



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

September 6, 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

Come out of the darkness of despair into the brightness of God's transforming love. We praise God for God's presence with us! Prepare your hearts and spirits to receive God's mercy and healing. We thank God for God's mercy toward us. Come, let us praise and worship God who is always with us. Thanks be to God at all times and in all places. AMEN.

GATHERING PRAYER

God, awaken my heart to the dawning of your revolutionary day – a day of justice and joy, a day of peace and repair. And especially when the night is most dim, give me friends to huddle in the dark with me, to face the horizon together, and to remind one another that the sun is about to rise. Amen.

HYMN Just As I Am

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Forgiving and loving God, our hearts are filled today with pain and concern for the future of humankind. Words of anger assail our airways — we cannot escape from the threats being thrown about. In our fear, we cry "Where are you, O Lord?" We wander around in the darkness of the spirit, seeking light and hope. Forgive us when we forget that you are always with us, through times of peace and times of war. Heal our souls. Help us to reach out to others with the assurance of your love and presence, for we ask this in Jesus' name. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God hears our prayers and our cries. God leads us out of the darkness of the past into the bright promise of today. We are called to stand strong and confident in God's Love. Rejoice, dear friends, for that love which began before creation flows in and through you this day! AMEN.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Romans 13:8-14

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Matthew 18:15-20

"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

MESSAGE *God's Economy of Love*

PASTORAL PRAYER

Lord of light, in the midst of darkness and fear, you call us to be a community of peace, love and hope. You remind us of the blessings we have and the opportunities to share those blessings with others. We praise and thank you for all these things and for your constant presence with us. Today, as a community seeking peace and healing, we offer the names of loved ones who are struggling with illness, with loss, with feelings of alienation and fear. We name these dear ones aloud in this congregation that all may enter the prayer for these people, seeking your healing and hope in their lives. Let us share our concerns with this community of faith.

[Prayers of concern are offered here].

As we have lifted up our concerns, we also offer messages of love and rejoicing. Let us offer prayers of Thanksgiving and Joy in this community of faith.

[Prayers of joy are offered here].

Lord, we thank you for your healing mercies and your sustaining love for us. We are confident in your abiding presence with us. Help us to be faithful to you in all times and in all places. Give us the grace to accept the forgiveness you have offered to each of us. For it is in Jesus' name that we offer this prayer. AMEN.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

These offerings we present to you, O Lord. May they be used for ministries of love and reconciliation through this community of faith. AMEN.

PASS THE PEACE

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

May God be with you.

Lift your hearts to our God.

We offer them to the One who loves us.

Let us join in glad songs of praise.

Gathered or scattered, we sing our thanksgivings to our God.

In just a moment, creation sprang forth from the emptiness of chaos, and you began to pour out all your goodness and genuine love, God of all moments. ...

... So, we will join our voices with those who continue to follow faithfully as well as with those who stumble, singing our praises to you:

Holy, holy, holy are you, God of Wonder.

In moments of confusion, you make clear your grace.

In days which seem endless, you hold our times in your hands.

In the midst of fears and worries, you watch over us.

Hosanna in the highest!

Yes, you are holy, God of all creation, yet you listen to the prayers of the forgotten, sending Jesus to come and share your love with us. ...

... In these days of wondering and wandering, we seek to remember, not just his words, his life, but the trust he had in you in every moment, even as we speak of that mystery we know as faith:

In moments of grief, Jesus weeps with us.

In moments of despair, Jesus hopes with us.

In moments of fear, Jesus walks with us.

In moments of uncertainty, Jesus comforts us.

Whether gathered in a sanctuary at a safe distance from each other, or at a table in the kitchen, or a desk sitting in front of a device, we pray you would pour out your Spirit upon all your people everywhere and the gifts to be used for this feast. ...

... And when you gather all our sisters and brothers from every scattered time and place, we will join our hearts singing your praise, 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

BLESSING THE FOOD AND DRINK

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.

Lift up your bread or cracker and say **"Bless this food and break open our hearts."**

Lift up you drink and say **"Bless this drink and pour out your love."**

Amen.

SENDING FORTH

Whether gathered in a sanctuary or scattered wherever we live, we will take the love of God into the world.

In these uncertain times, we will share the steadfast love of our God.

Whether from familiar places we call home, or from sacred places we have not visited in a long time, we will take the grace of Jesus into our neighborhoods.

For all the lonely, the forgotten, the scared, we will share the justice and compassion of Jesus.

Whether on our own, or joining with friends, whether serving those we know, and especially those we don't, we will be the people of the Holy Spirit.

We will open our arms wide, even from a safe distance, to welcome all of sisters and brothers.

POSTLUDE

Credits: Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Call To Worship, Gathering Prayer and Prayer of Forgiveness, Nancy C. Townley. The Great Thanksgiving Prayer and Sending Forth, Thom M Shuman. Prayer during the message, Steve Garnaas-Holmes

HYMN, Just As I Am Without One Plea CCLI #4721239, Words: The Jubilate Group, music: Public Domain

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Bible Study on Zoom:

Monday Night at 7pm *Daniel Dilema*

Wednesday Night at 7pm beginning September 16th *Present Over Perfect*

Wednesday Morning at 10am *God Is Closer Than You Think*

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.

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