



# PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**July 18, 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

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

## CALL TO WORSHIP

(based on Ephesians 2:11-22)

ONE: You are no longer aliens.

**ALL: We are citizens with the saints.**

ONE: You are no longer strangers.

**ALL: We are members of the household of God.**

ONE: Here we are built into the dwelling place of God! Alleluia!

## HYMN

*Christ Is Made The Sure Foundation*

*Christ is made the sure foundation  
Christ the head and cornerstone  
Chosen of the Lord and precious  
Binding all the Church in one  
Holy Zion's help forever  
And her confidence alone*

*To this temple where we call Thee  
Come O Lord of Hosts today  
With Thy faithful loving kindness  
Hear Thy people as they pray  
And Thy fullest benediction  
Shed within its walls always*

## GATHERING PRAYER

**Almighty God, you have built your Church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. Join us together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may become a holy temple, acceptable to you: through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## Call to Reconciliation

Do we really want God to dwell within us, or are we only willing to 'rent out' space for a brief visit? Our actions, our words, our silence, our fears all show the presence, or absence, of God in our lives. Let us empty ourselves of all which

burdens us, and welcome the One who lives with us forever. Please join me as we pray,

### **Unison Prayer for Forgiveness**

**Steadfast God, we confess that we are so busy putting up walls between ourselves and others, we cannot see the home you are building for all of us. We spend so much time noting the differences between us and others, while you are embracing everyone as your child. We run to welcome those who look, talk, and act like us, while you throw open your doors to the stranger, the alien, in our midst.**

**Forgive us, Faithful Heart. By your grace, help us to see the household you are building for all people: there are no plastic protectors on the furniture; there are no rooms that are off-limits; and even the smallest child is welcome to sit at the big peoples' table and be fed by your grace. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our peace, our hope, our Lord, our Savior.**

Silence is kept

### **Assurance of Pardon**

**Do you remember? At one time, you were without Christ; you were the stranger, the outsider, and the alien. But now, in Christ, you have been brought home, living in God's household of hope and peace.**

**God's covenant with us is everlasting; God's steadfast love is forever; God's forgiveness makes us new and whole. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

### **SCRIPTURE READING:**

2 Samuel 7:1-14a

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you." But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel,

saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.

#### Ephesians 2:11-22

So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision" --a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands-- remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God

## **MESSAGE**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**Lord, you gather us into your dwelling and lift us up into your holy presence. Make us worthy of you and teach us always to do what is right, as we pray for your people.**

**We pray for our friends and neighbors, who are near to us physically and in our affections. We pray especially for those we have named before you...**

**We pray too for our enemies, whose behavior we reject, with whom you call us to be reconciled. Give us grace to repent of our sins against others; fortitude to keep our promise even when it hurts; generosity to create abundance through sharing with those in need.**

**Keep us from stumbling as we follow in your way, we pray in Jesus' name, saying together:**

### **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](http://www.panthervalleychurch.org), or add PVEC to your online bill pay. Thank you for your generosity.

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**Bringer of peace, you shaped your people and gave them a home; you gave David rest from the wars assailing your people. We thank and praise you this day, for calling us to feed in your pastures and rest safely in your fields. In our gratitude for your steadfast love, receive the gifts we bring this day, that they may be signs of our love for the one you sent to be our shepherd. Amen.**

## **SENDING FORTH**

We leave this place no longer strangers, but members of God's own family, brothers and sisters through the blood of Jesus Christ. Together, we are being built into a holy dwelling place where God lives by the Spirit.

So go out with joy and confidence to love and serve the world, for we do not go alone.

## **POSTLUDE**

***Today's flowers are given with joy in honor of***

***Betty Schultheis's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday!***

*We are grateful for Diane Van Dongen, UMC Lay Servant, and Zoe Milelli, Certified UMC Lay Servant who are our worship Leaders this morning. Diane and Zoe completed their Lay Servant courses this past spring.*

*Credits: Today's liturgy is adapted from: Call To Worship is written by Rev. Christy Ramsey. Gathering Prayer is written by Prayer of Confession is written by Thom M. Shuman. Prayers of the people is written by Rev. Nathan Williams. Prayer of Dedication is written by B.J. Beu.*

*Hymn: Christ Is Made The Sure Foundation, Public Domain*

## Announcements & Upcoming Events

Thank you for coming to church today. We are glad to see you!

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

### **Please pray for:**

Those injured, lost, and affected by the condo collapse in Surfside, FL, for those who could not be with us today, for the hungry, sick and oppressed, The Sass Family in the loss of John Sr., The Miller Family, The Ward Family, Jackie, Mike, Samantha, Betty Schultheis, Danielle, Carolyn, Patrick, Anne, Maggie, Michelle, Lila, Eleanor, Giselle, Jayne, Judy, Catherine, Marianne, The Washburn Family - medical tests, Rich Pearson & Family, and for those struggling with loss. Thank you and please keep sharing & praying. Let us know when to remove a name from the list please.

Diane Van Dongen & Zoe Milelli, our 2 new **lay servants**, are leading worship this Sunday, July 18th.

\*Reminder that Ninabeth will be **on vacation** from Saturday, July 17<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, July 24<sup>th</sup>\*

Come celebrate a **Bridal Shower for Ali Bancroft**, next Sunday 7/25 after worship! Sandwiches, salad, and cake will be served. In lieu of monetary contributions for the party, bring a fun gift for Alison instead if you choose.

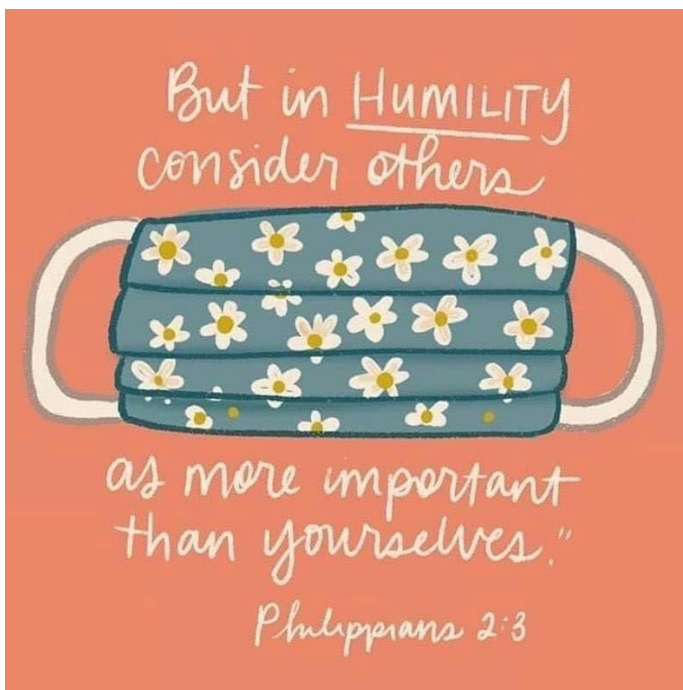
Happy Belated **90<sup>th</sup>** Birthday to Anne Cuff!

Happy **85<sup>th</sup>** Birthday to Renee Lundy!

A special thank you to our first **PVEC Weed-A-THON** gardener. Your green thumb is much appreciated!



**COVID UPDATE - July 2021, from the Highlands Presbytery.** The Pandemic is not over...we need to keep reminding ourselves. Lisa Allgood is the Executive Presbyter for Cincinnati Presbytery, an elder and an immunologist. She has been providing science and data updates about COVID to the congregations in the Cincinnati Presbytery and she also shares the info with other Presbyteries. See this past Friday's e-news for the rest of her update.



Therefore,  
do not worry  
about tomorrow,  
for tomorrow will worry about itself.



Each day  
has enough trouble  
of its own.



Matthew 6:34

## **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](mailto:pvecpastor@gmail.com)

**Music Director:** Diane Van Dongen

**Church Administrator:** Nikki Nicinski

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***FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH***