



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

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Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

Sunday Worship Service

February 9, 2025

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Tonight at 6pm will be our monthly Friends of the Homeless Meal. A sign-up sheet is available in the office for volunteers. While funding for the meal is good, please consider donating toward our other Friends of the Homeless efforts (Operations Fund or Jack's House of Hope Project).

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (February 12) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (February 12) at 8pm.

The "Tables of Eight" dinner group will meet on Saturday (February 15) at 6pm. RSVP is required, and the cost is \$10 per person. A sign-up sheet is available in the office, or you may contact Carolyn Berry or Mike Smith.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will meet on Sunday (February 16) at 9:15am.

In preparation for the 2024 annual congregational meeting all committee heads should have their reports into the church office no later than February 20.

During the month of February we will be taking up our "Souper Bowl Sunday" collection for the Dover-New Phila Food Pantry. All donations will be matched by our mission budget. Envelopes are available on the back mission table if you wish to donate.

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Father, holy are you and awesome are the visions and truths you reveal each day! You fill us with your Word, your holy wisdom and action, so we might strengthen this fellowship and lead it into the world with purpose. Teach us here, so we might know your desires for those you place in our path. **Amen.**

Prelude Beautiful Saviour arr. Wood

***Call to Worship (Psalm 138)**

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing your praise.

I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name, because of your steadfast love and faithfulness; for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.

When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me.

All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O LORD, when they have heard the words of your mouth.

They will sing of the ways of the LORD, that great is the glory of the LORD.

The LORD is high, yet cares for the lowly, perceiving the haughty from afar.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.

You will make good your purpose for me; O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.

Hymn #138 *Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;

Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!

God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinfulness Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

***Prayer of Confession**

We desire to follow you, LORD, and aspire to be the best and most equipped disciples the Church has ever seen. But we get in our own way by relying on our own knowledge, skills, and abilities before you:

LORD, our Father, the beginning of true wisdom and true discipleship is not skill or power but humility. We act and live like we are able to prove something on our own, when in reality we have no clue. Help us to admit what we do not know and cannot do, the humility to ask for your aid each and every day, and accept what comes from your divine plan to live as you want. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Even when we act independently and arrogantly from the LORD he cleanses and heals us to be his voice to a world lost.

By the power of Christ, seen in baptism, we witness what it takes to follow in humility, courage, trust, and faith so healing might be found.

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 6:1-13

6 ¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ² Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³ And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” ⁴ The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” ⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷ The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” ⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!” ⁹ And he said, “Go and say to this people: ‘Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.’” ¹⁰ Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.” ¹¹ Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said: “Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is utterly desolate; ¹² until the Lord sends everyone far away, and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land. ¹³ Even if a tenth part remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled.” The holy seed is its stump.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

15 ¹ Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, ² through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. ³ For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴ and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Luke 5:1-6:16

5 ¹ Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, ² he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way

from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. ⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." ⁶ When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. ⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." ¹¹ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. ¹² Once, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." ¹³ Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I do choose. Be made clean." Immediately the leprosy left him. ¹⁴ And he ordered him to tell no one. "Go," he said, "and show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, for a testimony to them." ¹⁵ But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. ¹⁶ But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray. ¹⁷ One day, while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting near by (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem); and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. ¹⁸ Just then some men came, carrying a paralyzed man on a bed. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; ¹⁹ but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. ²⁰ When he saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." ²¹ Then the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, "Who is this who is speaking blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ²² When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'?" ²⁴ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the one who was paralyzed—"I say to you, stand up and take your bed and go to your home." ²⁵ Immediately he stood up before them, took what he had been lying on, and went to his home, glorifying God. ²⁶ Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today." ²⁷ After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." ²⁸ And he got up, left everything, and followed him. ²⁹ Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them. ³⁰ The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" ³¹ Jesus answered, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; ³² I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance." ³³ Then they said to him, "John's disciples, like the disciples of the

Pharisees, frequently fast and pray, but your disciples eat and drink.’³⁴ Jesus said to them, “You cannot make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you?”³⁵ The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.”³⁶ He also told them a parable: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old.”³⁷ And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed.³⁸ But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.³⁹ And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, ‘The old is good.’”⁶¹ One sabbath while Jesus was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate them.² But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?”³ Jesus answered, “Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?⁴ He entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and gave some to his companions?”⁵ Then he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.”⁶ On another sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered.⁷ The scribes and the Pharisees watched him to see whether he would cure on the sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against him.⁸ Even though he knew what they were thinking, he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come and stand here.” He got up and stood there.⁹ Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?”¹⁰ After looking around at all of them, he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” He did so, and his hand was restored.¹¹ But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.¹² Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God.¹³ And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles:¹⁴ Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew,¹⁵ and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot,¹⁶ and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

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

Sermon *The Fifth Sunday of Epiphany*

When the world ‘discipleship’ is brought up in the Church it often is spoken of in such an institutional way. With lessons, curriculum, classes, regimen, and other methods which seem to choke life out of it. While learning and instruction are essential components, we must be careful about whose lessons and instructions we are picking up. Even the most noble-minded teachers can pass on ideas and purposes which do not fit with what is needed the most by the student. And some students do not think some lessons apply to them or understand their impact.

Discipleship is a process that possibly can be summed up in one phrase: “I do not know.” We do not know what we truly need, we do not know what to ask for, and do

not know when that realization will come. It leaves us in a state of humility and dependence which allows us to be open for when those moments of truth and wisdom come.

Much like the first disciples experienced in Luke 5:1-6:16.

Those first disciples were simple fishermen, workers, and others who were unaware of the LORD's workings until it was dropped on them. Simon Peter's realization because of the massive fish catch might be seen as a state of fear, but also of awe. Jesus is presenting the LORD in a manner the people were unacquainted with, but which would communicate that everlasting character and covenant they would have heard of.

Healing a man of leprosy, of paralysis, and a withered hand made the people see the impact of the LORD on their lives at the current moment. It pushed those first disciples out to see the impact of the current moment. And brought them into confrontation with the arrogance and ego of the Pharisees which made them blind to seeing the impact. The Pharisees' hiding behind the rules, tradition, and social convention cut them off from how the LORD was choosing to make life. The pride of knowledge made them unaware of the harm such dogma perpetuated on those in most need of hope and care. A sign to the disciples then, and now, that truth is within reach if we only lay down what we believe is true.

A process which the prophets experienced, in Isaiah 6:1-13.

The famous calling of Isaiah to be a prophet, and how the LORD cleansed and filled him with divine truth for the task ahead. But we also see the despair and fear when Isaiah is confronted by the divine. Such wisdom, holiness, beauty, splendor, and strength made him recognize the state he, and his own people, were in. But the humility he demonstrates, and lives in, allowed understanding to be articulated and understood in a manner which changed the course of his life. And the course of life for all who would hear the warnings and hopes Isaiah would give.

That experience is not just isolated to the prophets but is lived by all of us as well. Perhaps it is not as dramatic as seeing the LORD face-to-face on his heavenly throne, but there are times we have been confronted in a way that has jarred us. An almost car accident, a sudden disease or injury, and other events that left us in awe and have woken us from distraction. Such events make us more aware of the reality of life, of ourselves, and how we have been living before.

Which St. Paul helps the believers to understand in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11.

St. Paul is helping a distracted church to understand what they have believed, what is real, and how that impacts their lives and those around them. What we think, believe, and value will come out in our actions and allow others to see what our worldview is.

When it is set on the work of Jesus, when he is sought out for understanding from what he accomplished, it will allow for thought and action that will heal and clarify. When we set out from our preexisting beliefs, embrace solely what Jesus has done, we will be in awe at what is opened for us.

The world around us considers "I don't know" like a weakness and a sign of inferiority. If we do not know, then why listen to our claims? But claiming to know it all leaves some in danger of becoming trapped and controlled under the power of others- the curse of the Pharisees. But the humility and openness of a disciple allows us to cut through the arrogance of others, protect ourselves from undue influence, and foster a faith based upon the right sources. Jesus wants to lead us, to be our teacher, and show us a creation beyond anything we currently see or understand. But will we be ready to leave behind ideas which limit and make us dependent upon others, and accept divine possibilities which will make us confront who we were and what we value?

Prayers of the People

Let us remember in prayer:

Dominic Aquino, Tom & Amy Aquino, Mary Ellen Beans, Terry Carpenter, Fritz Chambers, Angie Chamberlain, 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, 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, Simone Villarruel, Jay Watt, The Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County & The Homeless of Tuscarawas County.

LORD, our Father, your Jesus has come to teach and bring the world around your marvelous and wonderful rule. A rule that is beyond imagination or explanation, which leaves us in fear and awe at what you can do. But you do not desire our cowardice or our subservience, but our cooperation and partnership. You seek to build us up, heal what ails us, transform our priorities and motivations, that we might be beings which reflect your holiness to all. And you bring us alongside this holiness as your disciples, those who learn and practice your ways and what they mean. You give us purpose and wisdom, but only if we admit what we do not know first. Once we let go of our pride and our mistaken notions can we truly receive your teachings and be directed where you want us to go. You have already met us in surprising and wonderful ways in our lives and given us the same shock as your prophets. Help us remember these moments of holy fear and surprise as ways you have cleansed and filled us with your better purpose.

As disciples we seek to follow and express your teachings in all we do, to correct and guide others into this fellowship and into your presence. Sometimes better said than

done, but this attitude you have gifted allows us to see our purpose beyond the value the world ascribes. Allow us to let go of what the world, others, and ourselves say is necessary so we might take hold of your greater gift. And from the moments of despair and uncertainty from those we love demonstrate how you call us to answer with your gospel...*Reading of the Prayer List*...Come Holy Spirit, and direct how we might meet the unknown and uncertain with your way.

Moment of Silence

We thank you for speaking to and directing us, LORD. From these moments of uncertainty fill us with what is necessary to carry your knowledge, your wisdom, your practice, your example into a world starved for its Creator. And to live the prayer our lives are built around, proclaiming:

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

All that is divinely given is not for us to take pride in, as if we had any part in its outcome. But in excitement of where the LORD will lead us with it.

Offertory *I Need Thee* arr. Southbridge

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, all in our fellowship and lives is yours to do with as you wish. All we give does not demonstrate how good we are, but how excited we are to see how you will act with it. May all who grace our presence, and come through our doors, receive your help by what we willingly give. So people may know your disciples are here.

Amen.

Hymn #388 *O Jesus, I Have Promised

O Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
Be Thou forever near me,

My Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle
If Thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou wilt be my guide.

O let me feel Thee near me!
The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear;
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But Jesus, draw Thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear Thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self will;
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, Thou hast promised
To all who follow Thee
That where Thou art in glory
There shall Thy servant be;
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
My Master and my friend.

***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 *Toccata Festiva* arr. Ritter**

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

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