



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

April 27, 2025

*All who are able, please stand.

Announcements & Prayer Concerns

Bible Study will be this Wednesday (April 30) at 10am.

AA will meet this Wednesday (April 30) at 8pm.

Our Sunday Morning Study Group will meet on Sunday (May 4) at 9:15am. We will be covering Chapter 8 "Foxe's Book of Martyrs". See Rev. Joe if you wish to attend!

Next Sunday (May 4) is our monthly church brunch following service. All are invited!

Opening Prayer

LORD, our Father, we often struggle in our disbelief of the Resurrection and all it entails. Help us to not bring your works down to our level, but to take refuge under all you have done. To trust that your Jesus has life so long as we are with him. **Amen.**

Prelude *Christ Hath Triumphed, Alleluia* arr. Hughes

***Call to Worship (Psalm 2)**

Why are the nations in an uproar? Why do the peoples mutter empty threats?

**Why do the kings of the earth rise up in revolt, and the princes plot together,
against the LORD and against the LORD's anointed?**

"Let us break their yoke," they say; "let us cast off their bonds from us."

God whose throne is in heaven is laughing; the LORD holds them in derision.

Then in wrath God speaks to them, and in rage fills them with terror.

"As for me, I have anointed my king upon Zion, my holy mountain."

Let me announce the decree of the LORD, who said to me, "You are my son; this day have I begotten you."

Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.

You shall crush them with an iron rod and shatter them like a piece of pottery.”

And now, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Submit to the LORD with fear, and with trembling bow in worship; lest the LORD be angry, and you perish in a sudden blaze of wrath.

Happy are all who take refuge in God!

Hymn #104 *Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!

Christ is risen! Shout Hosanna!
Celebrate this day of days!
Christ is risen! Hush in wonder:
All creation is amazed.
In the desert all surrounding,
See, a spreading tree has grown.
Healing leaves of grace abounding
Bring a taste of love unknown.

Christ is risen! raise your spirits
From the caverns of despair.
Walk with gladness in the morning.
See what love can do and dare.
Drink the wine of resurrection,
Not a servant, but a friend,
Jesus is our strong companion.
Joy and peace shall never end.

Christ is risen! Earth and heaven
Nevermore shall be the same.
Break the bread of new creation
Where the world is still in pain.
Tell its grim, demonic chorus:
"Christ is risen! Get you gone!"
God the First and Last is with us,
Sing Hosanna, everyone!

***Prayer of Confession**

Why do the peoples of the world, our lives, uproar at times and become chaotic? Why do we revolt and plot against the LORD? What must change before we are tamed?

**LORD, our Father, we confess in having seen your Resurrection and still work against you. We see you in your awesome power but are still tempted by the false perceptions around us. Clear our minds and hearts, help us to focus and stay with the risen Jesus, and wherever he goes and leads in this new age.
Amen.**

***Silent Confessions and Prayers**

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

The time has now come. Return to the LORD with all your hearts, trust in his words, feel and experience his wounds of salvation, and take refuge in all he has shown you.

All we have experienced has been entrusted to us. Let that revelation be our guide as his disciples.

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:

2 Kings 6:24-7:20

6 ²⁴ Some time later King Ben-hadad of Aram mustered his entire army; he marched against Samaria and laid siege to it. ²⁵ As the siege continued, famine in Samaria became so great that a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-

fourth of a kab of dove's dung for five shekels of silver. ²⁶ Now as the king of Israel was walking on the city wall, a woman cried out to him, "Help, my lord king!" ²⁷ He said, "No! Let the Lord help you. How can I help you? From the threshing floor or from the wine press?" ²⁸ But then the king asked her, "What is your complaint?" She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give up your son; we will eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' ²⁹ So we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, 'Give up your son and we will eat him.' But she has hidden her son." ³⁰ When the king heard the words of the woman he tore his clothes—now since he was walking on the city wall, the people could see that he had sackcloth on his body underneath— ³¹ and he said, "So may God do to me, and more, if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat stays on his shoulders today." ³² So he dispatched a man from his presence. Now Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. Before the messenger arrived, Elisha said to the elders, "Are you aware that this murderer has sent someone to take off my head? When the messenger comes, see that you shut the door and hold it closed against him. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?" ³³ While he was still speaking with them, the king came down to him and said, "This trouble is from the Lord! Why should I hope in the Lord any longer?" **7** ¹ But Elisha said, "Hear the word of the Lord: thus says the Lord, Tomorrow about this time a measure of choice meal shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria." ² Then the captain on whose hand the king leaned said to the man of God, "Even if the Lord were to make windows in the sky, could such a thing happen?" But he said, "You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat from it." ³ Now there were four leprous men outside the city gate, who said to one another, "Why should we sit here until we die? ⁴ If we say, 'Let us enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; but if we sit here, we shall also die. Therefore, let us desert to the Aramean camp; if they spare our lives, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die." ⁵ So they arose at twilight to go to the Aramean camp; but when they came to the edge of the Aramean camp, there was no one there at all. ⁶ For the Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the sound of chariots, and of horses, the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, "The king of Israel has hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to fight against us." ⁷ So they fled away in the twilight and abandoned their tents, their horses, and their donkeys leaving the camp just as it was, and fled for their lives. ⁸ When these leprous men had come to the edge of the camp, they went into a tent, ate and drank, carried off silver, gold, and clothing, and went and hid them. Then they came back, entered another tent, carried off things from it, and went and hid them. ⁹ Then they said to one another, "What we are doing is wrong. This is a day of good news; if we are silent and wait until the morning light, we will be found guilty; therefore let us go and tell the king's household." ¹⁰ So they came and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, "We went to the Aramean camp, but there was no one to be seen or heard there, nothing but the horses tied, the donkeys tied, and the tents as they were." ¹¹ Then the gatekeepers called out and proclaimed it to the king's household. ¹² The king got up in the night, and said to his servants, "I will tell you what the Arameans have prepared against us. They know that we are starving; so they have left the camp to hide themselves in the open country, thinking, 'When they come

out of the city, we shall take them alive and get into the city.’ ” ¹³ One of his servants said, “Let some men take five of the remaining horses, since those left here will suffer the fate of the whole multitude of Israel that have perished already; let us send and find out.” ¹⁴ So they took two mounted men, and the king sent them after the Aramean army, saying, “Go and find out.” ¹⁵ So they went after them as far as the Jordan; the whole way was littered with garments and equipment that the Arameans had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned, and told the king. ¹⁶ Then the people went out, and plundered the camp of the Arameans. So a measure of choice meal was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord. ¹⁷ Now the king had appointed the captain on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate; the people trampled him to death in the gate, just as the man of God had said when the king came down to him. ¹⁸ For when the man of God had said to the king, “Two measures of barley shall be sold for a shekel, and a measure of choice meal for a shekel, about this time tomorrow in the gate of Samaria,” ¹⁹ the captain had answered the man of God, “Even if the Lord were to make windows in the sky, could such a thing happen?” And he had answered, “You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat from it.” ²⁰ It did indeed happen to him; the people trampled him to death in the gate.

Revelation 1:1-8

1 ¹ The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near. ⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen. ⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

John 20:19-31

20 ¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” ²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve,

was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." ²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." ³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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

Sermon *The Second Sunday of Easter*

Doubt, disbelief, questioning- these are emotions, attitudes, and behaviors which are perfectly normal for everyone to feel. These have been with humanity since time immemorial and have kept us alive and made us aware of danger. However, there is the misunderstanding when we have these feelings in terms of faith they are unacceptable. Believed to express a lack of faith, a lack of trust, in the LORD and everything the divine has done for us. And sometimes is used to prey upon feelings of guilt to keep people in conditions and systems which can be harmful. Such feelings are also had about the Resurrection of Christ, a small voice of doubt which makes us question this account, this story, and central belief to Christianity. We think it comes from the devil wanting to trick or lead us away from the right path, but what if it is something else?

From John 20:19-31 we are familiar with the account of 'Doubting Thomas' who was not present when the risen Lord appeared for the first time to the disciples. He wanted to see the physical evidence, touch the proof, that Jesus was alive again and was with them. We deride that kind of attitude and even derogatorily use the label 'doubting'. But notice that Jesus does not hold that attitude in disdain, in fact he accepts it. He invites Thomas to touch and see the proof, and then proclaims that such a thing is accepted and even blessed! Jesus gives certainty and trust at a moment when fear and anxiety were at their highest for all involved. He proves the capability of the LORD to act in such situations for the good of his people, and promises a spirit who will remain with them to guide them more. The doubt opens them up to possibilities never considered, and an understanding of the LORD in a way never experienced. It pulled the disciples out of their fear to experience what is real, and remains available for us as well.

In 2 Kings 6:24-7:20 is an episode where disbelief and doubt are acted upon in ways that were destructive to the people of Israel. One of the Aramean tribes in the north invaded the Kingdom of Israel and lay siege to its capital of Samaria. The result was

famine which caused inflation within the city and cannibalism among the citizens. But instead the king used what little men and supplies they had to search for the prophet Elisha and kill him for predicting all of this. Elisha would later say that the Arameans would be defeated and Israel would triumph, and the LORD did cause the Arameans to abandon their camps along with all their supplies. But the king and his captain placed their trust in the wrong things, believed in the wrong outcomes, which caused them to act in ways contrary to their positions. For the sake of ego, and political expediency, they jumped into a foolhardy plan which cost one of them their life. And caused them to miss out on witnessing the LORD's salvation and vindication of his people from oppression.

When St. John started to the pen the words of his letter in Revelation 1:1-8 he was writing to believers warning them to pay attention. Revelation is not just a book describing the end of the world as a far-off possibility, but a reminder as to who is ruler and sovereign in all situations and under all types of rulers. Meant to prepare all believers who take the words to heart because the time is near. Not the end of all things, but the realization as to who truly rules and governs. To prove who is capable and who to trust, and what to realize about how things currently are. Addressing doubt and replacing it with faith, so then the believers can continue to live with hope and opportunity. Something very applicable to us today.

In this Easter season, the Catholic Church mourns the loss of Pope Francis I who worked so hard in his reign to make the church more open to those who needed it. One episode of his reign has stayed with me since I heard of it. Once when giving a papal audience a young child slipped passed to security to reach the Pope, to ask if his atheistic father who recently died was in heaven? How does one even address such a thing in that moment? But in a moment of compassion the Pope told the child that the LORD was a father who would never abandon one of his children in their doubts. Giving the child hope for his father, and a guide for himself to keep going forward confidently in life. Doubt is there to clarify faith and lead us to the right sources, and keep us from sources that would limit, stunt, or oppress us. It keeps us open to realizing the depths of the divine and what is offered for our lives to flourish, and to sympathize with others going through such trials as well. So we can witness how the risen Lord can connect and bind us together to mutual benefit from the good news which stands over us.

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, Barry Jacobs, Victoria Kasten, Amber Loftis, David Mackey, Breanne Mathias, Peg McIntire, 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, Jay Watt, The Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County & The Homeless of Tuscarawas County.

LORD, our Father, your Resurrection has changed everything for us. You have reset our values, pulled us from distraction and complacency, and broken into the world and all its issues. You have demonstrated a new life and new possibility because your salvation has arrived, and shown us who we can trust in to offer guidance and wisdom like no one else! But your salvation is beyond anything we know to be true, and we admit our struggles with accepting it. Part of us still waits, and braces, for this being just another unproven story or hoax. We desire proof that will not come and which you keep from us, and rely on explanations from others which do not feed or satisfy. That is what causes our lives to uproar and become chaotic, and why we do not feel settled and in tune with your ways. But Jesus leads us away from all that, meets us in our most private moments, and gives us what we need to trust in him. Our faith is not in pure power or ability alone, but in a person who has come in your name. Help us look to him before anything else.

Everything Jesus shows is to encourage our faith and give us reason to believe, the same as when he met those first disciples in the upper room. The same issues then are the same ones we face now, and for those whom we lift up to you...*Reading of the Prayer List*...Lead us in understanding your role in all life's circumstances and who you are in our uncertainty.

Moment of Silence

We thank you that you are one who does not punish doubt or disbelief, but gives a measure of faith to all to keep them moving forward. Our very lives are a sign of trust toward what you give. And your gifted prayer encourages what we can do, and be, as we strive in your way:

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

In what we give our resources and abilities too, there our belief and faith lies. Let us give as a measure of trust in the risen one!

Offertory *The Church Within Us* arr. Wyton

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 give in celebration of all we have seen and experienced in your Resurrection! Accept all we have as a sign of our trust in you, and the knowledge you know best what to do with what we have. **Amen.**

Hymn #462 *Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Day-star, in my heart appear.

Dark and cheerless is the morn
Unaccompanied by Thee;
Joyless is the day's return
Till Thy mercy's beams I see,
Till they inward light impart,
Cheer my eyes and warm my heart.

Visit then this soul of mine;
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
Fill me, Radiance divine;
Scatter all my unbelief;
More and more Thyself display,
Shining to the perfect day.

***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 *Gloria* French Carol**

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

All hymn lyrics and prayers are reproduced and printed with permission from The Presbyterian Hymnal: Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs (Westminster John Knox Press, 1990), and original writing of Rev. Joseph Svancara.

All Scripture lessons are reproduced and printed with permission from the New Revised Standard Bible (NRSV).

All worship messages, devotions, and church news are available on the First Presbyterian Church website (www.newphilapc.org).