



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Fourth Sunday in Easter April 25, 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: Beloved, let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and in truth.

ALL: By this we know love, that Jesus laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

ONE: And this is God's commandment, that we believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him.

ALL: Let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and in truth.

GATHERING PRAYER *A paraphrase of Psalm 23*

God, you are enough for us;

you give us rest in soft fields and beside whispering streams;

you restore and renew us, and lead us into life-giving ways;

When death and evil come close to us, you carry us through, you protect and comfort us;

when others seek to do us harm, your grace uplifts and provides for us in public view;

you fill us with your strength and we enjoy overflowing abundance;

We have confidence that your goodness and compassion will fill our days, and we will stay immersed in your life and presence forever. Amen.

HYMN

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honors of thy name.

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

God, life – your life – is so freely and abundantly available, it pulses in all creation, and in every human soul. Yet we have allowed ourselves to be seduced by death, and have left ourselves and our planet thirsty and lethargic.

So, where rain forests are destroyed to exploit immediate resources for short term profits, we pray that your life would teach us restraint;

Where human waste piles up and poisons the earth, and the lives of the creatures in it, we pray that your life would teach us wisdom;

Where the growth and nurture of children is stunted, by poverty and inequality, we pray that your life would teach us generosity and compassion;

Where life in all its various expressions is denied and suppressed by hatred, self-interest, war and megalomania, we pray that your life would teach us love and humility.

Teach us, O God, to live – to really live, abundantly, freely, generously and humbly, that life may be nurtured, multiplied and shared, – in all its amazing diversity – through us. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

This is the good news: God will walk with us in every moment, God will fill us with goodness and mercy, God will bring us home to live forever.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Acts 4:1-12 New Revised Standard Version

While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came to them, much annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead. So they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who heard the word believed; and they numbered about five thousand.

The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus

Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is

*'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;
it has become the cornerstone.'*

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."

1 John 3:16-24 New Revised Standard Version

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

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

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

God of love, you abide with us, you provide for all our needs and guide us in your ways. Out of gratitude for your care, we bring our gifts before you. Use them for your work of caring, that all may feast at the table of abundance, walk without fear, and drink deeply from the cup of compassion. Amen.

BENEDICTION

ONE: Go now into the world and let us love, not just in words, but in truth and action. Believe in the name of Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he has commanded us. And may God be at your side. May Christ Jesus be the cornerstone of your life. And may the Holy Spirit abide in you ...and tend you with love and mercy all the days of your life.

ALL: We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, in the name of Christ. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Credits:

Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Opening Words by Kristine S Oh, Gathering Prayer and Prayer for Reconciliation written by John van de Laar. Prayer of Dedication written by Mary Petrina Boyd Benediction from Nathan Nettleton

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

Website: <http://www.panthervalleychurch.org>

Tel: 908-852-5444

Email: panthervalleychurch@gmail.com

Friends • Family • Faith