



**PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH**

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**

**March 14, 2021**

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

*Our Worship can be viewed on our website  
[PantherValleyChurch.org](http://PantherValleyChurch.org)*

*FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH*

## PRELUDE

### **Call to Worship**

Let our praise for all that God has done  
resound within and beyond these walls.  
When all people turn to God and worship God,  
the poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
and justice and peace will surely embrace  
present and future generations.  
Therefore, in thanksgiving for all that God has done,  
let our lives and our love proclaim the message  
of God's gracious and liberating acts.

### **Opening Prayer**

We, like the Psalmist, cry out in praise and thanksgiving in response to God's eternal loving-kindness, holding us, guiding us, enfolding us with grace. And, as we gather here as people of God, we pray that our worship will reflect that divine love. We offer our worship today with the remembrance of Easter still filling us with joy, and with the anticipation of Pentecost firing our devotion. Let our praise for all that God has done, is doing and will do, truly resound within our hearts and our homes, within these walls and beyond. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

How we underestimate your compassion, Jesus;  
we are too easily convinced that you frown more than you smile, that our weakness and ignorance, our mistakes and sins, guarantee nothing but judgement from you.

*pause in silence*

Yet, time and again you show us that this picture is unworthy of you;  
after all, you said it – you didn't come to judge but to save!

*pause in silence*

And so, we thank you and celebrate you:  
Your compassion is limitless, and your love is unfailing;  
Your welcome is gracious and extravagant and all-inclusive;  
Your embrace is healing and transforming;  
And your commitment to us is costly and eternal.

*pause in silence*

Perhaps we will never really understand how you can be so totally for us, but perhaps, as we learn to trust, and to lean into your love, we will find the peace and wholeness that you desire for us.

*pause in silence*

And so we open ourselves to your surprising compassion again.  
Amen.

**PSALM 22:1-5, 25-26 NIV**

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?  
My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.

Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the one Israel praises.  
In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.  
To you they cried out and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

For he has not despised or scorned  
the suffering of the afflicted one;  
he has not hidden his face from him  
but has listened to his cry for help.  
From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;  
before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows.  
The poor will eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek the LORD will praise him—  
may your hearts live forever!

**GOSPEL READING Mark 5:24b-34 NIV**

A large crowd followed and pressed around Jesus. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?' "

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

**MESSAGE** *At the Crossroad of Despair & Hope, Dare to Pray & Trust*

**HYMN** *There Is a Balm in Gilead*

## **PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE**

O Lord, you are indeed the healer of all our ills. We bring to you, Lord, our bodies, minds and spirits hurting and broken by the violence, ills, trauma and cares of a world separated from you. Come to us now with your healing powers.

O God, we ask that you heal us. Give us the strength, health, wisdom and knowledge found only through you. Send your life-giving Spirit so that we may live our lives with courage in the profound peace of your love. Come to us now with your healing powers.

Breathe on me, O God, and make me whole.

O God, we ask that you sustain those who seek to alleviate the pain and suffering of this world. Give strength, courage, wisdom and knowledge to all doctors and orderlies, nurses and clerks, psychiatrists, researchers, and all other medical care givers, volunteers and professionals. Send your life-giving Spirit so that their ministries may bring healing and promote health. Come to us now with your healing powers.

Breathe on me, O God, and make me whole.

Be also with those who work to heal the wounds of societies and nations. Guide, protect and strengthen our lawyers and police, chaplains and pastors, healthcare and social workers, politicians, military, diplomats and all others who work for economic and social reform. Send your life-giving Spirit that they may promote your love and grace, bringing healing to those in conflict and stability to those who are vulnerable. Come to us now with your healing powers.

Breathe on me, O God, and make me whole.

God so loved this world and this people that God sent Christ to suffer and die for us. Accept now that gift. Know that you are accepted and loved.

Breathe on me, O God, and make me whole.  
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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

## **BENEDICTION**

And now as you move on into the world...  
Hold that which is happening on the outside AND the inside dear.  
Love what comes across your path for what it will teach you.  
Cherish the struggle that stirs in your gut for how it will guide you.  
And know that all people carry within them  
the Essence of the Divine—a Holy Wisdom—given at birth.  
Listen every day until we meet again.  
Get quiet enough to hear the still small voice and to find your own.  
And may the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be with you all.

## **POSTLUDE**

**Credits:**

Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Call To Worship & Opening Prayer, Moira Laidlaw, Prayer of Confession, John van de Laar  
Prelude, The Old Rugged Cross, CCLI# 5984817, Public Domain  
Postlude, Immortal Invisible God, CCLI# 124466, Public Domain  
Hymn, There is a Balm in Gilead, CCLI# 5612914, Words: Public Domain Music: 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House

We are grateful for the following people who made this worship service possible:

Diane Van Dongen our Music Director, Cylvia Ultz our Liturgist, and Pastor Ninabeth Metcalf.