



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

For the Beauty of Creation
“Let The Waters Gather Together”
Communion Sunday

August 1, 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 gather to worship God, Giver of Life,

ALL: God, give us the waters of new life.

ONE: In the deserts of our lives, in the wilderness within,

ALL: God, give us the waters of new life.

ONE: To give us hope when our lives run dry, to give us strength when our world seems barren,

ALL: God, gives us the waters of new life.

ONE: To let peace flow like a river and love spring forth like a fountain,

ALL: God, give us the waters of new life.

ONE: To make justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a living stream,

ALL: God, give us the waters of new life.

ONE: To give us - and our world - a second chance and a new beginning,

ALL: God, give us the waters of new life.

ONE: Come, people of God, open your lives to receive God's new life. Open your hearts to sing God's praise.

MOMENT OF GRATITUDE

We know that in the gathering of the people, power is present among us; your Holy Spirit stirs and moves and gives us courage to remember that all good gifts come first from you. We praise you for this creation in the words of the Psalmist, sung by our ancestors in faith for generations:

"God speaks: the heavens are made;
God breathes: the stars shine.
God bottles the waters of the sea
and stores them in the deep.
All earth, be astounded,
stand in awe of God."

Creator God, we give you thanks for your creation and everything in it. Teach us to love and care for our communities and neighbors, near and far. Please help us to remember you and your gift of water now and always. May we recognize the sacredness and holiness in all the earth's water and strive for care and protection. Amen.

LITANY FOR THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

ONE: Let us give thanks for the East, for the ancient bogs and marshes and streams without end, for the green Atlantic from the reaches of Maine to the Florida Keys, for maple and hemlock, for black bear and mountain trout, for cardinals and eastern bluebirds:

ALL: We bless you, O God, for the East.

ONE: Let us give thanks for the West, for estuaries and dry river beds, for waters roaring into the Pacific Ocean, for the mists of the Oregon coast, for sequoias and laurels, for salmon and sealions, snow buntings and cormorants:

ALL: We bless you, O God, for the West.

ONE: Let us give thanks for the North, for the Great Lakes, and the Hudson Bay, for the creeks and coulees of the Great Plains, for the ravines of the Dakotas and the lakes of Minnesota, for willows and quaking aspens, for northern pike and steeleye, for western meadowlarks and loons:

ALL: We bless you, O God, for the North

ONE: Let us give thanks for the South, for the broad Mississippi delta and the Gulf of Mexico, for the Everglades, for bayous and swamps, for tupelo and cypress, for catfish and river otters for egrets and pelicans:

ALL: We bless you, O God, for the South.

SCRIPTURE Genesis 1:6-10

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

MESSAGE *Let the Waters Gather Together*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord you give life to life, from day one; your Spirit brooding over the deep, your wind rushing, your breath filling. As creatures of the earth we rejoice in life using our breath, our being, to raise this hymn of praise:

Hallelujah to the sun whose radiance gives us light and warmth.

Hallelujah for water who quenches our thirst and gives us life.

Hallelujahs for the growth from seed to plant greening the earth; its fruit— beauty and food!

Hallelujahs for generations of life tumbling one after another. Life creeping, swimming, flying, running, below, above, upon, within.

All the world sings, calls, signals, speaks praise to God whose glory grows in all that breathes!

Knowing your power, knowing your love for us, we bring requests this morning;

We pray for all we know who are sick, in mind or body, or who suffer from chronic conditions.

We pray for all who have lost loved ones.

We pray for all who struggle with addiction.

We pray for those who are lonely.

We long for reconciliation with those we have harmed with harsh words or harsh actions, and for peace among our warring nations.

Fill us, enliven us, to be ambassadors of life abundant, breathing out your song in harmony, singing to you, our Creator, whose glory shines through all the world. 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

Creator God, whose Spirit moved over the face of the waters, who gathers the seas into their places and directs the courses of the rivers, who sends rain upon the earth that it should bring forth life: we praise you for the gift of water. Create in us such a sense of wonder and delight in this and all your gifts, that we might receive them with gratitude, care for them with love, and generously share them with all your creatures, to the honor and glory of your holy name. Amen.

HYMN

And Can It Be

And can it be that I should gain
an interest in the Savior's blood!
Died he for me? who caused his pain!
For me? who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine;
alive in him, my living Head,
and clothed in righteousness divine,
bold I approach th' eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.
Bold I approach th' eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.

THE 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 God our Creator!

ALL: With joy we give our thanks and praise!

Before anything was created, you were God.

...

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join the 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, and blessed is Jesus,

...

in union with Christ's offering of love, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

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

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,

...

Through your Beloved Child Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, all loving God, now and forever. 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.

SENDING FORTH

God our Creator, Living Water, Source of Life,

Who quenches our thirst and refreshes our weariness:

Be for us always a fountain of life, and for the world a river of hope springing up in the midst of the deserts of despair. Honor and blessing, glory and praise to you forever! Amen.

POSTLUDE

Today's Liturgy: Call to Worship is from "A desert faith in a desert time", Ghost Ranch, 2013—PEC Ferncliff Conference, Litany for the Four Directions is inspired by Jay C. Rochelle. Prayer of the People is adapted from Carol Penner. Offering Prayer is by Franciscans International. Sending forth is adapted from Miriam Therese Winter, Woman Prayer. Image: Apollo 17 Image of the Earth, Wikimedia Commons. Hymn: And Can It Be, CCLI #25280, Public Domain

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Thank you for coming to church today. We are glad to see you ~ continue to stay safe and healthy!

We care about all our congregants and look forward to seeing everyone when they are comfortable returning to inside worship.

Please pray for: For those who could not be with us today, for the hungry, sick, and oppressed, Nick, Diane, Amy, Charles, Laura, Bonnie Sue, Keith, The Miller Family, The Ward Family, Leslie M., Maureen Bloom – upcoming surgery, Jackie, Mike, Betty Schultheis – life transition, Danielle, Carolyn, Patrick, Anne, Maggie, Michelle, Lila, Eleanor, Giselle, Judy, Catherine, Marianne, The Washburn Family, Rich Pearson & Family – heart transplant, and for those struggling with loss.

(Let us know when to remove a name from the list please.)

Donation Statements - If you worship here in person, donation statements are available for you to pick up in the narthex on the table just inside the front doors. Otherwise, they will be mailed or emailed to you according to your preference as given this spring to Betty Johnson, Treasurer.

Christian Outreach is again participating in the Backpack Program to supply school supplies to needy children in our area. One collection bin will be in the narthex, and another will be downstairs near the office. Thank you for your generosity! You can find the detailed list of items being requested on our website and in this past Friday's e-news.

PVEC SUMMER 2021 SERMON SERIES - For the Beauty of Creation

Join us as we explore the first chapter of Genesis:

Israel's Poem of Creation

July 25th ~ Let there be Light

August 1st ~ Let the Waters gather together

August 8th ~ Let the earth put forth vegetation

August 15th ~ Let the waters and the earth bring forth living creatures

August 22 ~ Let us make humankind in our image

August 29th ~ God rested

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