



**First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia**

217 E. High Ave, New Philadelphia, OH 44663

330-343-7114

[www.newphilapc.org](http://www.newphilapc.org)



**Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor**

**Sunday Worship Service**

**February 16, 2025**

\*All who are able, please stand.

**Announcements & Prayer Concerns**

The church office will be closed Monday (February 17) in observance of Presidents' Day.

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (February 19) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (February 19) at 8pm.

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

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will meet on Sunday (February 23) at 9:15am.

Our annual congregational meeting will be on March 2 following service. It will feature a pot-luck luncheon, so please bring a dish to share. A sign-up sheet is available in the church office.

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, you enrich our lives with so many things to help us to know wisdom and righteousness. But often we take these for granted and do not use them to demonstrate our commitment. Teach us of the riches we do possess, and how we might use them to bless your fellowship and the wider creation. **Amen.**

**Prelude** *If You but Trust in God to Guide You* arr. Cherwein

**\*Call to Worship (Psalm 1)**

Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

**Their delight is in the law of the LORD, and they meditate on God's teaching day and night.**

They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; everything they do shall prosper.

**It is not so with the wicked; they are like chaff which the wind blows away.**

Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.

**For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall be destroyed.**

**\*Hymn #417    *Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation***

Christ is made the sure foundation,  
Christ the head and cornerstone,  
Chosen of the Lord and precious,  
Binding all the church in one;  
Holy Zion's help forever,  
And our confidence alone.

To this temple, where we call You,  
Come, O Lord of Hosts, today;  
With Your wonted lovingkindness  
Hear Your people as they pray.  
And Your fullest benediction  
Shed within its walls always.

Here bestow to all Your servants  
What they ask of You to gain,  
What they gain from You forever  
With the blessed to retain,  
And hereafter in Your glory  
Evermore with You to reign.

Laud and honor to the Father,  
Laud and honor to the Son,  
Laud and honor to the Spirit,  
Ever Three and ever one;  
One in might and one in glory  
While unending ages run.

**\*Prayer of Confession**

Often we trust leaders, teachers, and material things, thinking they will better or make easier our lives. But when we ignore or overlook what we consume, we risk poisoning our souls and rupturing our connection with the LORD. But in confession we return to what is essential:

**LORD, our Father, our lives are full of people and things which promise so much. We consume and take in what is necessary to live, but often overlook what they do to us. Help us to pay attention to those things so we might not compromise ourselves, or our reason for being around others who look to us. Amen.**

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

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

Even when we consume dirty or brackish water, healing can be found by returning to the living water to purify and restore our beings.

**By the promise of baptism we return to what is true and necessary, and learn what you provide so we might life rightly.**

#### **\*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:

Jeremiah 17:1-18

**17** <sup>1</sup> The sin of Judah is written with an iron pen; with a diamond point it is engraved on the tablet of their hearts, and on the horns of their altars, <sup>2</sup> while their children remember their altars and their sacred poles, beside every green tree, and on the high hills, <sup>3</sup> on the mountains in the open country. Your wealth and all your treasures I will give for spoil as the price of your sin throughout all your territory. <sup>4</sup> By your own act you shall lose the heritage that I gave you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. <sup>6</sup> They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. <sup>7</sup> Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. <sup>8</sup> They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. <sup>9</sup> The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it? <sup>10</sup> I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings. <sup>11</sup> Like the partridge hatching what it did not lay, so are all who amass wealth unjustly; in mid-life it will leave them, and at their end they will prove to be fools. <sup>12</sup> O glorious throne, exalted from the beginning, shrine of our sanctuary! <sup>13</sup> O hope of Israel! O Lord! All who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be recorded in the underworld, for they have forsaken the fountain of living water, the Lord. <sup>14</sup> Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for you are my praise. <sup>15</sup> See how they say to me, “Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come!” <sup>16</sup> But I have not run away from being a shepherd in your service, nor have I desired the fatal day. You know what came from my lips; it was before your face. <sup>17</sup> Do not become a terror to me; you are my refuge in the day of disaster; <sup>18</sup> Let my persecutors be shamed, but do not let me be shamed; let them be dismayed, but do not let me be dismayed; bring on them the day of disaster; destroy them with double destruction!

#### 1 Corinthians 15:12-34

**15**<sup>12</sup> Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; <sup>14</sup> and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. <sup>15</sup> We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. <sup>17</sup> If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup> If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. <sup>20</sup> But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. <sup>21</sup> For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; <sup>22</sup> for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong

to Christ. <sup>24</sup> Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup> For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. <sup>28</sup> When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all. <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, what will those people do who receive baptism on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? <sup>30</sup> And why are we putting ourselves in danger every hour? <sup>31</sup> I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you—a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord. <sup>32</sup> If with merely human hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what would I have gained by it? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” <sup>33</sup> Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” <sup>34</sup> Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

#### Luke 6:17-26

<sup>6</sup><sup>17</sup> He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>18</sup> They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. <sup>19</sup> And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them. <sup>20</sup> Then he looked up at his disciples and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. <sup>21</sup> Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. <sup>22</sup> Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup> Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. <sup>24</sup> But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. <sup>25</sup> Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. <sup>26</sup> Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.”

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

#### **Sermon    *The Sixth Sunday of Epiphany***

It is often taught in the Christian faith about the dangers of money and wealth. Many lessons, many traditions, have taught that to pursue money before anything else is a destructive path. To give oneself over to greed risks devaluing and dehumanizing others around you. It risks putting your soul in danger by compromising divine virtues and becoming like the world around you. But there is a distinction that needs to be made: wealth in itself is not a moral evil; it is not a sin to be successful- in fact, to be successful means one has trusted in the way of Jesus and cultivated love and care in life. One might turn on the news and see many broadcasters or commentators decry

the amassing of wealth and riches and point out only a chosen few who do so. Making claims that certain individuals who do so are to be vilified, but others are exceptions. Having wealth in itself is not what is wrong, but trying to control others' use of it and define what that use can be. Like many things in the world money is a tool which allows an individual to express their values and character to others. What you give your money too represents what has already gone on in your heart. While money can be used for destructive purposes, and be acquired unjustly, using it or having it is not evil. Much like a hammer, which can either be used to build or to kill, it is all about the intent of the one holding the tool. To the one who has much, what is required? How are we to view wealth as a means of expressing our love to the LORD?

We catch a glimpse of this in Luke 6:17-26.

Often referred to as the 'Sermon on the Plains', given after Jesus goes through the region of Galilee performing miracles. Similar to the 'Sermon on the Mount' given in Matthew's gospel, it is a group of teachings meant to illuminate and cast a light on daily living for the LORD's people. St. Matthew narrates these teachings at the start of Jesus' ministry to allow Jesus' miracles to reflect the law given. St. Luke narrates these teachings after Jesus' miracles to allow the example of Jesus to define the law. Jesus gave hope to those who had none, allowed them to possess hope and opportunity that others shut them off from, and contrast the character of those 'authoritative' figures who claimed to know everything. These beatitudes of blessing and woe are meant as an eventual justice of the LORD to those who have been purposefully deprived by others. A cosmic correction of those who have unjustly been cut out of society by some who want to increase their own station. For a modern disciple it is a warning about how societal pursuits can have a direct impact on others, and how we can choose to bridge that divide by what we have. Our character is what is being corrected by exercising what our means can do for those who have been victims of an unjust world.

And that correction is not visited upon us by some new economic theory, political movement, or religion coercion. As spoken by the prophet in Jeremiah 17:1-18.

The prophet warns the people of Israel the extent their sins, their misguided actions, have had upon themselves. Quite literally, when they chose to go against the direction of the LORD they carved their sins into their very beings. By choosing to ignore the opportunities to express their devotion to the covenant, the holy instruction, they desecrated themselves. No longer were they serving the LORD, but something else. By their own willing actions they placed trust in another instructor and demonstrated a willingness to be like the rest of the world. Whereas obeying the LORD and heeding his advice in all matters is like calling attention to a living body of water, one ready to give sustenance and life without effort. Either action will cause a change to come upon someone; either another human trying to force another into their own image, or the architect of humanity removing the impurities that can gather as a result of life. What the LORD puts in our paths is opportunity to exercise either the old ways of selfish

destruction, or the new ways of healing and restoration. It is just how we choose to demonstrate that opportunity by what we already have.

A warning that is given by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:12-34.

As St. Paul is encouraging the church in proper belief and understanding, he is teaching how what we believe and value changes us. He uses the example of the resurrection, a doctrine that was heavily debated in those times. Many different groups and traditions had radically different ideas about the resurrection of the dead and what it meant. But the differing views led to different applications and caused different actions among many of the believers. With some choosing to throw caution to the wind because they claimed there was no eventual resurrection, and some living in fear and severely policing themselves to ensure they could participate in it. But the resurrection was not some kind of reward or threat to keep people in line, but a signal that something new had come to our lives. Jesus demonstrating this reality shows what we may become when we trust in the LORD to guide our actions; when we allow the divine to influence what we do every moment. But when we surround ourselves with those who seek to control and remake humanity as they deem right it is no wonder we become stunted and hopeless. The LORD gives opportunity to redeem all things in this world by our participation, and we should not write off the possibility just because someone else tells us too!

Wealth and money are not the sole issues with what Jesus and the prophets talk about but is an example to allow us to understand the true issue at the root of them. Greed, unchecked power, and refusal to yield to the LORD are what cause many of the problems seen in the world. And that happens when you have all the wealth you could ever want, or if you have nothing. For us in the fellowship, we must understand everything we have as already belonging to the LORD and sanctified as such. All that we have is for a different purpose, and to be used to demonstrate the new reality of the LORD's rule in our lives. How we use what is in our lives to bridge the gap between rich and poor, ruler and slave, powerful and oppressed, demonstrates where our hearts and values lie and what we choose to pay attention too. Wealth simply means abundance, and we have an abundance of many things in our lives in different proportions depending on the LORD's will. How will you bridge the gap from where you are in society? How will you make opportunity for someone to live into what is best? How will you exemplify what the LORD has given you? That is how you will see the impact the miracles of Jesus have been to you, and witness to the true change needed to be seen by others.

### **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, we live in a world and society that is obsessed with riches and power. We obsess over people with more money than they know what to do with, and with those who have less than nothing. We think that riches are just the material wealth people have and defines who they are, which can make us see things much differently than you intend. The riches that come from you are more than money and influence, but also involve talent, time, character, and many other things. Riches themselves do not corrupt, but the love and jealousy of them show who we are and what we value. Help your people to see and discern that above all else, so we can know who we might trust and how we can live to teach them. Help us to have a wider and deeper mind so we can see past those superficialities and understand what truly defines another.

We thank you for the riches your fellowship has but does not possess. The gift of resurrection and eternal life through Jesus Christ, the assurance of the right way spoken of by your prophets, and the many avenues by which we might proclaim that news in the world. By what is joyful, and what is concerning, may we come closer to knowing what you give...*Reading of the Prayer List*...You give many and good gifts from above. Help us to see and accept their value.

### *Moment of Silence*

We thank you, LORD, for the words and attention given by Jesus Christ to focus on how we might truly belong to you. And by the prayer you give keep us attentive on the living water always accessible:

### **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 riches we have are not our own, and they are not just gold or money. From everything given to us we return to better the fellowship and all it seeks to do.

**Offertory    *Trust and Obey*    arr. Helman**



**\*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, the riches we have are not just gold or money but also ourselves.  
We give you our efforts, priorities, motives, time, and attention to see what you will  
make from them. Help us to accept what you give, so we might give to those in true  
need. **Amen.**

**\*Hymn #391 Take My Life**

Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
Take my moments and my days;  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love.  
Take my feet, and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee,  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing  
Always, only, for my King.  
Take my lips, and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee,  
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold;  
Not a mite would I withhold;  
Take my intellect, and use  
Every power as Thou shalt choose,  
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;  
It shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart, it is Thine own;  
It shall be Thy royal throne,  
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure store.  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee,  
Ever, only, all for Thee.

**\*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 Jubilee arr. Binckes**

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

---

*All hymn lyrics and prayers are reproduced and printed with permission from The Presbyterian Hymnal: Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs (Westminster John Knox Press, 1990), and original writing of Rev. Joseph Svancara.*

*All Scripture lessons are reproduced and printed with permission from the New Revised Standard Bible (NRSV).*

*All worship messages, devotions, and church news are available on the First Presbyterian Church website ([www.newphilapc.org](http://www.newphilapc.org)).*