



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

217 E. High Ave, New Philadelphia, OH 44663

330-343-7114

www.newphilapc.org



Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

**Sunday Worship Service
July 13, 2025**

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Tonight is our monthly Friends of the Homeless Dinner at 6pm. A sign-up sheet for volunteers is available in the church office. While funds for the meal are good, please consider donating toward one of our other Friends of the Homeless efforts (FOTH Operations/Jack's House of Hope.)

Session will be meeting this Tuesday (July 15) at 7pm.

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

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

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will meet on Sunday (July 20) at 9:15am. We will begin a new discussion on "Practice of the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence.

See Rev. Joe if you wish to join!

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 Father, you have made holy agreement with us to show us what is better and what is destructive. Help us to trust in the leading of your Spirit before anyone or anything else that we might produce what your creation needs. **Amen.**

Prelude *Be Thou My Vision* arr. Wood

***Call to Worship (Psalm 82)**

God stands to charge the divine council assembled, giving judgment in the midst of the gods:

“How long will you judge unjustly, and show favor to the wicked? Save the weak and the orphan; defend the humble and needy; rescue the weak and the poor; deliver them from the power of the wicked.

They do not know, neither do they understand; they wander about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. Now I say to you, ‘You are gods, and all of you children of the Most High; nevertheless, you shall die like mortals, and fall like any prince.’”

Arise, O God, and rule the earth, for you shall take all nations for your own.

Hymn #392 *Take Thou Our Minds, Dear Lord

Take Thou our minds, dear Lord, we humbly pray;
Give us the mind of Christ each passing day;
Teach us to know the truth that sets us free;
Grant us in all our thoughts to honor Thee.

Take Thou our hearts, O Christ, they are Thine own;
Come Thou within our souls and claim Thy throne;
Help us to shed abroad Thy deathless love;
Use us to make the earth like heaven above.

Take Thou our wills, Most High! Hold Thou full sway;
Have in our inmost souls Thy perfect way;
Guard Thou each sacred hour from selfish ease;
Guide Thou our ordered lives as Thou dost please.

Take Thou ourselves, O Lord, heart, mind, and will;
Through our surrendered souls Thy plans fulfill.
We yield ourselves to Thee—time, talents, all;
We hear, and henceforth heed, Thy sovereign call.

***Prayer of Confession**

We confess that the LORD is our light and life, and the words of Jesus Christ are our guide. But how often have we trusted in the promises of others before these?

LORD, our Father, we confess our struggles in following and obeying your word. We know you are the source of all life, but often allow others to interpret what we need and what we believe. Help us to see all these things, and people, more critically and to pay more attention to what you bring into our lives. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

The fruits of our lives cultivated by the Holy Spirit are a sign of what can grow again through forgiveness and effort.

Our identity is secured in heaven with Jesus Christ, through whom we will know what it means to live for the LORD.

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:

Deuteronomy 29:2-30:20

29 ² Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, ³ the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. ⁴ But to this day the Lord has not given you a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear. ⁵ I have led you forty years in the wilderness. The clothes on your back have not worn out, and the sandals on your feet have not worn out; ⁶ you have not eaten bread, and you have not drunk wine or strong drink—so that you may know that I am the Lord your God. ⁷ When you came to this place, King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan came out against us for battle, but we defeated them. ⁸ We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. ⁹ Therefore diligently observe the words of this covenant, in order that you may succeed in everything that you do. ¹⁰ You stand assembled today, all of you, before the Lord your God—the leaders of your tribes, your elders, and your officials, all

the men of Israel, ¹¹ your children, your women, and the aliens who are in your camp, both those who cut your wood and those who draw your water— ¹² to enter into the covenant of the Lord your God, sworn by an oath, which the Lord your God is making with you today; ¹³ in order that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you and as he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. ¹⁴ I am making this covenant, sworn by an oath, not only with you who stand here with us today before the Lord our God, ¹⁵ but also with those who are not here with us today. ¹⁶ You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed. ¹⁷ You have seen their detestable things, the filthy idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, that were among them. ¹⁸ It may be that there is among you a man or woman, or a family or tribe, whose heart is already turning away from the Lord our God to serve the gods of those nations. It may be that there is among you a root sprouting poisonous and bitter growth. ¹⁹ All who hear the words of this oath and bless themselves, thinking in their hearts, “We are safe even though we go our own stubborn ways” (thus bringing disaster on moist and dry alike)— ²⁰ the Lord will be unwilling to pardon them, for the Lord’s anger and passion will smoke against them. All the curses written in this book will descend on them, and the Lord will blot out their names from under heaven. ²¹ The Lord will single them out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this book of the law. ²² The next generation, your children who rise up after you, as well as the foreigner who comes from a distant country, will see the devastation of that land and the afflictions with which the Lord has afflicted it— ²³ all its soil burned out by sulfur and salt, nothing planted, nothing sprouting, unable to support any vegetation, like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord destroyed in his fierce anger— ²⁴ they and indeed all the nations will wonder, “Why has the Lord done thus to this land? What caused this great display of anger?” ²⁵ They will conclude, “It is because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their ancestors, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. ²⁶ They turned and served other gods, worshiping them, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them; ²⁷ so the anger of the Lord was kindled against that land, bringing on it every curse written in this book. ²⁸ The Lord uprooted them from their land in anger, fury, and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as is now the case.” ²⁹ The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever, to observe all the words of this law. **30** ¹ When all these things have happened to you, the blessings and the curses that I have set before you, if you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, ² and return to the Lord your God, and you and your children obey him with all your heart and with all your soul, just as I am commanding you today, ³ then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, gathering you again from all the peoples among whom the Lord your God has scattered you. ⁴ Even if you are exiled to the ends of the world, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there he will bring you back. ⁵ The Lord your God will bring you into the land that your ancestors possessed, and you will possess it; he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your

ancestors. ⁶ Moreover, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live. ⁷ The Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on the adversaries who took advantage of you. ⁸ Then you shall again obey the Lord, observing all his commandments that I am commanding you today, ⁹ and the Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil. For the Lord will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors, ¹⁰ when you obey the Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law, because you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹¹ Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" ¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" ¹⁴ No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe. ¹⁵ See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰ loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Colossians 1:1-14

1 ¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ² To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. ³ In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel ⁶ that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. ⁷ This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸ and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit. ⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as

you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. ¹¹ May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Luke 10:25-37

¹⁰ ²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." ²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

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

Sermon *The Sixth Sunday of Pentecost*

As disciples of Christ, servants of the living LORD, we know we have a duty to engage with the world to reach it. Our example proves there is something different in the way we live, and something wrong with the powers of the world so many want to believe in.

The idea of service, of engagement with the world and its issues, allows us to understand what others are facing and how the gospel might truly be 'good news' in that situation. It always allows us to remember who we once were and how Christ came into our desperate needs to demonstrate what is possible. And like Christ, his people reach out and imagine how the world can be different than what it is. Not so we might rule in our own right but prove that support is there for those in need of it.

Deuteronomy 29:2-30:20 reminds us of the principle which governs the fellowship, the people of the LORD, and what can attract people into our midst: the covenant.

Consider the idea of 'covenant' like a contractual agreement between two parties- in fact, that was a revolutionary concept in the period of history Israel found itself in. In a

world where different tribes and clans rarely engaged outside of their immediate circle, the covenant agreement allowed for engagement and cooperation in a manner which allowed for safety and security. To create a covenant between another person required pledging a deal, reciprocating a deal in return, and sealing it before a patron or deity to enforce. Even if trust in another human ran out and was broken there was the understanding one could not run away from a divine sense of justice and accountability.

In Deuteronomy, the prophet Moses is reminding the people of all the LORD has done for Israel in their time of need. The reasons why they were brought from slavery into freedom, and why they were about to inherit the Promised Land. Not because there was anything unique or special about this wandering group of stateless nomads, but because of the potential they had to live due to the LORD's guidance. The victories that Israel would have over the rival tribes and peoples of the region was not to simply bring glory to Israel, but through Israel reintroduce the creator whom the various peoples had misunderstood or forgotten. How Israel would live within that mission, and with these peoples, would determine how these others would be reconciled. One group that is alluded to in passing are the Gibeonites, a tribal group who made a peace treaty with Israel and lived in their midst in return for being their wood-hewers and water fetchers. These also would exist and live under covenant relationship, showing the way of Israel was not about conquest but mutual cooperation under a singular power. Thus, making the way of the LORD not an out-of-the-way, difficult, or costly thing. But something that can easily be seen and replicated by those seeking its guidance and guarantee.

In the Reformed Christian tradition, we are considered to be in covenant relationship within the fellowship. Each of us, when we join the church, take oaths and promises to support each other in the mission of loving the LORD and reaching the world with the teachings of Jesus Christ. It defines who we are to one another, eliciting trust because of the one who founded that agreement, and spurring us onward because of the backing it guarantees. It charges our actions with different purpose, because we now pull attention from others toward a different cause. One that is unlike the rest of the world and leads to the singular source of life which all things have come from. That is what St. Paul is thankful for in the opening of his letter in Colossians 1:1-14. That holy agreement, that holy instruction by Christ, is what allowed the Colossian Christians to learn and continue in their way of life so effectively. Even without the benefit of formally trained teachers and apostles always with them, it allowed volunteer pastors like Epaphras to help the people cultivate what the society around them needed. Seen in the imagery of fruit, this holy agreement between the saints allowed them to provide nourishment which brought others back into the presence of the living LORD they had long forgotten.

That is the point of Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan, in Luke 10:25-37. While it is a story which fosters the idea of helping those in need, it also points out what it means to

be a neighbor and live in a covenant manner with others. The Samaritan's actions were of sacrifice, compassion, and mercy toward the one in trouble. While the priest and Levite walk by without helping, thinking their gifts were reserved for 'better' purposes within the Temple or with their own kindred. Mercy is what showed the Samaritan to be different than the stereotypes people had about them in the day. It was a proof that the good things of the LORD were meant for all creation to experience, and those true to the LORD's heart would find every way to express them. Even just a simple desire and want to help, even without the practical knowledge of how to, signals that divine guidance is always present to lead into the better options.

Holy agreement is the basis for how the Church, the fellowship, operates and sees itself. Each of us come in with our own reasons and purposes, but have those different things serve the common cause of glorifying and bringing attention back to the creator of all. How we choose to engage with those outside our circle is an exercise for how much our agreement with the divine impacts our existence on the daily. Will we choose to look for every possibility and option to reveal the LORD to another, or continue to claim that love and possibility only exist in forms which will make those others worship us and our ways? Covenant relationship makes us realize our equal standing with each other, and the potential of each other, to know and give life so the world can glimpse the solution to what has always been ailing it.

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 Father; your covenants, your holy agreements, you make with your people are there for our guidance and betterment. As our creator you know our propensity for distraction, misunderstanding, and corruption. You know that we are at the mercy of any and all rival powers to you in our lives, until our beings are filled with your Spirit. All you instruct and call us to obey are not a means to control and subdue us, but nurture us and call attention to our true nature so we might act more rightly than on our own. While your instructions themselves do not save, they point us closer to the one who can save and shows what is within our grasp. Your good news is not locked away in heaven where we cannot reach it, or across the sea where we must risk life and limb to obtain, but within our hearts if we are willing to grasp what it means. And by grasping it we confess together, and individually, you are the only one worthy of our trust and attention and whose wisdom can never deceive or let us down.

We ask that trusting relationship reveal itself within the joys and concerns we face in our lives, and we might provide fruit to those seeking true sustenance...*Reading of the Prayer List*...Show us what you can cultivate, what you can provide, by our willingness to seek you first.

Moment of Silence

We thank you, LORD, that your wisdom has been revealed in a way so we might understand who we can trust, what is within our ability, and how we can carry out your good works. May the prayer you gift us keep us focused on what truly matters for our lives:

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 is the one who rules this world, and instructs us in our part to play within it by what we cultivate and gift.

Offertory *Calvary's Love* arr. Doran

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 that your power gives control over what grows in the world and what we can produce. You provide just what we need and when we need it, so we might be a blessing to others. May all who witness our gifts see the ability your holy gospel has to show mercy where it is needed. **Amen.**

Hymn #386 *O for a World

O for a world where everyone
respects each other's ways,
where love is lived and all is done
with justice and with praise.

O for a world where goods are shared
and misery relieved,
where truth is spoken, children spared,
equality achieved.

We welcome one world family
and struggle with each choice
that opens us to unity
and gives our vision voice.

The poor are rich, the weak are strong,
the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn, outcasts belong,
who perishes will rise.

O for a world preparing for
God's glorious reign of peace,
where time and tears will be no more,
and all but love will cease.

***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 *To God All Glory Given* arr. Sawyer**

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

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