



**First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia**

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**Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor**

**Sunday Worship Service  
August 24, 2025**

\*All who are able, please stand.

**Announcements & Prayer Concerns**

Finance Committee will meet this Tuesday (August 26) at 7pm.

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (August 27) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (August 27) at 8pm.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will be meeting next Sunday (August 31) at 9:15am.

We are currently reading through "The Practice of the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence. See Rev. Joe if you want to join!

The Tables of Eight dinner group will be meeting this Saturday (August 30) at 6pm. The cost is \$10 per person, and RSVP is required either to the church office or Carolyn Berry.

**Opening Prayer**

LORD, our Creator, your Kingdom draws your created from all corners of this world. People who desire to find you within our midst. Help us to be a fellowship who seeks your truth first and foremost, recognizes your capability above all others, and is ready to pursue it for the benefit of those who need our witness. **Amen.**

**Prelude    *Morning has Broken*    arr. Martin**

**\*Call to Worship (Psalm 103)**

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all God's benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from the grave and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy; who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's. O LORD, you provide vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.

**You made known your ways to Moses and your works to the children of Israel.  
LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and abounding in**

**steadfast love; you will not always accuse us, nor will you keep your anger forever. You have not dealt with us according to our sins, nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you. As far as the east is from the west, so far have you removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion for his children, so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD. For you know well how we are formed; you remember that we are but dust. As for mortals, their days are like the grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; when the wind passes over it, it is gone, and its place shall know it no more.

**But your steadfast love, O LORD, is forever with those who fear you, and your righteousness is for the children's children; for those who keep your covenant and remember to do your commandments. The LORD's throne is established in heaven; God's dominion rules over all. Bless the LORD, you angels, you mighty ones who do God's bidding, who obey the voice of God's word. Bless the LORD, all you hosts of God, you servants who do God's will. Bless the LORD, all you works of God, in all places where God rules; bless the LORD, O my soul.**

**\*Hymn #441    *I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord***

I love Thy kingdom, Lord,  
The house of Thine abode,  
The church our blessed Redeemer saved  
With His own precious blood.

I love Thy church, O God;  
Her walls before Thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,  
And graven on Thy hand.

For her my tears shall fall,  
For her my prayers ascend;  
To her my cares and toils be given,  
Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy  
I prize her heavenly ways,  
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,  
Her hymns of love and praise.

Sure as Thy truth shall last,  
To Zion shall be given

The brightest glories earth can yield  
And brighter bliss of Heaven.

**\*Prayer of Confession**

The Kingdom of God is all around and within us making us ready to joyfully accept the life prepared for us. But do our lives, and actions, prepare us to accept what is revealed?

**LORD, our Creator, you have given your people the wisdom of the ages to seek after you with all our hearts. But we often become more obsessed with the gift rather than the gifter, and focus more on what we are doing rather than what you have done. Help our worship not to be about ourselves, what we do, and instead let it be about how open we are to the change you bring according to our hidden needs. Amen.**

**\*Silent Confessions and Prayers**

**\*Assurance of Forgiveness**

Before we were kept at a distance, unable to know or come near the dwelling of the LORD. But by the work of Jesus Christ, mediator of a renewed agreement with us, we can now sit with the divine on the heights of the earth.

**In faith, in security, and in confidence we declare for the world to know: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!**

**\*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 58:1-14

58 <sup>1</sup> Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. <sup>2</sup> Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. <sup>3</sup> “Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. <sup>4</sup> Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. <sup>5</sup> Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? <sup>6</sup> Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? <sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? <sup>8</sup> Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. <sup>9</sup> Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, <sup>10</sup> if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. <sup>11</sup> The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. <sup>12</sup> Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. <sup>13</sup> If you refrain from trampling the sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; <sup>14</sup> then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Hebrews 12:18-29

12 <sup>18</sup> You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, <sup>19</sup> and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup> (For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death.” <sup>21</sup> Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.”) <sup>22</sup> But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living

God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup> and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup> and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. <sup>25</sup> See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! <sup>26</sup> At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven." <sup>27</sup> This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup> Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; <sup>29</sup> for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

### Luke 13:10-35

<sup>13</sup> <sup>10</sup> Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. <sup>11</sup> And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. <sup>12</sup> When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." <sup>13</sup> When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. <sup>14</sup> But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." <sup>15</sup> But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water?" <sup>16</sup> And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?" <sup>17</sup> When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing. <sup>18</sup> He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it?" <sup>19</sup> It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches." <sup>20</sup> And again he said, "To what should I compare the kingdom of God?" <sup>21</sup> It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." <sup>22</sup> Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup> Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" He said to them, <sup>24</sup> "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. <sup>25</sup> When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then in reply he will say to you, 'I do not know where you come from.' <sup>26</sup> Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' <sup>27</sup> But he will say, 'I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!' <sup>28</sup> There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out. <sup>29</sup> Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the

kingdom of God. <sup>30</sup> Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.” <sup>31</sup> At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup> He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. <sup>33</sup> Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’” <sup>34</sup> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

This is the Word of the LORD.

**Thanks be to God!**

### **Sermon    *The Twelfth Sunday of Pentecost***

When it comes to worshiping as a Christian, there is the idea that what we do ought to ‘please’ the LORD. Our singing, our prayers, our posture, what we wear, and even what we fellowship over in terms of food after the service centers around ‘pleasing’ a being whom we are trying to convince to give us support and blessing. There is the misconception that the LORD is a ruler like any other human and needs to be appealed too and convinced by means of gifts and the stoking of egos. But the LORD is not a human like us, not a being like us, who needs to be appealed too like us. The sanctuary is not a show floor by which we are showing off how much more pious we are than another. Worship is not a performance where the loudest and more outrageous of displays makes the LORD more captive in terms of attention. That is the old way of thinking; the thinking of the old humanity distant from the Creator and trying to lure him back. But the prophet Isaiah promises that the LORD is here amid a wanting people. So then, what is worship for if not that reason?

The prophet Isaiah touches on that idea of worship through the practices Israel used to reach out toward the LORD. The sabbath was seen as the highest of religious practices for Israel, and one of the only ones mentioned specifically within the laws. From a sundown to sundown period of time once a week the people would cease working, set aside the time, and contemplate. Contemplate the LORD, creation, each other, and their lives. In the rush of doing everything to live there was a rare time where such thoughts could be entertained. By forcing the people to sit and rest (the literal translation of “sabbath”) they could consider their lives and actions within the ethical framework the LORD had set up. Of course, Israel got away from that and started to treat the sabbath like a chore and obligation than a gift. Legalizing everything about it and bringing about some type of guilt whenever something was transgressed. Instead of freeing and liberating the people to consider the LORD, it locked them in a box of interpretation and allowed society as a whole to suffer from lack of

understanding what a life with the LORD would be like. Poverty, hunger, homelessness, familial breakdown, and other sufferings are answered within the holy instruction passed along by the people. But consideration was never had as to the responsibilities to build and heal the world around Israel. Never were the people allowed to be formed by rest, fasting, and prayer. Instead, others were sought for formation and the presence of the LORD was missed for something that seemed 'easier' and 'more predictable'.

There is always that temptation because of the human desire to take the easier path, the quickest solution, the most popular of interpretations and explanations for why things are the way they are. But those take away from the idea of sabbath, of rest, of contemplation and consideration for our lives. The practice is not about what we do and allow others to do, that is the sin of the Pharisees- policing others' actions as if we know better. It is about the space we allow for ourselves, what we allow ourselves to think and consider, and who we allow to form and bring those thoughts to life. The writer of Hebrews in 12:18-29 makes believers wonder who is more capable of bringing us into the Kingdom. Appealing back to the time of Moses, the communicator of the law, and the awe and fear had when the LORD stepped onto Mount Sinai to deliver the commandments. The LORD shook the earth at that arrival, and the unknown filled the people with a terror of what would happen. The law was supposed to introduce the people to the LORD, and fill them with purpose. So Moses had to go and retrieve the law for them so they would have this understanding. But as the story goes, even when presented with the law the people had trouble following it. As good and as necessary Moses was at that time in salvation history, the covenant needed something more capable to back it up. That is why Jesus is lifted up as the mediator of a renewed covenant with humanity and the divine, his works and teachings being what put skin on the bones of the holy instruction and demonstrated its sense.

In Luke 13:10-35, Jesus uses the sabbath to demonstrate the whole of life under the LORD. The practice was not supposed to be restrictive, keeping someone trapped in disease and suffering, but liberating so as to witness and accept what the LORD can do. The sabbath, all religious practices, are for communicating this truth and giving people what they need to be sensitized to the LORD's presence. That is why Jesus talks about the Kingdom as like a mustard seed which grows into a mighty tree, or like yeast producing bread, because it is a provision by which all of creation needs. It cannot be controlled by any earthly force; like what the Pharisee's, or even King Herod tried to do. Everything experienced and witnessed would happen under the LORD's mighty hand and would be for the understanding of all watching. Even the past killings of the old prophets and messengers by the so-called "city of peace" would not be enough to deter what the LORD wanted to give. The willingness to confess the capability of the ultimate law-demonstrator will open up anyone to see the Kingdom breaking into this world. How it meets the needs of all who come to it, fill all with purpose and meaning, and change the desires and direction this world was once going in. That is what it means to bless the one who comes in the name of the LORD.

All that we do as Christians is for the purpose of preparing the world to see and bless the entrance of divine wisdom into all situations and circumstances. The provision of the Kingdom is disruptive to everything the world does, by confronting it with what the Creator willed when order was brought out of primordial chaos. Worship does not force any of this and does not conform anyone to it. Worship is how we sensitize ourselves to what is coming, readying ourselves for what is better, and considering what we may contribute out of what the LORD has already given us. Worship as we know it is how the wayward desires of the world are silenced so we have time to focus and listen for what is better. It is a practice of hoping for something greater to answer the needs in our midst, and how it is already present by our willingness to seek it out. Our practices do not invoke the LORD or placate divine emotions, but prepare us to see where the LORD has been all along and has been setting us up to be the people he needs and trusts right here and now.

### **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, Bill & Cheryl Graham, Judy Hass, Alice & Errol Jacobs, Barry Jacobs, Victoria Kasten, Amber Loftis, David Mackey, Breanne Mathias, Will Long, Tom Netting, Ruth Patrick, Bob Pierre, Carol Phillips, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, Josh Shaeffer, Marlene Singhaus, Cindy Smith, Derrick & Mandy Smith, Janis Stover, 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 provided so much in order that your people might find and follow you. You are not one who sits far away and at a distance, but is close at hand when we need you the most. Our lives are filled with sudden twists and turns, unexpected events, and situations we could never imagine. But you provide so we do not just survive such circumstances but can live within and rise above. It is a testament to the power of your gospel, of Jesus Christ- the one who comes in the name of the LORD. He shows and bestows the kingdom and all its righteousness on those in need, and who earnestly desire it and all by which it comes. We are here as proof that those ways have captured us, united us, and bring people from all corners of creation to sit in celebration of your ways. Of life itself- your life, which you have imagined since the beginning of time.

For those in our lives who are in darkness, in doubt, in uncertainty, and need a light to guide them we lift up for your Spirit to reach and guide them...*Reading of the Prayer List...*

*Moment of Silence*



We thank you, LORD, for your Kingdom, your Church, and the gospel which creates and makes all things new. Continue to guide, form, and mold us more into your divine image so we might reflect the promise 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**

The Kingdom of God is near and ready to meet the needs of all. As citizens of that kingdom, let our provision be what helps to satisfy.

### **Offertory    *Supplication*    arr. Peterson**

#### **\*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 promised that if we offer food for the hungry and aid the afflicted our light will shine in the darkness of this world. Out of what we give may your fellowship shine and show the hope needed by those who still struggle for understanding. **Amen.**

#### **\*Hymn #439    *In Christ There Is No East or West***

In Christ there is no east or west,  
In Him no south or north;  
But one great fellowship of love  
Throughout the whole wide earth.

In Christ shall true hearts everywhere  
Their high communion find;  
His service is the golden cord,  
Close-binding humankind.

Join hands, disciples of the faith,  
Whate'er your race may be.  
All children of the living God  
Are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,  
In Him meet south and north;  
All Christly souls are one in Him  
Throughout the whole wide earth.

**\*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    *Come with Rejoicing*    arr. Morrison**

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

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