



# PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**Sunday April 26, 2020**

*Connecting with the Community,  
Growing Disciples, and Serving Jesus Christ*

*Our Worship can be viewed on our website  
[PantherValleyChurch.org](http://PantherValleyChurch.org)*

*FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH*

**PRELUDE**     *We invite you to begin your personal preparation at the beginning of the prelude.*

## **OPENING WORDS**

*We need your presence on the long road, Lord.  
The road between fear and hope, the road between  
the place where all is lost and the place of resurrection.  
Like the disciples walking the road to Emmaus, we are in need of your company!  
Jesus, stand among us, in your risen power, let this time of worship, be a hallowed hour.*

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Almighty One, we come to You confessing our weariness, our unease, our struggle in this time. There is so much that is unknown, so much to be afraid of. We worry about illness, about death, about finances and education. We worry about our future because we cannot plan for it, we cannot perceive it. We confess to You that we are waiting for some sort of sign, some sort of assurance, and this is difficult for us. But we also confess that You are the Risen Christ. You are with us on this journey, even when we are not sure where we are going or for how long. You are with us when we collapse with exhaustion and when we rise because we must. You remain faithful, even when we do not. Guide us into a deeper faith—not one where we have the answers, but one in which we have the assurance we are not alone, and that You will see us through. In Your name, Risen Christ, we pray. Amen.

## **BLESSING AND ASSURANCE**

In the times we think we are most alone, Christ is with us. When we are most distraught, Christ is beside us. When we are grieving, Christ is silently listening. When we rejoice, Christ is celebrating with us. Know that you are never truly alone. Know that you are always loved. Know that the hairs on your head are accounted for. You are God's beloved. Live with the assurance of God's steadfast love, now and always. Amen.

## **SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Peter 1:17-23**

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

## **GOSPEL READING: Luke 24:13-35**

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one

to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

## **MESSAGE**

### **HYMN**

#### **Open My Eyes That I May See**

##### **Verse 1**

Open my eyes that I may see  
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me  
Place in my hands the wonderful key  
That shall unclasp and set me free

##### **Chorus**

Silently now I wait for Thee  
Ready my God Thy will to see  
Open my eyes illumine me  
Spirit divine

##### **Verse 2**

Open my ears that I may hear  
Voices of truth Thou sendest clear  
And while the wave notes fall on my ear  
Everything false will disappear

##### **Chorus**

##### **Verse 3**

Open my mouth and let me bear  
Gladly the warm truth everywhere  
Open my heart and let me prepare  
Love with Thy children thus to share

##### **Chorus**

## **PRAYER**

Open our Eyes Lord, we long to see you

As we wonder at your resurrection, at the hope you have given us, we remember the appearances you made to those close to you, and we pray that our eyes too, may be opened to your presence.

Open our eyes, Lord, we long to see you.

We think of Thomas, so full of doubt. Yet you recognized his need to be reassured by your presence. We offer you our concerns for our world. Sometimes it is hard to see your presence in events that unfold. Comfort us and take away our doubt as we pray for reconciliation and hope in the world in which we live.

Open our eyes, Lord, we long to see you.

We think of Peter, the rock on which you built your church, so full of assurance and commitment and then so afraid and upset to have betrayed you. Yet you appeared to reassure him of your love and commanded him to feed your lambs. We offer you our church. Give us reassurance and openness to your guiding direction.

Open our eyes, Lord, we long to see you.

We think of the women who went to the tomb, so sad and wanting to be near you, even in their disillusionment. You appeared to them in the form of angels proclaiming the good news of your resurrection; and the women full of joy, rushed back to tell the good news. We offer ourselves and ask for your reassurance to help us reach out to the communities in which we live and work. We pray that we will make a difference to other people's lives by sharing all that you have given us; that through grace, lives may be changed by your presence.

Open our eyes, Lord, we long to see you.

We think of Mary, who loved you so much and took such risks to be close to you. We think of how you recognized her need to see you – how you wiped away her tears simply by speaking her name. We name before you those we know to be in special need at this time – those who are sick, lonely and afraid.....

Enfold them with your love and presence. Be close to each of them, and to others not known to us but known to you.

Open our eyes, Lord, we long to see you.

We think of Cleopas and his friend, who walk the lonely road to Emmaus, a journey of sadness after all the events of Holy Week. Yet you walked beside them and shared with them – opening their eyes to your presence in the breaking of bread at supper. Journey alongside all those who are bereaved at this time, ....

Open our eyes, Lord, we long to see you.

In silence we remember those who journeyed with us and have moved on into your eternal presence where their eyes are fully opened to your love and glory.

We thank you for your presence with us now and always. Amen.

And now as your beloved children we pray together the prayer that your Son taught us;

## **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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen**

## THE OFFERING

Easter teaches us that generous love is at the heart of God's work. Joyfully we are able to give knowing that our gifts will help others to see the blessed miracle of God's creative joy.

We offer several ways that you can give your fiscal pledge: by mail, through our website [Here](#), or add PVEC to your online bill pay. Thank you for your generosity.

## CLOSING PRAYER

We know Jesus is present among us...  
even in this very home...  
We will not let fear be louder than love...  
but with glad hearts and rejoicing souls...  
we will sing God's praise...  
for we are Easter People...!  
So Let us ...  
Open our eyes to see you ...  
And let joy reside in our hearts always!  
Amen!

## SONG

### **I Will Call Upon the Lord**

I will call upon the Lord  
who is worthy to be praised.  
So shall I be saved from my enemies.  
The Lord liveth, and be blessed be the Rock;  
and let the God of my salvation be exalted.  
The Lord liveth, and be blessed be the Rock;  
and let the God of my salvation be exalted.

### **Benediction**

*(based on Psalm 16)*

As we close this time together, remember:  
God is always with you. No matter what you face,  
no matter what trials or hardships come your way,  
God is right beside you, raising your very life from death,  
guiding and directing your path.  
So, acknowledge your fear and your worry  
and know it is as true and holy as any feeling,  
including joy and hope and love.  
Take heart, my friends! This is the heart of the matter.  
Let the people say, **Amen!**

## CLOSING HYMN

### **Shalom to You**

*Shalom to you now, shalom my friends.  
May God's full mercies bless you, my friends.  
In all your living and through your loving,  
Christ be your shalom, Christ be your shalom.*

## POSTLUDE

***Today's flowers are given in memory of Father and Father-in-Law, Sylvester,  
from Karen and Bruce, Keith and Pam***

Credits: Cover Image: On the Road to Emmaus by Julia Stankova, 2015

Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Opening Words by Carol Penner, Prayer of Confession by Rev. Mindi, Prayer of Intercession by Ruth Bowen, Benediction by Marcia McFee,

Hymns; Open My Eyes That I May See, CCLI #68003. Words and music are Public Domain.

I Will Call Upon The Lord, CCLI #11263

## **Announcements & Upcoming Events**

**PVEC Shop & Drop** If you are in a situation where you can not leave your house and you need food or medication contact our office and we will arrange for someone to shop and drop your items at your house.

**Children's faith formation** is found on our [website](#) and [facebook](#).

**Bedtime Stories with Ms. Sarah & Mr. Dan** are on Facebook live at 7:30pm

**Bible Studies** are being held on Zoom. Email or call the office if you are interested in joining these studies.

Unshakable Hope - Monday evenings beginning April 27<sup>th</sup> at 7pm via Zoom

Act: Catching Up with the Spirit - Wednesday Mornings at 10am via Zoom

**Care and Nurture Prayer Shawls and Palm Prayer Squares** are in the coat closet outside Fellowship Hall. People can take a bag to give to anyone who is in need of support and comfort.

### **PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH**

1490 Route 517 Hackettstown, NJ 07840

~We were built for you!~

Panther Valley Ecumenical Church is a congregation of many Christian traditions who worship together in accordance with Christ's prayer: "that they may all be one."

Our multi-denominational church has been serving northwest New Jersey since 1969.

We are formally affiliated with: The Episcopal Church, The United Church of Christ, The Presbyterian Church USA, and The United Methodist Church.

May God's Blessing go with you this week.

Pastor: Ninabeth Metcalf

Music Director: Diane Van Dongen

Church Administrator: Cynthia Richards

Office hours: Mon. – Fri. 9:00am – 2:00pm

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**Friends • Family • Faith**