



**First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia**

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**Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor**

**Sunday Worship Service**

**April 12, 2026**

\*All who are able, please stand.

**Announcements & Prayer Concerns**

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

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (April 15) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (April 15) at 8pm.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will be meeting next Sunday (April 19) at 9:15am.

**Opening Prayer**

LORD, our Creator, the resurrection of your Son is still a mystery to us because we cannot explain it by humans means. But its power demonstrates something greater in our lives worth pursuing. Help us to accept this revelation of power and where it leads us, and what it makes us witness for our lives. **Amen.**

**Prelude    *Easter Meditation*    Arr. B Price**

**\*Call to Worship (Psalm 111)**

Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

**Great are your works, O LORD, pondered by all who delight in them.**

Majesty and splendor mark your deeds, and your righteousness endures forever.

**You cause your wonders to be remembered; you are gracious and full of compassion.**

You give food to those who fear you, remembering forever your covenant.

**You have shown your people the power of your works in giving them the lands  
of the nations.**

The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice; all of your precepts are sure.

**They stand fast forever and ever, because they are done in truth and equity.**

You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever; holy and  
awesome is your name.

**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who practice this have a  
good understanding. God's praise endures forever.**

**\*Hymn #105 *Because You Live, O Christ***

Because You live, O Christ,  
The garden of the world has come to flower;  
The darkness of the tomb  
Is flooded with Your resurrection power.  
The stone has rolled away  
And death cannot imprison!  
O sing this Easter Day,  
For Jesus Christ has risen, has risen, has risen, had risen!

Because You live, O Christ,  
The spirit bird of hope is freed for flying;  
Our cages of despair  
No longer keep us closed and life denying.  
The stone has rolled away  
And death cannot imprison!  
O sing this Easter Day,  
For Jesus Christ has risen, has risen, has risen, had risen!

Because You live, O Christ,  
The rainbow of Your peace will span creation,  
The colors of Your love  
Will draw all humankind to adoration.  
The stone has rolled away  
And death cannot imprison!  
O sing this Easter Day,  
For Jesus Christ has risen, has risen, has risen, had risen!

**\*Prayer of Confession**

We attempt to explain and make known the LORD's mysteries, and with good  
intentions! But end up missing what is most important:

**LORD, our Creator, like Thomas we often desire what we can see, know, and understand. But your good news goes beyond mere human understanding, it redefines purpose and uncovers what we have attempted to ignore. Forgive us for looking in the wrong places, and trusting in limited means, and return us to where we must belong to be the best witnesses we can. Amen.**

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

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

The LORD knows our doubts, our disbelief, our disadvantages to giving the gospel. But his power gives us exactly what we need.

**The risen Christ has appeared to us, met with us, alleviated our fears, and bestows a gift to give us confidence in the calling ahead.**

#### **\*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 15:1-18

15 <sup>1</sup> Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea. <sup>2</sup> The Lord is my strength and my might, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I

will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. <sup>3</sup> The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name. <sup>4</sup> Pharaoh's chariots and his army he cast into the sea; his picked officers were sunk in the Red Sea. <sup>5</sup> The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone. <sup>6</sup> Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power— your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy. <sup>7</sup> In the greatness of your majesty you overthrew your adversaries; you sent out your fury, it consumed them like stubble. <sup>8</sup> At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up, the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. <sup>9</sup> The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.'<sup>10</sup> You blew with your wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters. <sup>11</sup> Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders? <sup>12</sup> You stretched out your right hand, the earth swallowed them. <sup>13</sup> In your steadfast love you led the people whom you redeemed; you guided them by your strength to your holy abode. <sup>14</sup> The peoples heard, they trembled; pangs seized the inhabitants of Philistia. <sup>15</sup> Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; trembling seized the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away. <sup>16</sup> Terror and dread fell upon them; by the might of your arm, they became still as a stone until your people, O Lord, passed by, until the people whom you acquired passed by. <sup>17</sup> You brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your own possession, the place, O Lord, that you made your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established. <sup>18</sup> The Lord will reign forever and ever."

#### 1 Peter 1:1-12

1 <sup>1</sup> Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance. <sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup> Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. <sup>10</sup> Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, <sup>11</sup> inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory. <sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!

## John 20:19-31

20 <sup>19</sup> When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." <sup>24</sup> But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." <sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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

### **Sermon    *The Second Sunday of Easter***

As the Church celebrates the Resurrection we continue to understand how we are to proclaim it and make known this miracle of the LORD known to all people. Criticism, doubt, and speculation are to be expected, and reason alone is not enough to convince others. Especially if they are already living lives and being driven by motives not in service to the LORD. When one's example is outside of the one set by Jesus Christ, outside of the divine teachings which inspired it, it is no wonder why some end up the way they do. But doubt does not hinder what the LORD wants and can do, and in fact can come when the claims of the world and the claims of the LORD butt heads. Naturally, we will have doubts and speculations as to the claims of any party vying for our allegiance and doing whatever it takes to claim it. But eventually motives always rise to the surface and reveal what is truly at play.

It was the same in the Resurrection accounts, especially with the disciple Thomas—who we affectionately refer to as 'Doubting Thomas'. He would not believe until he touched the physical wounds of Christ. But this was not the desire of just a die-hard skeptic, but the yearning of a man deeply scarred by what he had witnessed. The disciples not days earlier saw their master captured, tried and condemned, beaten, humiliated, and left to die in the eyes of the people. Jesus was seen as the hope of

Israel to free their people and liberate their religion from foreign oversight and oppression, to bring purity back to those chosen to teach the world. After seeing all of that we realize there was a need for reassurance that Jesus was who he claimed to be, and that what he spoke was real. Thomas just wanted clarity as to who his master, his friend, was. That was quickly answered by Jesus eliciting Thomas' confession and worship. Doubt became the catalyst that allowed faith to blossom and become even more pure. Not by human efforts but seeing how the LORD intervened when human effort bent toward the destructive.

And in Exodus 15 there is seen the root of that hope, the realization of that faith, played out across time and historical circumstance. This is known as the "Song of Moses" recounting the LORD's power to defeat the Egyptians and set Israel free from bondage. The LORD's power clarified who the Egyptians were under divine rule, who the Israelites were under divine rule, and who could be trusted and counted on. The Exodus story is about freedom for a people, but also a clarity story about what kind of power humanity needs to live. And not settling for a certain human power, but a wisdom to pull us into something else by experience to discover something greater.

1 Peter 1 is a letter written by the apostle St. Peter to the believers at the time clarifying what the power of Christ could do for them in their present circumstances. The believers were under persecution, wondered when the LORD was going to help them, and what the Gospel meant in times of trouble and uncertainty. When worldly power seemed to be crushing them, where was the LORD's power? And St. Peter makes it known that the LORD was present in their sufferings, in their unjust persecution, showing the people what true justice and mercy accomplished for them. Not in that their enemies were being dealt with, but what the believers were becoming despite that unrighteousness. Jesus went through the same things and clarified the power and redemption of the LORD, what salvation truly produced in this world. Their doubts of what the LORD would do purified their vision of the divine and allowed them to see what truly happened through steadfast faith and trust in the hardest of times. It was not an earning of salvation, but a clarity of salvation and what the people were saved from.

The salvation Jesus brought forth is a clarity of who the LORD is, how the divine chooses to interact within the conditions of this world, and set all people up to be confronted by the choices and consequences of themselves and others. To see what has been motivating them and if it truly produced anything right or beneficial, and then to see what it took to live rightly after knowing. Thomas is like us in a way, just wanting to know what is true and who can be counted on in a world where it seems like all people lie for your attention. To have those doubts is not a failure or weakness, but an honesty that we want things to be different. And the LORD answers those prayers by presence and demonstration of what it takes to be different, to be beneficial, and to be one others can count on and need in times of trouble. Doubt nurtures and brings about faith, because it forces us to face the power above all power and see what can be done for the good of all- and not just ourselves.

## **Prayers of the People**

*Let us remember in prayer:*

*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, 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, it is in this season where your good news becomes stark and your Church sits poised to explain all that has happened. But we fall into the trap of thinking that if we can explain you then people will accept you- which is not always the case.

There are a number of reasons why the world has not embraced you, why your creation pushes you away, and why the individuals we meet have not accepted your authority. Your Resurrection is the defining point for our history, but also the start of something else. Where you cut through all the doubts, uncertainties, and fears we have about life and grant us a Spirit able to face such challenges with your steadfast love. The goal of our faith is not to figure you out, or have you make sense to others, but to assure that you are accessible and never turn anyone away. That when we, or others, lack the necessary answers, we know that you do. Nothing in the world happens except by your power which is what we all return to understand.

We ask for that knowledge of power for the situations we all face. Not to solve them as if we are gods, but to know our place to communicate understanding, community, and gentle assurance in all struggles...*Reading of the Prayer List*...LORD, in your loving mercy, hear our prayer.

### *Moment of Silence*

We thank you for meeting with us, hearing our concerns, and actively working within us to bring all good things to completion. Even though we do not know when that will happen we still love and trust you are bringing about something blessed. To fulfill the words of your prayer:

### **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**

As Jesus grants his disciples the gift of his Spirit so we gift all that we have so others might walk in light as we have walked.

**Offertory    *A Holy Offering*    Arr. S Landon**

**\*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, we often place our trust in money, means, and resources to measure our job as your disciples. But you have instructed that by ourselves we can do nothing, we must have your Spirit. By that Spirit lead this church into renewed mission and understanding that others might find completeness with you. **Amen.**

**\*Hymn #108    *Christ is Alive!***

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
The cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
To distant years in Palestine,  
But saving, healing, here and now,  
And touching every place and time.

Not throned afar, remotely high,  
Untouched, unmoved by human pains,  
But daily, in the midst of life,  
Our Savior in the Godhead reigns.

In every insult, rift, and war,  
Where color, scorn, or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,  
And lives, where even hope has died.

**\*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    *Christ the Lord Has Risen!*    Arr. T Birchwood**

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

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