



Panther Valley Ecumenical Church

Sunday May 3, 2020

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

Our Worship can be viewed on our website

PantherValleyChurch.org

FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are the church.
We join our hearts together.
We listen for the word of God through scripture.
We feel each other's joy and sorrow as we share in prayer together.
Today, we will break bread together, and remember we are one,
Though we cannot be together; we are the church,
And we gather across time and space to worship God now.

OPENING PRAYER

*We often swim troubled waters, O Shepherd, yet you promise to lead us to still waters.
We are often wearied and depleted by the challenges life presents,
yet you promise to renew and restore our soul.
You promise that though we walk haunted by the shadow of death,
you comfort and guide us.
We have gathered to worship,
to give thanks,
to learn how to trust that come what may,
we will dwell with you forever. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long

Philippians 4:4-8

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

SONG *He's Got the Whole World In His Hands*

John 10:1-10

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice

of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

MESSAGE *Entering Through the Gate ~ C.A.L.M.*



Celebrate God's goodness

Ask God for help

Leave your concerns with God

Meditate on good things

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

O Lord, our Shepherding God,
come close to us now. Come near us in our time of need.

Shepherding God,

we need you in our time of anxiety. We need you in our time of economic uncertainty. We need you in a time of a globe-trotting disease. We need you to bind our wounds, and pour your healing ointment on our heads. We need the briars, and brambles, and burrs pulled out of our fleece and skin.

Shepherding God.

you guide us with your voice. Help us to listen and follow no matter where your voice leads. Help us to trust you.

Shepherding God,

protect us from the hired hands that do not really care for us and have neglected or abused us in the past.

Shepherding God,

thank you for your son who lay down his life for those who follow him and for those who are not in the fold yet.

Lord we pray for those who don't know the shepherd, whose life circumstances kept them from knowing the good shepherd. We pray that by our actions, our behavior, and our reaching out into the community, they may come to know you.

Shepherding God,

renew us, guide us with your love and renew us with your peace. Amen

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

Day by day, God would lead us to the places of hope and healing, while moment by moment, we continue to follow sin down all the wrong paths. Let us confess our lives, as we draw near to the One who would restore us to wholeness. Join me as we pray together, saying,

UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Gate of our lives, you know how easy it is to follow the wrong paths. We can make the foolish choice to listen to foolish rhetoric, and not to the wisest among us. We continue to make the mistake that we no longer need to be cautious, thus making life chancy for all around us, we would rather stir the waters of trouble than to stay at home, safe and content. And while we have no trouble locking the doors of our hearts, we increasingly grow weary of all this social distancing stuff.

Forgive us, our Goodness and Mercy. May our hearts overflow with hope for others, so others might be anointed with healing oil of grace. May we share from our abundance of caution with all who hunger for hope. May we follow Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, to the places of service and life with you forever, even if only from the interiors of our homes.

Silence is kept

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Our Comforter leads us to that place where God's Table is spread with forgiveness and overflowing with grace. Here, we are called to life and love. We will live as God's people: forgiven to serve, blessed to share, loved so we might care. Thanks be to God. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

We invite you to take this time to text, call, Facebook, Tweet, TikTok, Instagram, The Peace of Christ!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

As we offer our gifts this day, may we join Mercy and Goodness in being in the lives of all who long for rest, who hunger for hope, who thirst for living waters, and who ache to be part of your community of grace and peace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Friends, wherever you are may the Lord be with you

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

You watched over creation, God ...

... With those who walk your paths, with those who long to find their way, we offer glad and generous hearts to you:

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full - full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.***

You alone are holy, ...

... As we gather in prayer and worship, as we seek to devote ourselves to following Jesus,
we speak of that mystery known as faith:

Christ has died.

Christ has risen.

Christ will come again.

*You lead us to this Table where we want for nothing, ...
... and we will join our hearts and hands as we sing praise and wonder to you,
God in Community, Holy in One.
Amen.*

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

And so I invite you to raise a plate of "something" on your table, or a glass of whatever you are drinking, and let us bless it in this way, repeating after me:

Holy Comforter,

We gather in your name... invited by Jesus... bound together with your Spirit...
in union with each other...

Feed our bodies and our spirits... with your comforting presence...
so that we might be your comfort to others...

Bless this food... and break open our hearts...

Bless this drink... and pour out your love...

Amen...

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...!

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.
Jesus Christ has Risen Indeed!
Let the people say, **Amen!**

POSTLUDE

Credits:

Cover image by John August Swanson, Psalm 23, 2010

Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Call to Worship Rev. Mindi, Prayer of Intercession Rev. Abi, Prayer of Reconciliation and Great Thanksgiving Thom Shuman

Song: He's Got the Whole World In His Hands, CCLI #33681, Public Domain

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Download the Philippians 4:4-8 home study on our website [Here](#).

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 beginning April 27th at 7pm via Zoom

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>

Tel: 908-852-5444 Fax: 908-850-4754

Email: officepvec@gmail.com

Friends • Family • Faith