



First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia

217 E. High Ave, New Philadelphia, OH 44663

330-343-7114

www.newphilapc.org



Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor

***Sunday Worship Service
October 26, 2025***

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (October 29) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (October 29) at 8pm.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will be meeting next Sunday (November 2) 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!

Thank you to everyone who participated in October's special offering for the PCUSA's Peace and Global Witness Offering, and for Beneath the Shade! Your generosity is appreciated!

Next Sunday (November 2) is All Saints' Sunday during service. A signup sheet is in the church office for anyone you wish to be remembered!

Next Sunday (November 2) is our "First Celebration Sunday" with communion in worship followed by our monthly church brunch- all are welcome!

Our fall congregational meeting has been rescheduled to November 16 following service. Please come as we vote on nominations for church officers and the pastoral terms of call. Your vote is needed for this work!

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Creator, you have worked in the world and in history to purify your Church and allow it to shine. Help us to remember all the work of your faithful servants so we may be a people open to reform and change according to your only gospel. **Amen.**

Prelude *My Faith Looks Up To Thee* arr. Robert Hughs

***Call to Worship (Psalm 65)**

You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; to you shall vows be fulfilled. To you, the one who answers prayer, to you all flesh shall come.

Our sins are stronger than we are, but you blot out our transgressions.

Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there! They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of your temple.

**Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation,
O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans far away.**

You make firm the mountains by your power; you are girded about with might. You still the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.

**Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs;
you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.**

You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water. You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth. You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.

You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty.

May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, and the hills be clothed with joy.

**May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak
themselves with grain; let them shout for joy and sing.**

Hymn #260 *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;

His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

***Prayer of Confession**

We often believe that we are products of history or circumstance, but we forget the supreme rule of the LORD in all affairs within this world:

LORD, our Creator, we are creatures who cling to habit and tradition because we feel we know what is best. And we use those habits and traditions to often push people away and label them because it makes us feel powerful and safer. But your gospel is for the health and growth of all people, and you change us so we might embody that goal. Forgive us our resistance and short-sightedness, and help us understand the charge you have over all in life. Amen.

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Even when we fail to be faithful, the LORD is faithful first in all things. By the image, life, and wisdom of Jesus Christ we are restored and set in the proper path.

Even when our image is distorted by sin, it is Jesus Christ who restores and reminds who we are and can be.

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 14:1-22

14 ¹ The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought: ² Judah mourns and her gates languish; they lie in gloom on the ground, and the cry of Jerusalem goes up. ³ Her nobles send their servants for water; they come to the cisterns, they find no water, they return with their vessels empty. They are ashamed and dismayed and cover their heads, ⁴ because the ground is cracked. Because there has been no rain on the land the farmers are dismayed; they cover their heads. ⁵ Even the doe in the field forsakes her newborn fawn because there is no grass. ⁶ The wild asses stand on the bare heights, they pant for air like jackals; their eyes fail because there is no herbage. ⁷ Although our iniquities testify against us, act, O Lord, for your name's sake; our apostasies indeed are many, and we have sinned against you. ⁸ O hope of Israel, its savior in time of trouble, why should you be like a stranger in the land, like a traveler turning aside for the night? ⁹ Why should you be like someone confused, like a mighty warrior who cannot give help? Yet you, O Lord, are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name; do not forsake us! ¹⁰ Thus says the Lord concerning this people: Truly they have loved to wander, they have not restrained their feet; therefore the Lord does not accept them, now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins. ¹¹ The Lord said to me: Do not pray for the welfare of this people. ¹² Although they fast, I do not hear their cry, and although they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I do not accept them; but by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence I consume them. ¹³ Then I said: "Ah, Lord God! Here are the prophets saying to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you true peace in this place.' " ¹⁴ And the Lord said to me: The prophets are prophesying lies in my name; I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds. ¹⁵ Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name though I did not send them, and who say, "Sword and famine shall not come on this land": By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed. ¹⁶ And the people to whom they prophesy shall be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and sword. There shall be no one to bury them—themselves, their wives, their sons, and their daughters. For I will pour out their wickedness upon them. ¹⁷ You shall say to them this word: Let my eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease, for the virgin daughter—my people—is struck down with a crushing blow, with a very grievous wound. ¹⁸ If I go out into the field, look—those killed by the sword! And if I

enter the city, look—those sick with famine! For both prophet and priest ply their trade throughout the land, and have no knowledge. ¹⁹ Have you completely rejected Judah? Does your heart loathe Zion? Why have you struck us down so that there is no healing for us? We look for peace, but find no good; for a time of healing, but there is terror instead. ²⁰ We acknowledge our wickedness, O Lord, the iniquity of our ancestors, for we have sinned against you. ²¹ Do not spurn us, for your name's sake; do not dishonor your glorious throne; remember and do not break your covenant with us. ²² Can any idols of the nations bring rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Is it not you, O Lord our God? We set our hope on you, for it is you who do all this.

2 Timothy 4:1-18

4 ¹ In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: ² proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. ⁵ As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. ⁶ As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing. ⁹ Do your best to come to me soon, ¹⁰ for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry. ¹² I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³ When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. ¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will pay him back for his deeds. ¹⁵ You also must beware of him, for he strongly opposed our message. ¹⁶ At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! ¹⁷ But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Luke 18:9-14

⁹ He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' ¹⁴ I tell you, this

man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

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

Sermon *Reformation Sunday*

“The Church reforming, always reforming, to the glory of God!” This is the anthem of the Protestant Reformation, an event which not only gave us the Protestant Christian tradition but also represents a significant spiritual development in the history of divine salvation. Many want to focus on the Reformation being a moment of human history when people resisted corrupt authority and took religion into their own hands, as if they owned it in the first place. While it is true there were some specific historical considerations as to why Martin Luther’s movement succeeded while others fizzled out, to attribute it all to one man and one movement overlooks the greater authority which governs the Church. Sure, the invention of the printing press did allow for wider debate of Luther’s ideas in a time where the Catholic Church had a tight hold on information; political circumstance did allow for wider acceptance among the rulers in the Holy Roman Empire (modern-day Germany) who saw the authority of the pope as a hinderance; and events in the decades and centuries after showed the Catholic Church did accept and change along some reforming thoughts. But the means of this development was not all in the hands of humans who might not have foreseen the long-term outcomes of their ideas. Reformers like Huss, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and others served in this manner not to have control or power for themselves. These, and others, were captive to the Word of God and teaching the gospel in a manner by which to better understood and give hope to the lives of others. Not to keep the status quo or allow the Church to be static, but to challenge what it means to live the LORD’s authority in our personal lives so as to change society by our example. Not to impose our beliefs on others but demonstrate what our beliefs and the wisdom of Jesus Christ can accomplish when allowed to be free.

That flies in the face of so-called ‘historical circumstance’ because that is the spirit of the prophets, specifically seen in Jeremiah. Here, Jeremiah calls out the drought and pestilence that Jerusalem is experiencing as a sign that the LORD is bringing attention to the way the people are living. The prophet calls out the leaders, the priests, the teachers, and those who had the historical authority for teaching and preserving the holy instructions of the covenant. He calls out those willing to set aside the ethics of the LORD’s teaching for the sake of maintaining power and control, to keep a position rather than see the people become better at loving the LORD. At this time in the Jerusalem temple a lot of religious blending occurred, fusing the religion of the LORD along with the pagan rites and rituals of the nations around them. Many times, this was done in the name of peaceful coexistence but was about consolidating authority and proving a need for these human institutions and ideas. By changing the practice, they changed the view of the LORD and the authority the divine had over human life. That is why the LORD, through the prophet, criticized and rejected the offerings brought to the

temple. It did not matter what type of gift was brought, it would not replace ignoring the LORD's authority in other areas of life. Those false prophets who promised peace and prosperity on their terms were themselves promised a destructive end because of their corrupting the covenant for their own desires. Only by a great change would the LORD restore the visions of the people back to who they were always meant to be: a community of priests and ministers who demonstrate to the world the creator they have forgotten.

Jesus also calls out that idea of 'religious excellence' in his parable of the Pharisee and tax collector. The practices, rites, and instructions of the Kingdom are not there to empower people over others. But to show the common needs which already exist between all people. Show that we are not so different from someone who is homeless, who has a criminal past or present, in a seat of power, or richer than any monarch in history. All are already under the authority of the Creator, with or without knowing it, and coming back to a recognition of that authority allows for life to be lived in a way which fulfills the purpose of why we have been created. The Church is not a power or controller of the world by what is given to us, but a conscience of the world by asking what the world should be doing.

St. Paul finishes his instructions to Timothy by reminding him that a time will come when people will not want to hear sound doctrine, but rather what is popular and enticing for them. But to stick to that solid teaching founded in Christ, which cuts through all the superficialities we build around ourselves and hits the true issues of any time. Even in St. Paul's time many in the church rejected this and did great harm as a result. And while those others were to be avoided, they were not to be abandoned. That is the mission of Timothy's work, according to the apostle, to teach and instruct in the manner of Christ which brings even those ones to a humble position of realizing the true authority over them. A time will come when those others, or anyone, hits the dead end of whatever teaching or ideology they are following, and is the Church ready to aid those ones in realizing, confessing, and living the truth available to them?

The Reformation is a time of great realization and change, of the LORD using his servants to purify and allow the Church to return to what it is supposed to be. Not a building, organization, or institution but a fellowship of truth-seekers discovering how deep and wide the LORD's authority and power is within the world. Seeing how the LORD works to keep all of life operating as it is, to show the limits of sinful and evil influences, and how life can be lived no matter the circumstance. Not just a historical event but an attitude the Church is to remember, and adopt, to keep from falling into the traps of false prophets and powers. A confession that no matter what the Church calls itself it is still subject to its head, who gave of himself in the most spectacular way to free us from false and misleading ideas. Reforming always is another way to say, "waiting on the LORD" (Isaiah 40:31) and what that divine vision for the world will change and heal in us so we may become freer than we ever have before.

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, Judy Hass, Alice & Errol Jacobs, Victoria Kasten, Amber Loftis, David Mackey, Breanne Mathias, Will Long, Tom Netting, Ruth Patrick, Bob Pierre, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, Josh Shaeffer, Marlene Singhaus, Dane & 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, so often we get caught up in the supposed stories of history thinking they alone explain all that we have and are. While human actions are important and can cause great things to happen there are also limitations we have. We attempt to force our image onto society, onto others, and use our power to make it come to life. But often damage occurs because we squeeze out others who do not fit our vision and make them to be in need. The work of your servants in the Church: Huss, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and others have endeavored to make your gospel known and lived by all people. Often sacrificing themselves, their lives or potential for prosperity, to make your Word understood by those who need it. Your Church, through the Holy Spirit, is always reforming to your glory to allow all your human children to come to a knowledge of the truth. Allow us to be a fellowship that is open, truthful, wise, and courageous to accept the change you bring our way so we might shine brighter than ever!

For the concerns in our lives where our human wisdom and power runs short, may you speak and give us direction by your gracious governance...*Reading the Prayer List...*LORD, in your loving mercy, hear our prayers.

Moment of Silence

We thank you, LORD, that you are one who listens to heartfelt and truthful prayers. You accept our needs and longings, and even our sinful thoughts, to bring us to a better and greater understanding. One which we remember, and is articulated, within the prayer we accept:

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 LORD allows the Church to shine in all its efforts to make his name known to all.
And all we contribute aids in that greater work.

Offertory *Reflection* Composer Benton Price

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 thank you for how you have blessed this fellowship in time, talents, and abilities. For how all your faithful have worked to create a community of hope for all. Bless what we give so we might continue in that greater work. **Amen.**

Hymn #466 *O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of God's grace!

Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

Christ breaks the power of reigning sin,
And sets the prisoner free;
Christ's blood can make the sinful clean,
Christ's blood availed for me.

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name.

***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 *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* arr. Victor Johnson**

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

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