



Panther Valley Ecumenical Church

Sunday May 17, 2020

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

Our Worship can be viewed on our website

PantherValleyChurch.org

FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH

Nothing is more practical
than finding God,
than falling in love
in a quite absolute, final way.
What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination, will affect everything.
It will decide
what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you do with your evenings,
how you spend your weekends,
what you read, whom you know,
what breaks your heart,
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.
Fall in love, stay in love,
and it will decide everything.

attributed to Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ 1907-1991

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come close and listen!

The One who made heaven and earth sings a song of life!

Come close and listen!

The One who raises us from the dead sings a song of love!

Come close and listen!

The One who walks with us through fire and water sings a song of hope!

Alleluia! We join the eternal song of life, love, and hope.

Alleluia! God's song goes on and on!

OPENING PRAYER

Author of Life, you gift us with breath, enfold us in love, and bless us with your presence. When we feel lost, remind us that you are always near. When you seem far away, show us that you are closer than our breathing. When we are lonely and afraid, send us your Companion to offer comfort and courage. Open our eyes, hearts, and spirits to recognize it is still Easter and your unstoppable love abides with us always. Amen.

HYMN

Spirit of the Living God
Spirit of the living God
fall afresh on me.
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me,
Spirit of the living God,
Fall afresh on me.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Maker and giver of all, forgive us when we are too preoccupied to notice your presence in our lives: when we walk through this world and fail to see the wonder of you upholding our lives and all creation; when we walk through our lives and fail to see you abiding with, within, and around us; when we walk through holy moments and fail to savor your presence, instead feeling abandoned in the vast sweep of life as each day rushes at us with its demands. Open our eyes to your presence, God of love, that we may lean on you—for you uphold all of creation in tenderness and power. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

When Jesus left the disciples, he gave us a promise:

“I will not leave you orphaned!”

For we, his disciples, live in him and he in us—the presence of God within and around all.

What a promise! Take courage! Take comfort! Blessed be God!

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

O God of wisdom, you delight in deep truth. Let these words of scripture teach our hearts, that we may hear your joy and gladness, for the sake of Christ, your wisdom for us. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Acts 17:22-28

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

John 14:15-21

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

MESSAGE

Groping for the Spirit of Truth

SPECIAL MUSIC

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Center us now, O God, on your presence in this place among your people, as we lift up our hearts desires, our soul's deep needs, our hungers, fears and failures.

As we have often failed to be obedient to your will in our lives as individual disciples and as church, we pray that you will forgive us and enliven us to be and to do the gospel of Christ. Open us to your Spirit's urgings, and awaken us to live faithfully as your people in a changing, often hurting world.

We pray for those around us who need your care, and ask that you would make of us your instruments of healing, peace and redemption. We pray especially for those we have named to you this day, and others we lift to you in the silence of our hearts.

(lift up your prayers)

Reveal your presence with them and with us, God of life, that as people of renewed faith and vitality, we may be empowered to serve your world, and so give glory to you; for we offer our prayers and our lives in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Giver of all gifts, we are grateful for your every blessing and for your presence through all of life—in our joys and fears, and in our hopes and dreads. We pray for those who do not know the consolation of your presence in their lives, asking that you reveal yourself to them through the gifts we have given and through the lives we live. Reveal yourself, O God, that all your children may find their true home in you. Amen.

BENEDICTION

*Renewed by God's abiding presence,
We are sent to make God's presence known.
Resurrected by the grace Christ offers us,
We are sent to make grace visible.
Refreshed by the Spirit who breathes deeply within us,
We are sent to companion others on the journey.*

CLOSING SONG

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 were given by Charlie and Doreen Schaffer in honor of this church family!

***PLEASE JOIN US AT 11:30am for a time of fellowship and conversation on Zoom
The Member ID is 312-532-2951***

HYMN: Spirit of the Living God, CCLI#23488 Words: 1935. Renewed 1963 Birdwing Music Music: 1935. Renewed 1963 Birdwing Music

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Support our Lord's Pantry by purchasing an \$8 meal voucher from the Panther Pub!

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 at 7pm via Zoom

What the Women Saw – Tuesday Evenings at 7pm via Zoom and Facebook

Acts: 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

Website: <http://www.panthervalleychurch.org>

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Friends • Family • Faith