



**First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia**

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**Rev. Joseph Svancara, Pastor**

**Sunday Worship Service**

**February 8, 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 for volunteers is in the church office. While meal funds are good, please consider donating toward our other FOTH efforts!

Bible Study will be canceled this week.

AA will meet this Wednesday (February 11) at 8pm.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will be meeting next Sunday (February 15) at 9:15am. We are currently reading "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl, and is open for anyone to join!

February 22 we will hold our annual Congregational Meeting following service that day. It will feature a pot-luck luncheon, and a sign-up sheet is available to list what you can bring! In preparation for the meeting all chairs from committees in 2025 should have their reports into the office by February 19.

We will be worshipping with our neighbor churches for Ash Wednesday (February 18) at 7pm at Trinity Episcopal Church in New Philadelphia. All are welcome as we start the season of Lent together as a Christian community!

During the month of February, we will be taking up our "Souper Bowl Sunday" collection to benefit the Dover-New Phila Food Pantry. Donation envelopes are available on the back mission table!

The Tables of Eight dinner group will be meeting on February 21 at 6pm. The cost is \$10 per person, and RSVP is required either to the church office or to Carolyn Berry.

The Session needs a volunteer to become this year's Clerk of Session. Please see Rev. Joe or a current member of Session if interested and want a description of the position.

## **Opening Prayer**

LORD, our Creator, the works of your people are numerous and important. Nothing escapes your sight, and you use all things to order and ready your people for action. Help us to appreciate what we have, what we can do, and how we might support in the best way possible. **Amen.**

**Prelude** *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus* **Arr L Smith**

### **\*Call to Worship** (Psalm 112)

Hallelujah! Happy are they who fear the LORD and have great delight in God's commandments!

**Their descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.**

Wealth and riches will be in their house, and their righteousness will last forever.

**Light shines in the darkness for the upright; the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.**

It is good for them to be generous in lending and to manage their affairs with justice.

**For they will never be shaken; the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.**

They will not be afraid of any evil rumors; their heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

**Their heart is established and will not shrink, until they see their desire upon their enemies.**

They have given freely to the poor, and their righteousness stands fast forever; they will hold up their head with honor.

**The wicked will see it and be angry; they will gnash their teeth and pine away; the desires of the wicked will perish.**

### **\*Hymn #428** *We Give Thee but Thine Own*

We give Thee but Thine own,  
Whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Thine alone,  
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

May we Thy bounties thus  
As stewards true receive,

And gladly, as Thou blessest us,  
To Thee our firstfruits give.

To comfort and to bless,  
To find a balm for woe,  
To tend the lonely in distress,  
Is angels' work below.

The captive to release,  
To God the lost to bring,  
To teach the way of life and peace—  
It is a Christ-like thing.

And we believe Thy Word,  
Though dim our faith may be;  
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord,  
We do it unto Thee.

### **\*Prayer of Confession**

Even though the LORD has purposefully made us, individually and as a people, we seek to change our flavor due to the temptations and expectations around us:

**LORD, our Father, you have made us salt of the earth and a city on a hill, to live and articulate your gospel so the world might witness true hope. But we burden this goal by trying to be like everyone else, accomplish what they achieve, and allow our standards to be set by others' expectations. Forgive us for our distraction and teach us what it means to live by what you alone provide. Amen.**

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

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

Even when we cannot restore our saltiness, the one who created the minerals themselves can restore and purify through the renewed hope of Jesus Christ.

**In appreciating what has been gifted, let us never surrender it to others again.**

#### **\*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.

#### 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

2 <sup>1</sup> When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. <sup>2</sup> For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. <sup>4</sup> My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. <sup>6</sup> Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. <sup>7</sup> But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup> But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"— <sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. <sup>13</sup> And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. <sup>14</sup> Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup> Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. <sup>16</sup> "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

#### Matthew 5:13-20

5 <sup>13</sup> "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. <sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. <sup>17</sup> Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

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

**Sermon    *The Fifth Sunday Of Epiphany***

When we hear Jesus' proclamation about being a "light of the world" and "a city on hill", it might provoke in us the idea of being able to accomplish big and great things to better the world with the help of the LORD. Of receiving the Word of truth which illuminates all we do and making clear to others what is the way of life. But often this image is also misused and used to draw attention to the wrong demonstrations of light and life. When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, in their famous "Mayflower Compact" they used the same image of being a city on the hill. In their case, they were religious dissenters and refugees who were persecuted back in England and desired freedom to live and worship as they understood. They had also seen the Church of England as corrupt and worldly, sometimes for real and superficial reasons, and saw their mission as bringing 'purity' to God's people. Perhaps their mission was driven by the LORD, their desire for purity and freedom was genuine, but we can easily make it too much about human endeavors and achievements instead of what the LORD is teaching all within that process- participants and spectators alike!

In the beginning Beatitudes, Jesus was issuing a challenge to his disciples and those who were listening. What seems like a foolish, powerless, and foolhardy achievement in the world's eyes was actually how people could realize true life and purpose. A break from what others deemed important to capture what was truly important to live, and to understand how the divine created us and this world to be. We do not live on our own terms, and at the beginning of creation we were not made to be independent from the LORD. The "image of God" is more than just a physical likeness, but an embodiment of everything the divine is and the ability to act it out within reality. So everything that is accomplished, and to be accomplished, on earth is an extension of what the LORD desires. Everything we do is not for ourselves, even though we try and act like that sometimes. Everything dreamed of and achieved is the property of the one who inspired it all initially. Our goal, from Jesus' instruction, is to live in a manner where we do not get too caught up in our own actions and reasonings. To understand that our actions, words, and thoughts are to express the love and grace of the LORD toward his creation, reinforcing that declaration of goodness first expressed.

Everything that Jesus teaches is in line with that initial act of creation, even surpassing the written covenant and teachings kept by Israel for centuries. Even the Pharisees and scribes are lauded for their work in passing along and keeping the written teachings for such a time as when they could be fulfilled. The reason why the law needed to be kept is what is coming out, which is the hope of the prophets and the fulfillment of the Church's purpose. Both Isaiah and St. Paul express the life that is handed to humanity by the divine. Revealed by the person of Jesus, the meaning of such things have come out to be embraced by even the most ordinary of people. It did not matter if you were a peasant farmer, household slave, king, general, or jester- the LORD promises: "your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall

spring up quickly”, and “so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.” But that can only happen “if you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil.” By letting go of the superficial expectations we, or others, have, and stop trying to demonstrate our own greatness or relevance can our true mission be revealed. As St. Paul reminds the church that human wisdom means nothing, everything great has already been given to demonstrate that which is truly wise.

Things like comforting the bereaved, feeding and housing the poor, bringing peace and understanding to conflict, are not to prove anything. By those acts alone we learn and are humbled and taught through willingness, effort, and cooperation this is how life can be nurtured. It happens in a variety of ways but all returns back to the same source of inspiration. Perhaps the Church has gotten too caught up in the trap of ‘celebrity charity’, doing good works just to bring attention and funnel people into the organization. Instead, our works should be about lending support and setting people up to discover their participation within the wider world. But that is a role that is not glorious, not glamorous, and takes place in the backrooms and almost never sees the light of day. It is a role that is necessary, and our stepping into that role is the measure of our divine service. Representation of the divine to clarify for others, and not to earn for ourselves. To demonstrate this is what the mission of humanity can be, and how anyone can participate in it. In that sense, the mission of the Church is that of instruction and support and to make real the words and promises of the faith. By just being there we make a difference, we act as salt and light, and without prompting and clever words our importance is already seen.

### **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, Breanne Mathias, Will Long, Tom Netting, Ruth Patrick, Bob Pierre, Mark Preusser, Stefani Seth, Josh Shaeffer, Marlene Singhaus, 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, you have given your people, the whole of your creation, the ability to live out and represent your divine meaning. Your essence is within us, empowering us to great service in your name, but is not a service that is our own. We cannot claim credit, materially benefit, or coopt your power even though we, and many others, have tried. Our call to be salt and light applies to our individual efforts, abilities, and works which you have already given us. Your gospel already telling us what we need to do and why, so we might demonstrate a wisdom and power which surpasses our own and everything else. To show what life can be and how anyone can access it without cost.

For our own celebrations, concerns, and needs we ask your Spirit to make know what we can do and be the representatives you want us to be...*Reading of the Prayer List*...LORD, in your loving mercy, hear our prayers.

*Moment of Silence*

You alone have the words and spirit of life, and we thank you for having placed that power within us already. Help us to listen for that guidance always so we might truly live 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**

All the LORD gives us is to prepare and help us discover our purpose in this world. May all we give prepare others to discover the same thing for themselves!

**Offertory    *Jesus, My All*    Arr R Wilson**

**\*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, all that you give prepares your people to be a support and a help in times of trouble and uncertainty. May all we give aid in being that encouragement for all who seek us out. **Amen.**

**\*Hymn #430    *Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!***

Come sing O church in joy  
Come join O church in song  
For Christ the Lord has led us  
Through the ages long  
In bold accord  
Come celebrate the journey now  
And praise the Lord

Long years have come and gone  
And still God reigns supreme  
Empowering us to catch the vision  
Dream the dream  
In bold accord  
Come celebrate the journey now  
And praise the Lord

Let courage be our friend  
Let wisdom be our guide  
As we in mission  
Magnify the Crucified  
In bold accord  
Come celebrate the journey now  
And praise the Lord

Come sing O church in joy  
Come join O church in song  
For Christ the Lord has triumphed  
Over the ages long  
In bold accord  
Come celebrate the journey now  
And praise the Lord

**\*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**    *When Morning Guilds the Skies*    **Arr. L Smith**

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

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