



# PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**Worship in the United Church of Christ Tradition  
September 19, 2021**

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

*Our Worship can be viewed on our website  
[PantherValleyChurch.org](http://PantherValleyChurch.org)*

## PRELUDE

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

### **MEDITATION – Poem, Living Psalm 1**

Happy are those who do not follow the ways of alternative facts  
but listen to science and reason,  
who choose the path to health and common sense.

Their delight is in the law God set in motion for our earth,  
and on this wisdom they meditate night and day.

They are like trees – rooted in the knowledge of well-being,  
rooted near the lakes of reason,  
rooted deep in the soil of understanding.

With these gifts, their leaves will not wither  
and their souls, minds, and bodies will prosper.

For the foolish dance with chosen “facts”  
and the wicked will the winds with falsehoods.

Yet the Spirit of God will drive dishonesty away.

In the land of the Holy One, the waters of the Christ, and the winds of the Holy  
Spirit,

our Divine Parent will watch over those who faithfully follow God’s law.

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

ONE: Come, you who are seeking and searching;  
there’s a community here that’s incomplete without you!

**ALL: In the name of the welcoming One, we gather.**

ONE: Come, you who are hungry and thirsty;  
there’s a table here that’s incomplete without you!

**ALL: In the name of the welcoming One, we feast.**

ONE: Come, you who are weary and worried;  
there’s a hope here that’s incomplete without you!

**ALL: In the name of the welcoming One, we pray.**

ONE: Come, you who are lonely and lost;  
Christ’s body is incomplete without you!

**ALL: In the name of the welcoming One, we come and find that all are  
welcome here!**

## **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**

**God, Your grace reaches out to all of us. You call us to live as citizens of heaven, working together with one heart and mind. Strengthen us to live in a manner worthy of the Good News we have received, offering our lives in service of Your kingdom, where the last are first, and the first are last, and there is grace enough for all. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, Amen.**

## **JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**We praise your abiding guidance, O God, for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah, to model for us the way of love for the whole universe. We offer these prayers of love on behalf of ourselves and our neighbors, on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.**

*in silence lift up to God your joys and concerns*

**Loving God, open our ears to hear your word and draw us closer to you, that the whole world may be one with you as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **SCRIPTURE**

### **James 4:7-10 Common English Bible**

Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will run away from you. Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Cry out in sorrow, mourn, and weep! Let your laughter become mourning and your joy become sadness. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

## HYMN

### *Lord, I Want To Be A Christian*

Lord I want to be a Christian  
In my heart in my heart  
Lord I want to be a Christian  
In my heart (in my heart)  
In my heart (in my heart)  
In my heart (in my heart)  
Lord I want to be a Christian  
In my heart (in my heart)

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION

**Holy One, you welcome us into your wide embrace of grace, again and again. As you open your arms to hold our hearts with tender loving-kindness, you invite us to do the same. Open our ears as you call us again to welcome the stranger, the foreigner, the lonely, the outcast, and the weak. Open our hearts to welcome each precious child, just as you have welcomed us. Amen.**

## SCRIPTURE

### **Mark 9:30-37 Common English Bible**

From there Jesus and his followers went through Galilee, but he didn't want anyone to know it. This was because he was teaching his disciples, "The Human One will be delivered into human hands. They will kill him. Three days after he is killed he will rise up." But they didn't understand this kind of talk, and they were afraid to ask him.

They entered Capernaum. When they had come into a house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about during the journey?" They didn't respond, since on the way they had been debating with each other about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be least of all and the servant of all." Jesus reached for a little child, placed him among the Twelve, and embraced him. Then he said, "Whoever welcomes one of these children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me isn't actually welcoming me but rather the one who sent me."

## MESSAGE

### RESPONSIVE READING

ONE: Into our lives littered with distraction; into our bickering, pointless and petty,

**ALL: you come among us, welcoming One, lifting up the littlest and least of us with open arms.**

ONE: You come, reminding us to welcome the child.

**ALL: And by doing so, we welcome God.**

ONE: You come, reminding us to welcome the stranger.

**ALL: And by doing so, we welcome angels.**

ONE: You come, reminding us to welcome the least, the last, and the lost.

**ALL: And by doing so, we welcome your kin-dom.**

ONE: When the last are first, and the lowly are lifted;  
when the persecuted are blessed, and the weak are strengthened; when  
we lose our lives and give them away to love;

**ALL: you come among us, welcoming One, embracing us with open arms.**

ONE: When we welcome a child and see the face of God,

**ALL: you come among us, welcoming One, teaching us to be servants of all.**

### LORD'S PRAYER Ecumenical Text

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

*Today we are highlighting the prayer in the Ecumenical Text which was developed in contemporary language by the English Language Liturgical Consultation in 1988.*

**Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours**

**Now and for ever. Amen.**

## **BENEDICTION**

Go out into a weary world, offering the welcome of God.

Go out into places of hostility, offering the hospitality of Christ.

Go out into spaces of brokenness, offering the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Go and be living, breathing signs of God's realm by offering a wide welcome wherever you go.

## **POSTLUDE**

*Today's flowers are given by Carol Phillips in memory of Nick Phillips  
and in honor of Peyton O'Brien.*

***Credits:** Living Psalm 1 —Pentecost 17B was written by Michelle L. Torigian.  
Call to Worship, Prayer of Invocation, Responsive Reading, and Benediction by  
Jennifer and Todd Pick. Prayer of Dedication is written by Christine Longhurst.*

*Image: Wooden Love sign, anonymous.*

*Hymn: Lord, I Want To Be A Christian, CCLI#3184437, Words: Public Domain  
Music: 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House*

## **Announcements & Upcoming Events**

### **PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

Joan Gibbs & Family, Josephine Fracasso, The Hal Loss Family, Ann Custard, Henry Newbold, Zachary, Donna in the loss of her friend, Mark Simon's baby, Benny, health & safety in our schools, our mental & physical health, churches as they try and do ministry in a new time, our friends at Heath Village & Colonial Manor, The Willet Family, The Tamarco Family, The Calandriello Family, The Miller Family, The Ward Family, Rich Pearson & Family, Carol D., Derek Fleming, Dave & Sue, Lauren, Faye's college friend Bridget, Tom & Lisa Grillo, Jaylyn & Savanna, Brian, Vinnie Candito, Dee Lartie, Anne, Robyn, Diane, Amy, Charles, Laura, Bonnie Sue, Keith, Nick, Leslie M., Jackie, Mike, Danielle, Carolyn, Patrick, Anne, Maggie, Michelle, Giselle, Judy, Marianne

**Thank you and please let us know when to remove a name from the list.**

**TODAY is Ice Cream Sundae Sunday.** Following worship, we will enjoy our treats outside on the "patio" near the kitchen, weather permitting.

### **Friends & Neighbors of Allamuchy MEGA EVENT September 25, 10am-5pm @ PVEC (Rain Date is 10/2)**

Tricky Tray, Designer Purse Auction, Yard Sale, Raffles, 50/50 – cash only, except for purse auction

**Thanks to everyone who brought us plastic bags** for the Food Pantry's Wawa Harvest pick-ups! We appreciate you!

## **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

Email: [pvecsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:pvecsecretary@gmail.com)

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

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

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***FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH***