



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

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Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

Sunday Worship Service

June 14, 2026

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Tonight at 6pm is our monthly Friends of the Homeless Meal. Volunteers can sign-up in the church office to help. While meal funds are good, please consider donating toward our other Friends of the Homeless efforts.

The monthly Session meeting, which normally meets this Tuesday, is rescheduled for June 23 at 7pm.

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (June 17) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (June 17) at 8pm.

The Tables of Eight dinner group will be meeting June 20 at 6pm. The cost is \$10 per person and RSVP is required either to the church office or to Carolyn Berry.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will be meeting next Sunday (June 21) at 9:15am.

We are accepting special donations to aid the local Dress-A-Child program to provide clothes and school supplies to low-income families for the next school year. Donation envelopes are available on the back mission table!

Our Organist is taking requests for music during worship! If you have a favorite hymn, song, or arrangement you would like her to use in worship please let her know!

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Creator, you call us to call and make disciples to live your message. But you call us not to impose your will by force or coercion, rather by recognizing how your Spirit moves those who struggle to believe. Help us to recognize how we must act to demonstrate the greater life to live. **Amen.**

Prelude *Sweet Hour of Prayer* Arr. Lucy Ann Warriar

***Call to Worship (Psalm 100)**

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all you lands! Serve the LORD with gladness; come into God's presence with a song.

Know that the LORD is God, our maker to whom we belong; we are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture.

Enter the gates of the LORD with thanksgiving and the courts with praise; give thanks and bless God's holy name.

Good indeed is the LORD, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from age to age.

Hymn #336 *As a Chalice Cast of God

As a chalice cast of gold,
Burnished, bright, and brimmed with wine,
Make me, Lord, as fit to hold
Grace and truth and love divine.
Let my praise and worship start
With the cleansing of my heart.

Save me from the soothing sin
Of the empty cultic deed
And the pious, babbling din
Of the claimed but unlived creed.
Let my actions, Lord, express
What my tongue and lips profess.

When I bend upon my knees,
Clasp my hands, or bow my head,
Let my spoken, public pleas
Be directly, simply said,
Free of tangled words that mask
What my soul would plainly ask.

When I dance or chant Your praise,
When I sing a psalm or hymn,
When I preach Your loving ways,
Let my heart add its Amen.
Let each cherished outward rite
Thus reflect Your inward light.

***Prayer of Confession**

Our discipleship calls us to express hospitality, but we often struggle to welcome others and fail in building trust:

LORD, our Creator, we confess that we have not accepted others with generosity, or have only welcomed those in need to fulfill our agenda and sense of accomplishment. Help us to see those others as you see them, as Christ wants them, that his Church may become more complete to express true salvation. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Even when we struggle to do what is right we have one who teaches and demonstrates what it means to live rightly.

May the example of Jesus show us what it means to welcome the stranger in our midst and leave them better than when we first met them.

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:

Genesis 18:1-15

18 ¹ The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to

the ground. ³ He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." ⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." ⁷ Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. ⁹ They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." ¹⁰ Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" ¹³ The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." ¹⁵ But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh."

Romans 5:1-21

5 ¹ Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸ But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹ But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. ¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned— ¹³ sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings

justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Matthew 9:35-10:15

9 ³⁵ Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." 10 ¹ Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. ² These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. ⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' ⁸ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. ⁹ Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, ¹⁰ no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. ¹¹ Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. ¹² As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³ If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

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

Sermon *The Fourth Sunday of Pentecost*

One of the great goals of the Church is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and make disciples of all peoples. But discipleship is a nuanced condition and action that does not necessarily mean what others have turned it into. Some think discipleship is just for bringing people into the Church to be members, to fill the pews, to have a

captive audience to the ideas one is giving out. But just as faith is more than just intellectual truth discipleship is more than just collecting together willing bodies. A disciple in Jesus' time was more than someone who hung onto the words of the teacher, they wanted to BECOME the teacher. They wanted to imitate the teacher in every respect in terms of example, mannerism, and speech. Some ancient accounts go so far as to tell that some disciples followed their teacher in the bathroom so they could learn to imitate EVERYTHING they did! While that is slightly problematic in our day and age there is something we can learn from that. We are not just accepting ideas but accepting example and demonstrating the condition all of reality is under right now.

That condition is outlined by St. Paul in Romans 5, that struggle and suffering reveal something about the world around us which leads us to understanding and mercy.

That at one time in history, in our lives, we were without law and guidance which helped to define the mercy and love of the LORD. Due to disobedience, a willful ignorance, represented by Adam, humanity was left to wander aimlessly until Moses expressed to a certain group of people what it all meant. The law in itself, following rules on their own, did not produce salvation but explained the one who could give salvation. Who could bring others out from under the shadow of chaos and misunderstanding so they might see the world as it is. One who could quite literally purchase people, changing their fundamental position in life, so they could live in liberty and opportunity. The LORD, through Jesus Christ, emancipated people from their obligation to sin and death so they might represent true life and what the divine saw as 'good' at the moment of creation. As understanding of law and order grow through experience so does grace and mercy, to know what we can leave behind and make room for what is ahead.

That is what Jesus in Matthew 9 sends his disciples, and us, out into. Into a world that is not necessarily evil but misunderstanding and unaware of the condition they are in.

Humans are famous for ignoring dangers until they are staring them in the face- and then it might be too late to address. But the disciples were sent out to reveal and teach those dangers, offer that solution, and aid others in recognizing the one who can make anyone a shining light in the darkness. It might seem Jesus is sending the disciples out unprepared, but he sends them out like this purposefully. Then, as now, there were charlatan teachers who traveled around to make money off of pretty talk and half-hearted wisdom. To have his disciples accept nothing set them apart and disarmed suspicions to bridge the trust needed for true teaching and fellowship can begin. And, of course, this is not an idealistic life where everything offered would be accepted.

Some will reject this message outright, not entertain what the disciples offer, and set the stage for their persecution. But Jesus says not to force or make an enemy of those reject, rather leave them to the judgment and direction of the LORD- the only one who can bring belief into human life. Perhaps those are just not ready for us or the message we bring, are still caught up in worshipping something else, and the experience of life will reveal what they have been serving. The punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah is

not a threat against those, but what happens to a house who refuses to offer hospitality and generosity because they cannot see the immediate value.

Contrast that to Genesis 18 when Abraham received the strangers into his tent. Some traditions say these men were prophets, angels, or a manifestation of the LORD directly. But in either case Abraham receives these with hospitality, offering food, water, and rest, and expressing through character and action who he served. That is why the promise of a son through Sarah, a woman who suffered infertility, is given as a guarantee by the LORD this example would live in to educate the world. Later in Genesis these strangers would travel to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and experience the violence that comes with lack of hospitality and welcome, which ended up destroying these places.

But Abraham's example is not saying we have to welcome everyone by giving away the store. There was an ancient etiquette of being welcomed into someone's home. One would stand at the edge of the camp and wait to be recognized, ritualistically drop their weapons and provisions outside of the camp, and be walked to a tent where they were received. It was a ritual of trust-building, of getting to know those who come to you, and seeing who was deserving of trust and relationship. If a group of people just come through and pillage your camp, that was usually a dealbreaker in terms of building trustworthiness. But if a group came to you humble, respectful, and willing to listen and reason with you it was a start of something that could secure your community even more. And we engage with the world in order to elicit trust and purposefully build community among people, to show others where order and security can be found because of the willingness to seek it out. Not to impose it without reason but draw out the best impulses of humanity to preserve and promote. That gives us a target understanding for our work and what it accomplishes; not just humanistic goodness, but divine love which changes and resets all understandings and expectations.

Discipleship then becomes an umbrella term for what the Church does and is drawn out by specific practices we choose. Hospitality, generosity, security, truth, understanding, and other actions which choose the order of being together instead of the chaos of being apart. When we condition entrance based on superficial standards and practices, what we can only see physically, we only demonstrate service to ourselves and our particular institution instead of to the one who governs all. Our willingness to welcome, to host, to reach out, and be truthful with who we are devoted to is an expression itself of what we desire others to have. Instead of just making people think the same way we should embrace the idea of living together, having our differences compliment and more-widely express the greater goal of why we gather. To show that all flavors of the human civilization can contribute to the completeness of the world, if only we set aside our insecurities first and embrace what we can all become together.

Prayers of the People

Let us remember in prayer:

Mary Ellen Beans, Fritz Chambers, Michelle Chamberlain, Mary Jane Dougherty, Don Eberheart Jr., Allison Folly, Kay Frantz, Jamie Frank, Judy Hass, Alice & Errol Jacobs, Victoria Kasten, Amber Loftis, Will Long, Tom Netting, Ruth Patrick, Bob Pierre, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, 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, you have called your disciples, all of us, to experience your salvation and redemption of all of humanity. You have called us to look into the deepest parts of your creation, to see and understand what you have truly created, and how good it can be under your love and care. Being your disciples does not mean just accepting your words as faithful and true, but to be lived and expressed to those who do not understand. We are teachers inasmuch as we are followers and called to seek out those who can and want to learn about what this life has to offer. You created your Church, your rejuvenated Israel, to be a host in this world to welcome all into its care. Sometimes there are people who reject us and what we offer, but there are others who are curious and want to learn- and need that divine touch and hospitality only you can provide. Help us to see our lives as an area of welcome, as tables we call others to join, so they might know true community and fellowship- perhaps for the first time in their lives!

Aid us LORD to see all areas of our lives, joys and concerns, as chances to welcome and provide for those who do not see good things ahead...*Reading the Prayer List...*LORD, in your loving mercy, hear our prayers.

Moment of Silence

LORD, we thank you for having created our lives to be open to the world that we might mutually share and understand what is better. By including each other purposefully we might experience a world you first imagined, and is possible, by the prayer 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

Our gifts and service offer a glimpse of the better life for those who struggle, and what the LORD's people can offer.

Offertory *Interlude on “Canonbury”* Arr. Gilbert Martin

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, you have provided a home for us all not built or protected by human hands but given by you to meet our deepest needs. By our offerings enable us to open the door for those who do not know so they discover you again. **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 *Life Eternal

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

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