



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH
Advent 4

"I Believe in the Light: Illuminating Peace"

December 20, 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

ONE: Make yourself ready!

ALL: Raise your voices, change your hearts,

ONE: get ready to be transformed, because now is the time.

ALL: Let us embrace peace that we can do what needs to be done to bring more light into the world.

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF PEACE

Reader One: Because of war, because of violence in our communities, because there is still so much unrest in our hearts, we light a candle of peace...

Reader Two: Because hatred is still so strong, because so many swords have not yet been beaten into ploughshares, we light a candle of peace... *(Light the fourth candle in your Advent wreath.)*

Reader One: May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

Reader Two: May the light from this candle say to all that God's peace is coming, on earth as it already is in heaven.

Reader One: Friends, be not afraid, God's peace is at hand!

OPENING PRAYER

Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of peace on earth. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle—even when we aren't sure that goodwill among us can be found, ignite the flame of peace within us, that we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out. I believe in the light, I believe in the light, that has come... that has come... and is coming.

Choral response

Help us face the silence of unknowing
and embrace it as the pregnant pause before joyful new beginnings.

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 9: 2-7 (CEB)

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned. You have made the nation great; you have increased its joy. They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest, as those who divide plunder rejoice. As on the day of Midian, you've shattered the yoke that burdened them, the staff on their shoulders, and the rod of their oppressor. Because every boot of the thundering warriors, and every garment rolled in blood will be burned, fuel for the fire.

A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and authority will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be vast authority and endless peace for David's throne and for his kingdom, establishing and sustaining it with justice and righteousness now and forever.

The Gospel of John 1: 1-18 (CEB)

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being. What came into being through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.

A man named John was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so that through him everyone would believe in the light. He himself wasn't the light, but his mission was to testify concerning the light. The true light that shines on all people was coming into the world. The light was in the world, and the world came into being through the light, but the world didn't recognize the light. The light came to his own people, and his own people didn't welcome him. But those who did welcome him, those who believed in his name, he authorized to become God's children, born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God. The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

John testified about him, crying out,

“This is the one of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is greater than me because he existed before me.’”

From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace; as the Law was given through Moses, so grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made God known.

MESSAGE *Do You Hear What I Hear – 4th movement - Peace*

SONG *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*

PRAYERS FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

One: I invite you to get in a comfortable position of rest. I invite you to get as quiet and still as you can. I invite you to a deep breath and a deep listening posture—perhaps eyes closed or fixed on a candle—as we prepare for a time of prayer. *[pause for a breath]*

ALL: The gentle pull of God is often lost amidst the rush of all the obligations which lay a claim on us. Yet just beyond the frantic pace our restless feet have trod lie deep still pools of quietness— the dwelling place of God. Meet me in the stillness, Lord Be the air I breathe Meet me in the stillness, Lord Free me to receive. O take me to that secret place where lost in wonder and in awe, the moment comes and I rejoice to be and be with God. Meet me in the stillness, Lord Be the air I breathe Meet me in the stillness, Lord Free me to receive.

We invite you at this time to lift up Prayers for the World.

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

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Believe, with a peaceful heart! Believe, and shine your light!

Believe, because the song we sing is sung for all!

And now let the weak say, "I am strong;" let the poor say, "I am rich because of what our God has done for us." Believe!

BENEDICTION

We wait for justice but we do not wait to work for change;

We wait for restored health but we do not wait to work to heal;

We wait for wholeness but we do not wait to work at binding brokenness;

We wait for peace but we do not wait to work to eliminate hatred.

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news
that the light has dawned and shines on all people,
fill the night left by sadness with messages of peace.

Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that peace alive in you
and that spur you on in your work of justice and reconciliation.

Raise your voices and repeat after me...

"do not be afraid!"

"do not be afraid!"

Amen!

POSTLUDE

Credits: Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Worship Design Studio, Advent Candle liturgy is from SALT Project, *Opening Prayer, "Singers for "Crossing the Threshold"* Haylee Coburn, Jared Pugh, Katie Ledsinger, Ryan Rose; music by Mark A. Miller; mixed by Jared Pugh, Claremont UMC. Used with permission.

www.worshipdesignstudio.com,

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I Believe Handbell Benediction, Mark A. Miller/ arr. Stephanie Rhoades, used by permission. Played by the PVEC Handbell Choir.

PAJAMA SUNDAY

Sunday December 27, 2020

Attend worship in your pajamas!

Watch on line or join us for a Zoom worship!

PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

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