



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Third Sunday in Easter April 18, 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

We invite you to begin your personal preparation at the beginning of the prelude.

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: We are witnesses,

ALL: to the love God has poured into us.

ONE: We are witnesses of God's love,

ALL: sharing it with each person we meet.

ONE: We are witnesses to everyone we encounter,

ALL: little children like us,

ONE: sisters and brothers in God's family.

GATHERING PRAYER

**We thank you, God, for drawing us to this place and time
and for interrupting us with your gift of life in Christ.**

Whether we have heard the news many times over,

or are this day listening with brand new ears,

surprise us with your justice and righteousness,

that our lives might turn in the right direction;

startle us with your goodness and mercy,

that we might receive your empowering forgiveness;

stagger us with your hope and peace,

that our eyes will remain wide open as we leave this place,

wondering what you will be doing this week in our world and in us.

This we pray in the name of your Messiah. Amen.

HYMN *We've a Story to Tell the Nations*

We've a story to tell to the nations,
that shall turn their hearts to the right,

a story of truth and mercy,

a story of peace and light,

a story of peace and light.

Refrain:

For the darkness shall turn to dawning,

and the dawning to noonday bright;

and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,

the kingdom of love and light

We've a Savior to show to the nations,
who the path of sorrow hath trod,
that all of the world's great peoples
might come to the truth of God,
might come to the truth of God.
(Refrain)

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

Gracious God, you give to us your greatest gift, Your Son Jesus Christ. You call us to be people of courage and hope. You challenge us to proclaim our faith. Shake us up, Lord! Forgive us when we seem to need prodding over and over again. Help us to see the presence of Jesus in our lives; and remind us of all that He taught us, to help us to live as disciples, serving you by serving others. Change us! Remold us! Make us truly the disciples you have called us to be. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Rejoice! God's love is poured upon you, now and forever. AMEN.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Acts 3:12-19

Peter addressed the people: "You Israelites, why are you amazed at this? Why are you staring at us as if we made him walk by our own power or piety? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of our ancestors—has glorified his servant Jesus. This is the one you handed over and denied in Pilate's presence, even though he had already decided to release him. You rejected the holy and righteous one, and asked that a murderer be released to you instead. You killed the author of life, the very one whom God raised from the dead. We are witnesses of this. His name itself has made this man strong. That is, because of faith in Jesus' name, God has strengthened this man whom you see and know. The faith that comes through Jesus gave him complete health right before your eyes.

"Brothers and sisters, I know you acted in ignorance. So did your rulers. But this is how God fulfilled what he foretold through all the prophets: that his Christ

would suffer. Change your hearts and lives! Turn back to God so that your sins may be wiped away.

1 John 3:1-7

See what kind of love the Father has given to us in that we should be called God's children, and that is what we are! Because the world didn't recognize him, it doesn't recognize us.

Dear friends, now we are God's children, and it hasn't yet appeared what we will be. We know that when he appears we will be like him because we'll see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves even as he is pure. Every person who practices sin commits an act of rebellion, and sin is rebellion. You know that he appeared to take away sins, and there is no sin in him. Every person who remains in relationship to him does not sin. Any person who sins has not seen him or known him.

Little children, make sure no one deceives you. The person who practices righteousness is righteous, in the same way that Jesus is righteous.

MESSAGE **What does the resurrection of Jesus make possible? Witness!**

SPECIAL MUSIC

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

Eternal God, to whom all may come through your Son,
lay your healing hand upon all those who are sick.
Make your loving presence known to those who are lonely.
Give your strengthening power to those who are weak.
May those who lack be filled,
those who mourn be comforted,
those who worry be calmed
and those who seek forgiveness find it in Jesus Christ;
through whom we pray. 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.

THE OFFERING

We invite you to take this time to express your gratitude to God for all that you have been given by dedicating your time, talents, witness, service, and resources. The gifts you give are helping God build the community of love in this place and in our world. We offer several ways that you can give your fiscal pledge: in person by placing your offering in the "church mailbox" in the narthex, dropping it off at the office, by mail, through our website www.panthervalleychurch.org, or add PVEC to your online bill pay. Thank you for your generosity.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Generous and surprising God, when we thought that death had claimed your only Son, you amazed us with the resurrection. Surprise us again with your ability to turn these humble offerings into gifts that will transform the world through our witness to your love. We lay our very lives at your feet, O God, knowing that you will use us to proclaim and embody the gospel. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Go in courage and peace, proclaiming the Risen Lord to all! Be those who bring hope and justice to a hungry and hurting world! The peace of the Lord is with you now and forever. AMEN.

POSTLUDE

Credits:

Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Opening Words by Thom M Shuman, Gathering Prayer by Peter L Hayes. Prayer of the People by Michael Seward. Prayer for Reconciliation and Benediction by Nancy C. Townley.

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Children's faith formation is being offered on Class Dojo and at PVEC on Sundays.

Sunday School teachers are needed for preschoolers.

Bible Studies are being held on Zoom. Email or call the office if you are interested in joining these studies.

- 1st Corinthians - Monday evenings at 7pm via Zoom
- Spiritual Guides for the 21st Century; Protestant Reformers - Wednesday mornings at 10am via Zoom

PVEC Rummage Sale May 14 – 22nd! We are looking for volunteers! Please contact Penny Newell or Cylvia Ultz if you are interested in helping in any way!

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.

The Lord's Pantry needs brown paper bags please.

The Church Directory has been updated and hard copies are available. We can also send them electronically. Let Nikki know if you have any changes.

Christian Outreach is looking for a new chair.

We are looking for someone to help film our worship services on Sunday morning.

PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

1490 Route 517 Hackettstown, NJ 07840

~Welcome—we were built for you!~

Panther Valley Ecumenical Church is a multi-denominational church 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.

We are a congregation of many Christian traditions who worship together in accordance with Christ's prayer: "that they may all be one."

May God's Blessing go with you this week.

Pastor: Ninabeth Metcalf

Email: pvecpastor@gmail.com

Music Director: Diane Van Dongen

Church Administrator: Nikki Nicinski

Email: pvecsecretary@gmail.com

Office hours: Mon. – Fri. 9:00am – 2:00pm

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Friends • Family • Faith