Week services will be as follows for this week: Maundy Thursday (April 17 at 6pm) and Good Friday (April 18 at 12pm). Please come as we remember and celebrate the Passion of Jesus.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will meet on Sunday (April 20) at 9:15am. We will be covering Chapter 6 "Foxe's Book of Martyrs". See Rev. Joe if you wish to attend!

During the season of Lent, consider donating toward the PCUSA's "One Great Hour of Sharing"- to benefit the denomination's hunger, disaster, and development ministries.

Donation envelopes and literature are available on the back mission table. Next Sunday will be the last week of collection.

Remember to order your Easter tulips this year! Cost is \$8 per tulip, and order forms are available in your bulletins. Simply fill out and drop in the offering plate, or call the church office. Accepting orders through April 13.

**Opening Prayer**

LORD, our Father, the triumphal entry of your Son, the arrival of your reign in our lives, has caused us to look at the world in such a different way. Allow us to welcome your arrival, your Passion, with anticipation for what it now allows for all creation. **Amen.**

**Prelude *Fanfare Prelude- All Glory, Laud, and Honor* arr. Southbridge**

**\*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**

The image of Jesus is what can light up our lives and give us hope, but we often allow that image to be overshadowed by false expectations and promises:

**LORD, our Father, your Son Jesus is the promise and assurance of your salvation to all. The image of kingliness and leadership which can bring order to our world. But our eyes are fixed and obsessed with the standards and expectations of others, which takes our devotion off you. Reset our expectations to the mind of Christ and allow his Passion to signal what is truly powerful and awaits us. Amen.**

#### **\*Silent Confessions and Prayers**

##### **\*Assurance of Forgiveness**

Jesus Christ rides on with victory assured over everything he does. In his coming Passion, symbolized in baptism, we are shown the way.

**Allow us not to be beaten down by the evils of the world, but to be in awe at how your deliverance overcomes all.**

##### **\*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

**50** <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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; <sup>8</sup> he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup>

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? <sup>11</sup> 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** <sup>1</sup> If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Let the same

mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, <sup>8</sup> he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. <sup>12</sup> 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; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. <sup>14</sup> Do all things without murmuring and arguing, <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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— <sup>18</sup> and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.

Luke 19:29-40

**19** <sup>29</sup> When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’ ” <sup>32</sup> So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. <sup>33</sup> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” <sup>34</sup> They said, “The Lord needs it.” <sup>35</sup> Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup> As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup> As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!” <sup>39</sup> Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” <sup>40</sup> He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

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

### **Sermon Palm Sunday**

As we get closer to Easter, as we prepare to celebrate the arrival of our Messiah, there has been a particular phrase I have been contemplating. It may be a common or often heard phrase, but it makes me see the work of Jesus in a new light: “Heavy is the head who wears the crown.” Originally a misquote from Shakespeare’s *Henry IV* it evolved to become a saying about the burden and responsibility of leadership. Many believe that leaders sit on a throne of privilege or have the ability to act without any

consideration of others. And seeing the type of leaders in our world today I do not blame anyone for having that sentiment- many act like kings in their own right. Leadership is seen as just having power and control, pushing your agenda and ideology, and retaining it to see your vision come to life. But it often comes at the expense of others whose lives are caught up in such decisions. But when Shakespeare penned that line in recounting the lives of the English monarchs, he was emphasizing the burden that leadership had on some. That true kingship, true leadership, involved consideration and agony about the decisions being made. Those considerations caused someone to be oriented toward the proper path and produced ones who were able to guide and lead people. It produced a humility in the powerful; it made them- and others- see they were only vassal servants to the true king. No one in this world has power on their own, because all powers and decisions are under the watch and authority of the Creator of all.

So the Passion of Christ is not just a historical event, rather an action which makes us consider what it means that the LORD gave Jesus “the name above all names by which all would kneel”- penned by St. Paul in Philippians 2:1-18. By being willing to hand himself over to a blind and deaf leadership of Israel, Jesus demonstrated the difference between enforcing righteousness and demonstrating righteousness. Even when Jesus went through all that pain and suffering, his trust in the LORD to redeem his efforts was unwavering. Before all of those who mocked, condemned, betrayed, and mourned for him he showed that it means to represent the true God of all even before those who know nothing. It is a crown that was not just placed willy-nilly onto Jesus’ head, but a crown which demonstrates responsibility first before all else. First to the LORD, then to others. It is leadership not based upon power but on wisdom. A divine wisdom which allows the true intentions of all to be seen for what they are, and the decision to follow that which is better.

That is also the prophecy laid out in Isaiah 50:4-11. Often referred to as the “Servant Song” many have interpreted it as a future prediction for what the ultimate redeemer of Israel will accomplish for the people. But prophecy is more than just predicting the future, if the LORD will even let humanity have that! It is about truth-telling, revealing all hidden powers and intentions within a present situation, seeing what the LORD presents, and then deciding the path we want to go down. The abuse this servant is described going through by the prophet is comparable to the kingship rites during, and before, the time of Israel as a nation. In Mesopotamia, before a Sumerian king was crowned he went through a humility rite. He was ritualistically beaten before the god Bel in the central temple and then grabbed by the beard and dragged in the streets of the city. Only to then be reinvested with his regalia in the presence of the god. This *akitu* ritual was a reminder that the king was not in power by his own means, or those of others, but by the will of the god. In the time after the meaning of this ritual is seen in the Day of Atonement for Israel by chasing a scapegoat from the Jerusalem temple into the desert. Again, to symbolize the power of the LORD to redeem and purify the people and nothing else. This promise, this revelation, demonstrates what a true

servant of the LORD is to look like and how they might be spotted- and imitated, so the covenant of the LORD could be fulfilled.

That is why Jesus appears the way he does in the Triumphal Entry in Luke 19:29-40.

While he may be fulfilling ancient prediction by means of his entry, he is also proclaiming an essential truth to the people who look at and cheer him on. The king of Israel comes in order to take charge of the LORD's people, but also to demonstrate the greater power which gives all of them life and purpose. He was not coming by his own means, power, popularity, or politics. He was shining a light on all leadership in Jerusalem at the time, showing if it truly demonstrated the LORD's will, so the people could see what was worth following and dedicating themselves too. Jesus knows full well what he was stepping into, what he would experience, but to prepare and demonstrate the greater reality of the LORD's redemption and salvation. To make a people who were of one mind and purpose, dedicated to one mission they would use all their means to see through. In the same way Jesus and the LORD were one, this act would make all who were watching one. To strengthen and prepare a renewed people to carry on the LORD's original intent: to shine a light for the nations and prepare his creation to be united and harmonious once again.

Jesus casts a light on all who claim to be, or aspire to be, leaders in their own circles. It is not something that is deserved or entitled to, and not even earned based upon one's merits and supposed expertise. But which is recognized because there is something there which can offer a benefit. It is not enforced by anything but accepted because of what it demonstrates in that moment. How it orients and shapes others positively, and points to what is more important and longer lasting. The Passion of Christ is not an event we should shy away from because it makes us feel bad or remorseful but embrace because of what is revealed by it. This is why Jesus is our resurrected king and ultimate master and teacher. Who and what he is can be what we become as well, so long as our trust is in that which is not temporary or moveable and our dedication not to our own vision but consider what others need to find a place and life among us.

### **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, Porter Family, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, Josh Shaeffer, Marlene Singhaus, Cindy Smith, Derrick & Mandy Smith, Janis Stover, Bill Titley, Dean & Heidi Unzicker, Ruth Joyce Zimmerly, Simone Villarruel, Jay Watt, The Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County & The Homeless of Tuscarawas County.*

LORD, our Father, the week of your Passion has begun and approaches us in a manner which we cannot escape. We see Jesus riding by and have eager expectation for what he can do and what he will, and has, shown us. His later betrayal echoes what we do when he does not produce what we want, and when we allow earthly expectations to creep into our faith. But he lives into his Passion with the expectation of a true king, a true Son of God, a true servant, for what your redemption will bring about. His work is not just for us as individuals but for the whole of creation, to bring harmony between all things and demonstrate what is necessary for peace to flourish among all created. Prepare us to accept this coming act, this demonstration of righteousness, and realization of what can be when the mind of Jesus is embraced. Help us not to become bogged down and depressed over the details, but to celebrate that one is willing to stand for all in this manner. And how you give us the ability to live for that as well.

We stand as examples wherever we are and go, and you make it possible by your calling to give what is needed so life may be found. In our joys and concerns, our excitement and apprehension, help us to glimpse how we might be to shine your salvation and demonstrate your mind...*Reading of the Prayer List*...In all we face, let your Spirit guide as it wishes for your way.

#### *Moment of Silence*

Your plans and wisdom are perfect and revive our souls toward your true intentions. In all we experience this coming week may we be prepared for your ultimate show of salvation. And may the acts of Jesus help us to live the words you have gifted:

#### **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**

In celebration of the arrival of a true king, we offer all we have that is good to celebrate and herald his arrival!

**Offertory *Praise Him* arr. Saxton**

#### **\*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, in celebration of your coming and merciful reign over us we offer you the good of everything we have. You deserve so much more, but we offer in hope that your redemption will grow from what we lovingly give. **Amen.**

### **\*Hymn #91    *Ride On! Ride On in Majesty!***

Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
Hark! all the tribes Hosanna cry;  
O Savior meek, pursue Thy road  
With palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die;  
O Christ, Thy triumphs now begin  
O'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
The winged squadrons of the sky  
Look down with sad and wondering eyes  
To see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on! ride on, in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die;  
Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain,  
Then take, O God, Thy power, and reign.

### **\*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    *Processional for a King*    arr. Paxton**

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

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