



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

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Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

***Sunday Worship Service
August 3, 2025***

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Today is our "First Celebration Sunday" with Holy Communion in worship and our Church Brunch afterward. All are welcome!

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (August 6) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (August 6) at 8pm.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will be meeting next Sunday (August 10) 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!

Next Sunday (August 10) is our monthly Friends of the Homeless meal at 5:30pm, a signup sheet for volunteers is in the church office. While funds for the meal are good, please consider donation to our other FOTH efforts (FOTH Operations/Jack's House of Hope).

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Father, you make all things bright and beautiful in our world for our enjoyment and for the healing of suffering. Help us to understand all the riches and blessings you have poured into our lives and how we might use them to participate in your wonderful works. **Amen.**

Prelude

***Call to Worship (Psalm 49)**

Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all you who dwell in the world, you of high degree and low, rich and poor together.

My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and my heart shall meditate on understanding.

I will incline my ear to a proverb and set forth my riddle upon the harp.

Why should I be afraid in evil days, when the wickedness of those at my heels surrounds me, the wickedness of those who put their trust in their own prowess, and boast of their great riches?

One can never redeem another, or give to God the ransom for another's life; for the ransom of a life is so great that there would never be enough to pay it, in order to live forever and ever and never see the grave.

For we see that the wise die also; like the dull and stupid they perish and leave their wealth to those who come after them.

Their graves shall be their homes forever, their dwelling places from generation to generation, though they had named lands after themselves.

Even though honored, they cannot live forever; they are like the beasts that perish.

Such is the way of self-confident fools, and the end of those who delight in their own words.

Like sheep they are destined to die; death will both shepherd and rule them; straight away to the grave, their form wastes away, and Sheol is their splendid abode.

But God will ransom my life and will snatch me from the grasp of death.

Do not be envious when some become rich, or when the grandeur of their house increases; for they will carry nothing away at their death, nor will their grandeur follow them.

Though they think highly of themselves while they live, and are praised for their success, they shall join the company of their forebears, who will never see the light again.

Those who are honored, but have no understanding, are like the beasts that perish.

Hymn #267 *All Things Bright and Beautiful

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings:
God made their glowing colors,
God made their tiny wings.
All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.

The purple-headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset, and the morning
That brightens up the sky,
All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
God made them every one.
All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.

God gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.
All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.

***Prayer of Confession**

We strive to serve the LORD and people first as disciples, but often the distractions and cares of life cause us to worry about the wrong things:

LORD, our Creator, you have clothed your world with beauty and splendor in a way nothing else can compete. The abundance of the world is at our fingertips to enjoy, but we obsess about how much to take for ourselves. Help us to understand how much is enough for our lives, what you call us to give, so greed

does not take over and change us. We belong to and worship you alone, so help us live in that reality. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

When the greeds and obsessions of this world threaten to choke out the Word within us, Christ makes a way to realize our true path and calling.

Fear no longer has a hold on us or dictates what we can do, but with the Spirit's help we experience new possibility.

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:

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2:26

1 ¹ The words of the Teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. ² Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. ³ What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun? ⁴ A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. ⁵ The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hurries to the place where it rises. ⁶ The wind blows to the south, and goes around to the north; round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. ⁷ All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they continue to flow.

⁸ All things are wearisome; more than one can express; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, or the ear filled with hearing. ⁹ What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun. ¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has already been, in the ages before us. ¹¹ The people of long ago are not remembered, nor will there be any remembrance of people yet to come by those who come after them. ¹² I, the Teacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, ¹³ applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with. ¹⁴ I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind. ¹⁵ What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted. ¹⁶ I said to myself, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." ¹⁷ And I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a chasing after wind. ¹⁸ For in much wisdom is much vexation, and those who increase knowledge increase sorrow. **2** ¹ I said to myself, "Come now, I will make a test of pleasure; enjoy yourself." But again, this also was vanity. ² I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?" ³ I searched with my mind how to cheer my body with wine—my mind still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, until I might see what was good for mortals to do under heaven during the few days of their life. ⁴ I made great works; I built houses and planted vineyards for myself; ⁵ I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. ⁶ I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house; I also had great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. ⁸ I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and of the provinces; I got singers, both men and women, and delights of the flesh, and many concubines. ⁹ So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰ Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them; I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. ¹¹ Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had spent in doing it, and again, all was vanity and a chasing after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun. ¹² So I turned to consider wisdom and madness and folly; for what can the one do who comes after the king? Only what has already been done. ¹³ Then I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. ¹⁴ The wise have eyes in their head, but fools walk in darkness. Yet I perceived that the same fate befalls all of them. ¹⁵ Then I said to myself, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also; why then have I been so very wise?" And I said to myself that this also is vanity. ¹⁶ For there is no enduring remembrance of the wise or of fools, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How can the wise die just like fools? ¹⁷ So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me; for all is vanity and a chasing after wind. ¹⁸ I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to those who come after me ¹⁹ —and who knows whether they will be wise or foolish? Yet they will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰ So I

turned and gave my heart up to despair concerning all the toil of my labors under the sun, ²¹ because sometimes one who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by another who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²² What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? ²³ For all their days are full of pain, and their work is a vexation; even at night their minds do not rest. This also is vanity. ²⁴ There is nothing better for mortals than to eat and drink, and find enjoyment in their toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God; ²⁵ for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? ²⁶ For to the one who pleases him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner he gives the work of gathering and heaping, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a chasing after wind.

Colossians 3:1-4:1

3 ¹ So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³ for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. ⁷ These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. ⁸ But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. ¹¹ In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all! ¹² As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. ¹⁸ Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, or they may lose heart. ²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. ²³ Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, ²⁴ since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵ For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no

partiality. **4** ¹ Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Luke 12:13-34

12 ¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” ¹⁴ But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵ And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” ¹⁶ Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷ And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.” ²² He said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵ And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁶ If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. ³⁰ For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. ³² Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is the Word of the LORD.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon *The Ninth Sunday of Pentecost*

When we think about who we are as disciples of Christ, we are confronted with the idea of what makes us secure and gives us security. How does the gospel meet and confront the fears which are constantly invading our hearts? Fear is a natural response to the dangers around us, and hardwired into our beings in order to keep us safe. It is an example of the perfect wiring of our beings by the Creator, designed to make us

aware of our existence and be invested in our survival. But while it served a good cause in the ancient past to keep animals from eating us, the fears seems to be hyped up and hijacked today to keep us in a perpetual state of anxiety and insecurity. We are played upon by others who not only offer promises but play on the fears of living without what they promise. It is not the idea of life without something, but the fear of not having something. As if we will constantly be in want and not guaranteed to see the next day unless we obey. And the Scriptures presented this week use the idea of money, of wealth (Gk. *Mammon*, “material need”), to demonstrate this point.

Money has always been played up by the Church as something to watch out for and even has gotten the Church in trouble many times in its history. It is one of those stereotypical sins, greed, which is always called to be watched out for. Many developing philosophies and theories about the right use of money, or for its abolishment because of what it does to people. But whether you subscribe to capitalism or socialism, either extreme deals with the idea of provision and whether or not you or anyone else has enough. And whether or not you have money also touches on the idea of what it even is all for. We scrape and save from our labors and accumulate so many things in our life, but what for?

That is what Ecclesiastes 1:1-2:26 deals with. Traditionally, this book is ascribed to King Solomon who was known as the wisest and richest of the Israelite monarchs in its history. Blessed by the LORD with so much in order to rule the people but also struggled with its implications in the face of his own circumstances. Part of Solomon’s narrative was that he fell in love with an African queen, the queen of Sheba, and had a son with her. But he was not able to marry her and she returned with their son to their homeland. That personal devastation would have cracked open his being and made him contemplate, and be receptive to, the wisdom and rule of the LORD. People could work hard and acquire so much, only to see it go into the hands of inheritors who use it for selfish and evil purposes. No one has any control of what happens in that regard, and that is the point the teacher makes us focus on. Meaning and purpose are not anchored in what we accomplish and build, but they are manifestations as to what we have prized and deemed worthy in our lives. They exemplify who we have worked for, what we have been devoted to, and what we have attempted to proclaim to the world around us. It is a reminder that everything in this life belongs to the LORD, is given to us as a sacred trust, and how we use it aids us in understanding the knowing the LORD.

Jesus also focuses, and hones in, on this idea in Luke 12:13-34. This parable about the rich fool is also used stereotypically at times to talk about greed and the evils of money and hoarding riches for oneself. But digging deeper into the story, and its implications, makes us see greed as more than just a vice to be avoided. Even after acquiring so much provision for himself the rich man is confronted by the LORD, asked for his life, and what all this acquisition was for? What was in his heart which made him take so much and give so little? That is why Jesus speaks about fear and insecurity,

and about not being anxious about ones need. Coming just after Jesus teaching the disciples to pray for “their daily bread”, he speaks about how the LORD is the Creator who cares so much about all things in this world. He feeds the birds, clothes the fields with grass and flowers, watches over every aspect of our lives, and nothing escapes his will. What actually makes us afraid is the idolatry of what we let into our hearts to rule us. When we crowd out the LORD for the other distractions of life, of course we are going to be afraid. We are replacing the true essence of life for counterfeit garbage which will go to the metaphorical, and literal, trash next year. But having a life, and means, to focus on the LORD and his guidance will make a life much more stable. Not easier because we will be confronted with unfortunate situations and circumstances, but with the ability to steadfastly go through them with confidence. To believe that when the LORD says, “This too shall pass” we can believe it!

Jesus speaks about “where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also”, but the word ‘treasure’ is not what we think it is. We think it speaks about material wealth and things, but in the Greek the word refers to a ‘storehouse, repository, or other means of storage’. It is the vessel by which holds and showcases what we deem valuable. It is our very beings. What we let in and set up shop will determine how we feel and function going forward, and how we work and serve the true calling of our lives.

St. Paul in Colossians 3:1-4:1 speaks about the life that Christ provides and makes available to those who desire. He speaks about how that devotion can order everything in our lives and set things in their proper place. The LORD is a being of creation and order who will come in and set things in their proper place so we might serve without worry. Our lives no longer become our own, so we do not have to fear what becomes of them- because they are hidden in the dwelling place with the LORD. He protects and watches over everything and nothing will surprise or catch him off guard. All he gives and allows to happen is because of his trust in us to handle it. The LORD knows this is the exercise needed to stretch our spiritual muscles. It is not the idea of ‘what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger’, because another’s strength is not our strength. It is individual training and conditioning to truly recognize the LORD’s gifts and rule and see them within others. That is why no matter what position we are in; wife, husband, child, servant, master, we recognize a power and responsibility in what is given to us and how we must use it. Never for ourselves, never for our own benefit, and not even for anyone else. But for the LORD, so others can see him clearly and without fear.

Life is more than just money and riches, but they are also not sinful either. Money can be a tool, much like a screwdriver or plunger- aiding us in difficult tasks with ease. Money is not the root of all evil, but the devotion to it alone can be. It is replacing what is in our storehouse for us to and call upon, and if it is lacking it will cause endless fear and anxiety to the point of crippling us. The LORD is the only one who can cast aside fear and worry, replace it with confidence, and set us up so we can live truly before others. How we use money, how greed pops up in our lives, is all about how we see

and accept the Creator of all things first and foremost. Does he get to dictate and form us into the beings he imagined us to be, or do our own desires and distractions?

Celebration of Holy Communion

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, The Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County & The Homeless of Tuscarawas County.

The LORD be with you!

And also with you!

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to the LORD!

Let us give thanks to the LORD, our God!

It is right to give our thanks and praise!

LORD, our Creator, great are you and the works you have done and continue to do! You have made the world and all within it, created the people we interact with every day, and set up all situations by which we can be your people. Sometimes it is difficult to know how to be your people, how to care for others, without greed taking over or casting our pearls before swine. You have called us to be not only considerate over what we have, but to pay attention what is given in every moment to your Church. You ask us to pray for our daily bread and no more, not because you do not want to provide but you want us to see what you set up. One day is never like the next in your timing, but you always ensure your Church is situated for its mission. So for whatever we do in word and deed for our Lord Jesus Christ, we can sing and celebrate with all creation:

Holy, holy, holy LORD. God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed be your Son Jesus Christ, who has spoken your mysteries and taught us what comes from your hand. In all of his works of mercy, in the broken bread and blessed cup, is revealed what the divine provides so we might live as we were always meant

too. The Gospel is an assurance of how we can live at all times and never be dependent on anything except for you. By your means of grace and sustenance allow us to be sustenance for the world and articulate your mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come gain.

In what we celebrate and receive here today, unite your fellowship and remind us of the divine mission you have given us. We all have the responsibility to live it as you have called us but help us support each other and allow your power to be known to its fullest. Holy Spirit, make clear your path by what we take together so we might be ready to follow when called and see wonders beyond imagining.

Amen.

Partaking in the Elements

We thank you, LORD, that you have created here again today among us. You cultivate a harvest to remind where true provision is found, and how it is known to those who hunger and thirst for what is right. Aid your Church, your people, everywhere to be an oasis from the deserts of life and what enables all who work to keep going so love is known. To fulfill, and live, the promises 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

It is our duty as the people of the LORD to cultivate a harvest to feed a starving and malnourished world, so people might see what is better.

Offertory

***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, we thank you for all which you sprout up and blow into our lives. We cannot tell where it comes from and where it leads, except that it comes from you and

is used to heal this world. By what we give and cultivate, by your Spirit help us to share so others may experience your omnipresence and what you can make happen. **Amen.**

***Hymn #265 Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand**

Great God, we sing that mighty hand
By which supported still we stand;
The opening year Your mercy shows;
That mercy crowns it till it close.

With grateful hearts the past we own;
The future, all to us unknown,
We to Your guardian care commit,
And peaceful leave before Your feet.

In scenes exalted or depressed,
You are our joy, and You our rest;
Your goodness all our hopes shall raise,
Adored through all our changing days.

***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**

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

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