

# PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**Worship in the Tradition of Oikumene  
Celebration of Baptism  
September 26, 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.

## WORDS OF WELCOME

*“At the River Clarion” by Mary Oliver, from Evidence: Poems, Beacon Press*

## OPENING PRAYER

**We praise You, Lord God, that Your Way is found not by travelling an exclusive highway, or in secrets preserved only for some, but in the open field of love and grace, where all who choose may come and play.**

**We praise You, Lord God, that Your Truth is heard not only in the words of scholars and authors, or in brittle, inflexible ideas, but in honest questions and difficult conversations, in the courageous attempts of simple people to live lives of integrity.**

**We praise You, Lord God, that Your Life is discovered not just in the predictable places of beauty and wealth or within the confines of clearly demarcated norms, but in the unexpected generosity and pride of those who have nothing, in the creativity and risk of trying new things, and defending the vulnerable.**

**We open ourselves again to Your call, determined to do what we promise, to follow Your Way, to embody Your Truth to share Your Life.**

**And to do it all with thanksgiving and praise. Amen.**

## SCRIPTURE

Mark 9:38-42

John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.”

“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea.”

## MESSAGE

## **HYMN**

### *They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love*

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord  
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord  
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand  
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand  
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land  
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love

## **THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

Sisters and brothers in Christ: through the sacrament of baptism God's Spirit initiates us into Christ's holy church, puts us on the stage of God's saving drama, and gives us new birth through water and the Spirit. So, come to the water -- water poured over and immersing us, water flowing freely for all who will receive it, water from the streams of God's saving power and justice, water that brings hope to all who thirst for righteousness, water that refreshes life, nurtures growth, and offers new birth.

Here we come to the waters, to baptize a child, and in each other's presence to renew our commitments to Christ who has raised us, the Spirit who has birthed us, and the Creator who is making all things new.

## **PRESENTATION FOR BAPTISM**

Pastor Ninabeth: On behalf of the Ecumenical Council,  
I present Blake Pheonyx Fernandez,  
son of Marwin Fernandez and Jennifer Dietrich Fernandez,  
Godson of Ian and Michele Fernandez  
to receive the sacrament of Baptism.

Pastor Ninabeth (to Parents): Do you desire that Blake be baptized?

Pastor Ninabeth (to Godparents): Do you promise, through prayer and example, to support and encourage Blake to be a faithful Christian?

Pastor Ninabeth (to Congregation): Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture Blake by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging him to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of his church?

**Congregation: We do.**

## **PROFESSION OF FAITH**

With the whole church, let us confess:

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER**

ONE: The Spirit of the Lord is with us.

**ALL: Even so, come Lord Jesus!**

ONE: Let us pray. Almighty God, the life you birthed in us by baptism into Jesus Christ will never die. Your justice never fails. Your mercy is everlasting. Your healing river flows. Your Spirit blows where you will. We cannot stop you, God! But sometimes we try. We try to block the flow, we redirect the winds of the Spirit, or we walk so far away from the life-giving Stream that we do not hear its sound, and we forget its power. We parch ourselves.

**ALL: We are dry and thirsty, O God. Come, refresh us!**

ONE: Come upon us, Holy Spirit!

**ALL: Come upon us, Holy Spirit! Come upon these waters. Come upon these waters.**

**Let these waters be to us drops of your mercy.**

**Let these waters remind us of your righteousness and justice.**

**Let these waters renew in us the resurrection power of Jesus.  
Let these waters make us long for your coming reign.  
Most Holy God, Abba, Father! Glory to you!  
Jesus Christ, Savior, Lord! Glory to you!  
Spirit of fire, Spirit over the waters, Spirit of holiness! Glory to you!  
Eternal God, One in Three and Three in One!  
All glory is yours, now and forever. Amen!**

## **BAPTISM**

*Blake, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit, you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Pastor Ninabeth invites the congregation to welcome Blake:

*Let us welcome our new brother in Christ. Child of God by water and the Spirit.*

**Congregation: We welcome you into God's new creation. Share with us in Christ's royal priesthood. With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you as a member of Christ's church.**

## **JOYS AND CONCERNS**

### **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 Mother / Father / God 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.**

## **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.

## **BENEDICTION**

## **POSTLUDE**

***Credits:*** *Opening Prayer is written by John Van de Laar.*

*Image: Baptism of Jesus, He Qi*

*Hymn: They'll Know We Are Christians, CCLI #26997. Words: 1966 F.E.L. Publications. Assigned 1991 The Lorenz Corporation Music: 1966 F.E.L. Publications. Assigned 1991 The Lorenz Corporation*

## **Announcements & Upcoming Events**

### **PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

Joan Gibbs & Family, Meghan Rose, Anne, Julie, 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

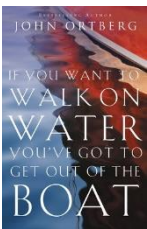
**Thank you and please let us know when to remove a name from the list.**

Donna & Penny are planning Fellowship Hour on the first Sunday of each month \*(Communion Sunday). Join us for chicken noodle soup on October 3rd.

Thank you, Kathy & Bob Zinckgraf, for the hard work on the church property for the last few months! They have been doing weeding, landscaping, and seemingly in one day repainted the lines in the church parking lot.

Thanks also to John Samanns for the labor of love in the church garden this season!

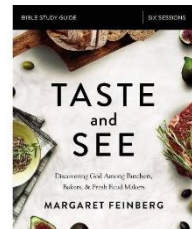
### **NEW Wednesday Morning 10am Faith Formation (Pastor Ninabeth)**



Join us **Wednesday September 29<sup>th</sup> via ZOOM** as we begin our journey with John Ortberg.

### **NEW Monday Evening 7pm Faith Formation (Terrie Newbold)**

**Also via Zoom.**



## **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

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***FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH***