



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**2nd Sunday After Christmas
Holy Communion**

January 3, 2021

*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

Let us seek to simplify this moment, slow down for a time. Let us worship, leaning on prayer, reflection and sharing with one another.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy and Just God, You have shown us what is right and good. Open us this day to a vision of the world made all-right so that we might follow your ways and know the peace of your reign on earth as it is in heaven. We praise you for your steadfast presence, holding our lives together in love. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 147

Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting. The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure. The Lord lifts up the downtrodden; he casts the wicked to the ground.

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre. He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills. He gives to the animals their food, and to the young ravens when they cry. His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner; but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you. He grants peace within your borders; he fills you with the finest of wheat. He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly. He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes. He hurls down hail like crumbs— who can stand before his cold? He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.

He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his ordinances.

Praise the Lord!

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

MESSAGE *Singing Our Lives to God with Tony Alonso*

SONG

Prayers of the People

You are invited to write your prayer concerns on small pieces of paper and place these prayers in a container [*bowl, box, etc*]-a symbolic action of placing them in God's hands, God's care.

Let us continue our prayers. I will offer a category of concern and we will allow a brief pause, I invite you to cup your hands, ready to receive God's love and peace, and in preparation to be God's love and peace in the world.

Let us pray for the leaders of this world and this church community...

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who live in conflict around the world...

Prince of Peace, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all who are experiencing loss of any kind in this pandemic...

Comforting Healer, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who are homeless, hungry and alone...

Emmanuel, God-With-Us, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who live in comfort,
for Christ-like hospitality and generosity...

Transforming Spirit, hear our prayer.

Holy and Living One,
for those we have named and the ones whose names we do not know,
hear our prayer.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Give thanks for strong yet tender hands
held out in trust and blessing.
Where words fall short let hands speak out;
the heights of love expressing.**

HOLY COMMUNION AND THE 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

SONG *A Cradle in the Shadow of the Cross*

BENEDICTION

Now go in the knowledge that God is holding your life even as we hold each other. You are not alone. You are loved. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Credits:

Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Worship Design Studio

Singing Our Lives to God with Tony Alonso from The Work of the People

Communion with Bishop John Schol from GNJUMC

A Cradle in the Shadow of the Cross, Smith D/Kingsmore, Lillenas Publishing Co.

Communion celebrant is Bishop John Schol from the Greater NJ UMC.