



**First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia**

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**Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor**

**Sunday Worship Service**

**February 15, 2026**

\*All who are able, please stand.

**Announcements & Prayer Concerns**

The church office will be closed Monday (February 16) for Presidents' Day.

Session will meet this Tuesday (February 17) at 7pm.

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (February 18) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (February 18) at 8pm.

We will be worshipping with our neighbor churches for Ash Wednesday (February 18) at 7pm at Trinity Episcopal Church in New Philadelphia. All are welcome as we start the season of Lent together as a Christian community!

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will be meeting next Sunday (February 22) at 9:15am. We are currently reading "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl, and is open for anyone to join!

Next Sunday (February 22) we will hold our annual Congregational Meeting following service that day. It will feature a pot-luck luncheon, and a sign-up sheet is available to list what you can bring! In preparation for the meeting all chairs from committees in 2025 should have their reports into the office by this week!

During the month of February, we will be taking up our "Souper Bowl Sunday" collection to benefit the Dover-New Phila Food Pantry. Donation envelopes are available on the back mission table!

The Tables of Eight dinner group will be meeting this Saturday (February 21) at 6pm. The cost is \$10 per person, and RSVP is required either to the church office or to Carolyn Berry.

The Session needs a volunteer to become this year's Clerk of Session. Please see Rev. Joe or a current member of Session if interested and want a description of the position.

## Opening Prayer

LORD, our Creator, you have not sent your Son to do away with your law and prophets but to fulfill them. To bring their messages together in a way that we might know and understand your wisdom for our lives. As we follow your Jesus in this revelation, make us ready to accept that which you alone can gift. **Amen.**

### **Prelude    *I Lift My Eyes to the Hills*    Arr. G Peterson**

#### **\*Call to Worship (Psalm 2)**

Why are the nations in an uproar? Why do the peoples mutter empty threats? Why do the kings of the earth rise up in revolt, and the princes plot together, against the LORD and against the LORD's anointed? "Let us break their yoke," they say; "let us cast off their bonds from us."

**God whose throne is in heaven is laughing; the LORD holds them in derision. Then in wrath God speaks to them, and in rage fills them with terror. "As for me, I have anointed my king upon Zion, my holy mountain."**

Let me announce the decree of the LORD, who said to me, "You are my son; this day have I begotten you. Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall crush them with an iron rod and shatter them like a piece of pottery."

**And now, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Submit to the LORD with fear, and with trembling bow in worship; lest the LORD be angry, and you perish in a sudden blaze of wrath. Happy are all who take refuge in God!**

#### **\*Hymn #327    *O Word of God Incarnate***

O Word of God incarnate,  
O Wisdom from on high,  
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,  
O Light of our dark sky:  
We praise You for the radiance  
That from the hallowed page,  
A lantern to our footsteps,  
Shines on from age to age.

The church from You, dear Savior,  
Received this gift divine,  
And still that light is lifted  
On all the earth to shine.  
It is the chart and compass  
That, all life's voyage through,

Amid the rocks and quicksands,  
Still guides, O Christ, to You.

O make Your church, dear Savior,  
A lamp of purest gold  
To bear before the nations  
Your true light, as of old;  
O teach Your wandering pilgrims  
By this our path to trace,  
Till, clouds and darkness ended,  
We see You face to face.

### **\*Prayer of Confession**

The LORD has not done away with his holy instructions, his standards, but we live as if they do not matter and do not impact our lives today:

**LORD, our Creator, your laws and prophets have come to demonstrate a specific message about life and how we are to live with each other. But in our arrogance, we have set them aside for ways more convenient to us. Forgive us and help us realize your ways offer more instruction and meaning than we realized, and that your Jesus is the one to bring it all together. Amen.**

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

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

In Jesus all things live, move, and have their being. In seeing his true essence we realize what is truth and worthy of attention.

**We let go of false and misleading ways to make room for hope and true illumination.**

#### **\*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:

Exodus 24:1-18

24 <sup>1</sup> Then he said to Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship at a distance. <sup>2</sup> Moses alone shall come near the Lord; but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him." <sup>3</sup> Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do." <sup>4</sup> And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. He rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and set up twelve pillars, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>5</sup> He sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed oxen as offerings of well-being to the Lord. <sup>6</sup> Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he dashed against the altar. <sup>7</sup> Then he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." <sup>8</sup> Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and said, "See the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words." <sup>9</sup> Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, <sup>10</sup> and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. <sup>11</sup> God did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank. <sup>12</sup> The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." <sup>13</sup> So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. <sup>14</sup> To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them." <sup>15</sup> Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. <sup>16</sup> The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. <sup>17</sup> Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. <sup>18</sup> Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

2 Peter 1:3-21

<sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup> His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature. <sup>5</sup> For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. <sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For anyone who lacks these things is nearsighted and blind, and is forgetful of the cleansing of past sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never stumble. <sup>11</sup> For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you. <sup>12</sup> Therefore I intend to keep on reminding you of these things, though you know them already and are established in the truth that has come to you. <sup>13</sup> I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to refresh your memory, <sup>14</sup> since I know that my death will come soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. <sup>15</sup> And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. <sup>16</sup> For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." <sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. <sup>19</sup> So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup> First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, <sup>21</sup> because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

#### Matthew 16:13-17:13

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup> And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup> Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. <sup>21</sup> From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the

elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.  
<sup>22</sup> And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you."  
<sup>23</sup> But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."  
<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.  
<sup>25</sup> For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.  
<sup>26</sup> For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?  
<sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.  
<sup>28</sup> Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."  
17 1 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves.  
2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.  
3 Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.  
4 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."  
5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"  
6 When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear.  
7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."  
8 And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.  
9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."  
<sup>10</sup> And the disciples asked him, "Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"  
<sup>11</sup> He replied, "Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things;  
<sup>12</sup> but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but they did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands."  
<sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

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

### **Sermon   *Transfiguration Sunday***

As we transition in the year from the celebration of the Epiphany of Christ to the Lenten journey of Christ, the Transfiguration of Christ becomes a symbol and moment by which to understand who it is we are following and looking to for our salvation. In the Christmas message, the birth of Jesus is presented to the whole of the world and all of its peoples to find the LORD once again and discover true hope. The Lenten message, Jesus' journey to the cross, is one of expectation of what will happen that will allow the whole of creation to experience a new age of possibility and renewal. The lived past and expectant future come into focus in Jesus being transformed before the disciples, divine radiance and character shining bright to reveal who this man truly is. Many have had their theories about Jesus and who he might have been, about what he might have come to do, and if he truly was sent by the LORD. Moses and Elijah, representing the

law and prophets (parts of the overall divine instruction), demonstrate the fulfillment and hope of the LORD coming into the world through the ministry. That is how some are able to perceive and understand that Jesus is truly the representative of the LORD, by what the LORD has already shown what is right and making accessible to those who were cut off. Jesus is not making anything brand new as if the former ways of law and worship were obsolete and can be set aside, but fulfilling what it all was meant to do always.

When the law was given to the people of Israel, highlighted in Exodus, it outlines a life and purpose for those who call themselves 'worshippers of the LORD'. The LORD is beyond things like ego and appeasement and did not need to be placated like the other supposed gods of that era and region, so the worship was for a different reason. Once the law was declared the people sealed it with sacrifice, the sprinkling of blood, to recognize and declare the LORD was the only true life-giver. And if the only one meant to give and take life then would be the only one worthy of governing life. It was not a set of rules the people needed to make sure to follow, but an identifier for the people of what was worth following. It pointed out the difference between life and death, between right and wrong, and between true power and imitation. It called out law-breakers and challenged them what they were truly following, what they saw as life, and called people back to each other again. The prophets announced this time after time when Israel went astray, and represented what any teacher must do in the pursuit of that right way of life. It is more than just the tenets of just another religion, but consideration of what the LORD sees, nurtures, and brings about through our worship and life together.

That is what Peter reminds the Church that divine power is and what allows the all the people, and individual believers, to stand in the call and purpose they have. Goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, mutual affection, love- all these attributes are granted in order that believers might find and seek what is beneficial. Our desire to search is what sets us apart from the world, from those who are trapped within imitations of life which prevent these attributes from growing. It is a faith that is alive and continuing to inspire, and not just a myth or story confined to another time. Even today it brings us closer to realization that Jesus fulfills, brings ability to live, so we might demonstrate what is worthy of life and which brings benefit.

The Lenten season is more than just realizing what rules and ordinances we have broken- because as humans we have already broken a lot already, and will continue too! But it is about realizing what we can return to, what can give us purpose and meaning again, and give us insight to why we were wayward to begin with. The law and prophets personify the LORD, Jesus personifies the law and prophets, bringing all things together to see what makes for a complete life. This is a time of consideration for what divine instruction has to show us, what vision of life we should embrace, and have confidence in the identity of the one who will bring it all to life in a way no other teacher, ruler, or supposed god could ever do.

## **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, Victoria Kasten, Amber Loftis, Breanne Mathias, Will Long, Tom Netting, Ruth Patrick, Bob Pierre, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, Josh Shaeffer, Dane & Cindy Smith, Derrick & Mandy Smith, Dean & Heidi Unzicker, Simone Villarruel, Holly Waldenmyer, The Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County & The Homeless of Tuscarawas County.*

LORD, our Creator, in your mercy and desire for us you have granted your instruction of life for all to access and embrace. You have not just given us rules to check off, but clues to investigate about who we are, might become, and live out your will in a dark and blinded world. A world that hops from one promise to another, always seems restless, and battling with itself about what is better. But you call people away from that mentality to embrace what is good, to be nurtured, and used to demonstrate the better things that answer the problems all people face. By desiring to know you, to know the Jesus you have sent, we see you have implanted in us what we need to follow and see through your journey. Allow this season to nurture and allow to blossom what you have given, to inform us about what you have us to understand, and accept what you have given us as part of your people and plan of redemption.

You give good things to all who are in need, and we call upon that divine patronage for those who weigh on our minds and hearts...*Reading of the Prayer List*...LORD, in your loving mercy, hear our prayers.

### *Moment of Silence*

We thank you for your Word of life, your teachings and promises, which act like a lamp on a dark path. May we not hoard and keep back this light, but use it to go into unknown and strange places so your prayer may be fulfilled through 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**

In thankfulness for what has been revealed to us, we offer what we have to enable that truth to be seen by others.

**Offertory    *Chanson Melodique*    Arr. T Chesterton**

**\*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, everything you teach orders our lives and helps us see the needs of our neighbors around us. May what we give today fulfill your instruction and properly orient your people to the better tasks around us. **Amen.**

**\*Hymn #340    *Eternal Light, Shine in My Heart***

Eternal light, shine in my heart;  
Eternal hope, lift up my eyes;  
Eternal power, be my support;  
Eternal wisdom, make me wise.

Eternal life, raise me from death;  
Eternal brightness, help me see;  
Eternal Spirit, give me breath;  
Eternal Savior, come to me;

Until by Your most costly grace,  
Invited by Your holy word,  
At last I come before Your face  
To know You, my eternal God.

**\*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    *Immortal, Invisible*    Arr. G Peterson**

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

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