



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**Fifth Sunday in Easter May 2, 2021
Communion Sunday**

*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 branches, rooted in the vine of Christ.

ALL: We come because we seek to abide in Christ.

ONE: The branches that remain in the vine bear much fruit.

ALL: We come because we long to be spiritually vibrant, alive, productive.

ONE: If we abide in Christ, then Christ's words will abide in us.

ALL: We come because we strive to be faithful disciples.

ONE: We gather for worship now to the glory of the One God:
Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.

ALL: May we grow wildly as God tends us lovingly.

GATHERING PRAYER

Lord, we would grow with you; new shoots reaching out, hands stretched upward, like leaves newly formed soaking up your light and warmth.

Lord, we would grow with you.

Lord, we would grow with you; in sunshine and rain, in darkness and light, in cold days and summer days, from Springtime to Winter.

Lord, we would grow with you.

Lord, we would grow with you; and bring forth fruit that is pleasing to you, fed by your living water, giving sustenance to others.

Lord, we would grow with you.

HYMN

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit;
let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Acts 8: 26-40, 1 John 4:7-21

John 15: 1, 5

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. ...

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

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

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.

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

The Divine Gardener cannot sow seeds of justice and peace where there is nothing but hearts of dry, hard rocks. We confess that our hearts may need tilling and the digging out of the deeply rooted sins that crowd out seedlings planted with divine compassion.

Pause in silence

God of steadfast love, you change bitter tears of remorseful hearts with raindrops of mercy,

Now let us germinate a new life, growing with integrity!

(Pause in silence)

God of steadfast love, you change the cold shame of contrite hearts with sunrays of mercy

Now let us sprout a new life, growing with honesty!

(Pause in silence)

God of steadfast love, you change the stony edges of repentant hearts into landscapes of mercy,

Now let us branch out into new life, growing with generosity!

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Divine Gardener, you tend us in steadfast love, unending mercies, and eternal faithfulness; you cultivate true friendship with you through boundless forgiveness. In Christ, this faithful love is planted in our hearts.

Gathered as your community of believers, our family of faith, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us, we can now produce forgiveness for each other as we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

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.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

ONE: The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Lift up your hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.

ONE: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of Creation, God of Life, God of Love, as we gather at this table, we remember many gifts: ...

And so, with all your people on earth and all the company of heaven who have gone before us we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, O God, ever creating, and ever preparing your people and guiding us by your Spirit...

And so in this Easter season we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Guiding, comforting, protecting God; send your Spirit upon and among us and on these gifts of bread and juice. ...

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and for ever.

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.

We Share the Meal

The Bread we break is the Bread of Life.
The Cup we Share is the Cup of Love
Here at this table we share the abundance of God's gifts.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

We Close in Prayer

**God our shepherd, we have gathered at the table You have prepared.
We have eaten, we have drunk, we have tasted your overflowing
abundance.**

**May this meal embolden, enrich, and nurture us as we go out to live as
people of The Way.**

**And may goodness and mercy flow through us all the days of our lives.
May we live in your presence forever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

Let us go into the world glorifying our Creator in all we say and do. May the love of Christ nudge us to go to places we do not want to go, may the Spirit help us to welcome people we are reluctant to meet, and may the power of the Holy Spirit move us and shake us so others may recognize us as people of the living God. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Credits: Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Opening Words by Joanna Harader, Gathering Prayer is a Welsh prayer. Prayer for Reconciliation written by James E. Janecek. Prayer of Dedication written by Mary Petrina Boyd. Benediction by Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar.

Announcements & Upcoming Events

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

Prayer Requests Write down your requests on the page in the narthex but if you would like to send yours electronically, please email pvecsecretary@gmail.com or go to the church website and add them there. They will be compiled and send out in the next week's E-newsletter.

Fellowship Hour The Care and Nurture Commission is having a Welcome Back Fellowship Hour kick-off on Sunday June 6th after church service from 11:15-12:30 in Fellowship Hall. Fellowship Hour will be held beginning June 6th and every Sunday thereafter, unless otherwise noted in the bulletin. Coffee and tea will be served along with snacks. We will maintain social distance, everyone must wear a mask, except when eating or drinking, and all food will be served in accordance with State and local restrictions. Come and enjoy Fellowship and Friendship.

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

Sunday School teachers are needed for preschoolers.

Christian Outreach is looking for a new chair.

New 7 Week (biweekly) Book Group begins today – Love is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times by Bishop Michael Curry. We are excited to say we have about 11 people joining us in person or via Zoom.

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 and Spiritual Guides for the 21st Century; Protestant Reformers - Wednesday mornings at 10am via Zoom

Calling all brownie bakers. Donna is looking for baked brownie donations for this week's May 6th Chicken Dinner. Contact her if you are able.

PVEC Rummage Sale May 14 – 22nd Penny & Cylvia continue to seek volunteers for check in, sales help, clean up. Donations from church members are still being accepted.

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 needs support and comfort.

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

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

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Friends • Family • Faith