



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

For the Beauty of Creation
“Let Us Make Humankind In Our Image”

August 22, 2021

*Connecting with the Community,
Growing Disciples, and Serving Jesus Christ*

Our Worship can be viewed on our website
PantherValleyChurch.org

PRELUDE

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: In the beginning God created all things,

ALL: and God saw that they were good.

ONE: At our beginning, God created us

ALL: unique and irreplaceable, loved and wanted by God, known and treasured by God even before He created us.

ONE: In all our new beginnings, God creates something new

ALL: so we will seek God in the freshness of this morning, in the laughter of friends, in the colors of creation, and in this beautiful place.

ONE: Lord God, King of Creation,

ALL: open our eyes to see your presence, our souls to sense your presence, and our hearts to love your presence, ever here in your creation, and ever beyond it in eternity. Amen.

MOMENT OF GRATITUDE

We return thanks to our mother, the earth, which sustains us.

We return thanks to the rivers and streams, which supply us with waters.

We return thanks to all herbs, which furnish medicine for the cure of our diseases.

We return thanks to the corn, and to her sisters, the beans and the squashes, which give us life.

We return thanks to the wind, which refreshes us and purifies the air we breathe.

We return thanks to the moon and the stars, which have given us their light when the sun was gone.

We return thanks to the sun, that he has looked upon the earth with a beneficent eye.

Lastly, we return thanks to the Great Spirit, in whom is embodied all goodness, and who directs all things for the good of his children.

PRAYER TO THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

Great Spirit who comes out of the East, come to us with the power of the East. We are thankful for the light of the rising sun. Let there be light on the path we walk. Let us remember always to be thankful that You give the gift of a new day.

Spirit of Creation, we turn to the south. We are thankful for sending us warm and soothing winds from the South to comfort us and caress us when we are tired and cold. Unfold us as your gentle breezes unfold the leaves on the trees. And as You give to all the earth your warm moving wind, give to us warmth and a reminder to be grateful, so that we may grow close to You.

Great Life-giving Spirit, we face the West, the direction of sundown. Let us remember every day that the moment will come when our sun will go down. Never let us forget that we must fade into you. Give us beautiful color; give us a great sky for setting, so that when it is time to meet you we come with glory.

Great Spirit of Love, come to us with the power of the North, make us courageous when the cold winds of life fall upon us. Give us strength and endurance for everything that is harsh, everything that hurts, everything that makes us squint. Let us move through life ready to take what comes from the North.

Great Spirit of the Sky, lift us up to You that our hearts may worship You and come to You in glory. Hold in our memory that You are the Creator, greater than we, eager for our good life. Let everything that is in the world lift our minds and our hearts and our lives to You, so that we may come to You always in truth and in heart.

Giver of all Life, we pray to you from the Earth. Help us to remember as we touch the earth that we are little and need your pity. Help us to be thankful for the gift of the earth and never walk hurtfully on the world. Bless us with eyes to love what comes from Mother Earth and teach us how to use well your gifts. Amen.

HYMN

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Refrain:

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful:
the Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colors,
and made their tiny wings.
(Refrain)

The purple-headed mountains,
the river running by,
the sunset and the morning
that brightens up the sky.
(Refrain)

The cold wind in the winter,
the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden:
God made them every one.
(Refrain)

God gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty,
who has made all things well.
(Refrain)

SCRIPTURE Genesis 1:26-31 Common English Bible

Then God said, “Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth.”

God created humanity in God’s own image,
in the divine image God created them,
male and female God created them.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. Take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground.” Then God said, “I now give to you all the plants on the earth that yield seeds and all the trees whose fruit produces its seeds within it. These will be your food. To all wildlife, to all the birds in the sky, and to everything crawling on the ground—to everything that breathes—I give all the green grasses for food.” And that’s what happened. God saw everything he had made: it was supremely good.

There was evening and there was morning: the sixth day.

MESSAGE *Let Us Make Humankind In Our Image*

PRAYERS FOR THE LIFE OF OUR WORLD

Jesus Christ, teach us to empathize with Earth. Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation, cries for justice from the land, the seas, and the skies. Jesus Christ, make our faith sensitive to the groans of the Spirit in creation, groans of longing for a new creation. Jesus Christ, make our hearts sensitive to the songs of our kin, songs of celebration from the sea, the forest, and the air. Christ, teach us to care.

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

We pray for the people who have been affected by earthquake, fire, and floods.

We pray for the homeless, displaced, and forgotten.

We pray for all 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.

O Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

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

We are made in your image and formed in your likeness. May we see your presence in every creature, person, race, and nation. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

We invite you to pray the prayer in the language you are used to speaking.

Today we are highlighting the prayer in the Traditional text written in the 16th century for the Book of Common Prayer. This prayer is utilized by the Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church.

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

Holy God, these gifts are not truly ours to offer. Everything that is here was first given to us by you. Whatever wealth or abundance lies in these baskets was nurtured by your good rains, warmed by your sun and rested under the light of your stars before it became fruits of our labors. We ask that you make us mindful that our possessions are all products of your beautiful good earth! Let our habits never render the earth incapable of praising you by the life and bounty it produces. Bless these gifts to the well-being of your world and all its inhabitants, that we might all praise your holy name. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

Creator God, may we always walk gently upon the Earth, in right relationship, nurtured by your love, open to the wind of the Spirit, taking only what we need, always open to the needs of others, making choices that bring wellbeing, living with generosity, striving for justice, honoring all with reverence, reconciling and peacemaking, mindful of those who will come after, recognizing our proper place as part of your creation.

Grant us the strength and courage, Lord, for such a radical transformation into your Kingdom. Amen.

ONE: May the Spirit of God, who is above all and in all and through all, fill you with the knowledge of God’s presence in Earth and with the joy Christ within you. Go in peace! Serving Christ and loving Earth!

ALL: **We go in peace, serving Christ and tending Earth.**

POSTLUDE

Credits: Moment of Gratitude - The indigenous Americans are especially eloquent about voicing gratefulness, as in this Iroquois (now Haudenosaunee) prayer. Four Directions Prayer is anonymous. Closing prayer is from Third Space.

Image: Just Created by Julia Stankova, 2016

Hymn: All Things Bright and Beautiful, CCLI #1510282, Public Domain

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please Pray For:

The nation and the world with COVID, the health of children and staff returning to school, healthcare workers inundated with patients again, our mental & physical health, the innocent people of Afghanistan, our military personnel, victims of the Haitian earthquake, control of the wildfires, churches as they try and do ministry in a new time, our friends at Heath Village & Colonial Manor, Giselle & The Family of Gennaro Sirianni, Diane's dear family friend in hospice care, The Ledwith Family, The Calandriello Family, The Miller Family, The Ward Family, The Washburn Family, Rich Pearson & Family, Lisa who is hospitalized with Covid, Dave & Sue, Bridget, Tom & Lisa Grillo, Jaylyn & Savanna, Brian, Vinnie Candito, Dee Lartie, Anne, Robyn, Maureen Bloom, Betty Schultheis, Diane, Amy, Charles, Laura, Bonnie Sue, Keith, Nick, Leslie M., Jackie, Mike, Danielle, Carolyn, Patrick, Anne, Maggie, Michelle, Lila, Eleanor, Giselle, Judy, Catherine, Marianne, Diana in hospice care & husband Richard

Christian Outreach Backpack Program collection bins are in the narthex and downstairs near the office. Thank you for your generosity!

The next 2 \$5 Chicken Dinners will be on the 2nd Thursday of the Month again.

SEPTEMBER 9TH - Honey BBQ Chicken with mac n' cheese, bean salad, roll & butter, brownie

OCTOBER 14TH - Oktoberfest Chicken with German potato salad, red cabbage, pumpkin bread & butter, apple dumplings

Youth Group/Youth Squad (Ages 10 and up) Come join us!

- Friday, September 24th 6-8pm Theater Night Skit for Worship
- Friday, October 29th 6-8pm Halloween Party
- Sunday, November 21st 1-3pm Community Thanksgiving Dinner
- Friday, December 17th 6-8pm Ugly Sweater Party

Learn more about the **Panther Valley Friends & Neighbors Mega Event Day** here at PVEC in the parking lot on Saturday, 9/25 from 10-5 in this past Friday's e-news.

PVEC SUMMER 2021 SERMON SERIES ending - For the Beauty of Creation
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

Email: pvecsecretary@gmail.com

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

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FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH