



## **PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH**

**Worship in the Tradition of the  
Ecumenical Community of Iona Abbey  
October 31, 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

### CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: O God, who created the heavens and stretched them out,

**ALL: we praise you!**

ONE: You made the earth and all that lives here:

**ALL: we praise you!**

ONE: You give breath to all creation and your Spirit to all people:

**ALL: we praise you, O God!**

ONE: That the eyes of the blinded be opened, the poor hear the good news, the captives be brought out of darkness, the wealth of the world serve the good of all,

**ALL: your kingdom come, O God; your will be done!**

## HYMN

*I'll Praise My Maker*

*COR Worship Collective*

*I'll praise my maker, while I have breath  
And when my voice is gone, I'll praise in death  
Praise shall employ my, my nobler powers  
My praise will raise above this darkened hour*

*The Lord pours eyesight, to heal the blind  
The Lord supports, my fainting mind  
God helps the stranger, who's in distress  
And grants this prisoner, my sweet release*

## PRAYER

**Over time, over space, over matter, over thought, you are our God, in all and through all. The noises of conflict are loud in your ears, as is the cry of the newborn child. You share the excitement of those pioneering research as well as the last breaths of those nearing death. And in Christ, all the pain and potential in the world are held together in the hope of healing. Be present to us here, gracious God, and let your Spirit open us to glimpse that fairer world which you intend for us and for all people. Amen.**

## SCRIPTURE

Mark 12:28-34 New Revised Standard Version

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?"

Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

## REFLECTION

### PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

ONE: God of new beginnings, you long for us to live in love and justice with our neighbors, with friends and strangers, with people everywhere.

**ALL: You call us to be just and loving in our working, in our shopping, in our caring, and through our prayers.**

ONE: Jesus you were a storyteller, you talked about money, wages, and taxes, you told stories about integrity and forgiveness, you helped people who were in trouble, you listened to people who were sad.

**ALL: You call us to live as you did – to listen to each other, to be forgiving, and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.**

ONE: Holy Spirit, we are discovering what you ask of us. You are wild and wise and you speak the truth. You challenge and comfort us, you breathe life into us, you shout in the streets and you whisper in our ears.

**ALL: You remind us what Jesus taught and practiced, you take us to task, you tell us to turn around; you call us to walk in Love's way.**

ONE: Holy Trinity, God's love in community,

**ALL: every day in all our living help us to say yes to you. Amen.**

HYMN

*'Tis So Sweet To Trust In Jesus*      COR Worship Collective

*'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus  
Just to take Him at His word  
Just to rest upon His promise  
And to know, Thus saith the Lord*

*Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him  
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er  
Jesus, Jesus, Precious Jesus!  
Oh for grace to trust Him more*

*Oh Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus  
Just from sin and self to cease;  
Just from Jesus simply taking  
Life, and rest, and joy, and peace*

*Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him  
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er  
Jesus, Jesus, Precious Jesus!  
Oh for grace to trust Him more*

*Lord I trust you, I trust You  
I put my hope in You, Lord  
Oh for grace, to trust You more  
Lord I trust you, I trust You  
I put my hope in You, Lord  
Oh for grace, to trust You more*

*I'm so glad I learned to trust You,  
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend;  
And I know that You are with me,  
You will be with me to the end.*

*Jesus, Jesus, how I trust You  
How I've proved You o'er and o'er  
Jesus, Jesus, Precious Jesus!  
O for grace to trust You more*

## **PRAYERS OF CONCERN**

ONE: Holy God, who, in Jesus, touched the earth, admiring its beauty and blessing its people, we honor you for the gift of life and all the gifts that life brings us: food, shelter, company, the experiences that make us think, the people that bring out the best in us.

Hear our prayers for the places in this world where beauty has turned to ugliness, food has been replaced by famine, friendship has been forgotten and fear, hostility, and hopelessness have the upper hand.

(Pause)

**ALL: God in your mercy, bring healing, bring peace.**

ONE: Hear our prayers for people who cannot pray because of pain, loss or worry; and for those who will not love themselves and so cannot love their neighbor.

(pause)

**ALL: God, in your mercy, bring healing, bring peace.**

ONE: Hear our prayers for ourselves – our private yearnings, our secret hopes and any doubt, jealousy or anger to which we hold too tightly.

(pause)

**ALL: God, in your mercy, bring healing, bring peace.**

ONE: And hear us as we, in our mother tongue, say the words Jesus first prayed in his.

**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; and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us in the time of trial and deliver us from evil; for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

May God, our maker, bless us and wrap us round in love and tenderness.

May Jesus, our brother, bless us and ask us the questions that lead us to do justice.

May the Holy Spirit bless us and fill our lives with her courage and wisdom.

May we live bravely in the love of the Trinity all our nights and days. AMEN

## **POSTLUDE**

*Today's flowers are given by Donna Weinberg*

*In Honor of Rachid's 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday.*

## Questions to Consider

How do I see myself?

With what kind of eyes do I see people?

Is my seeing prejudiced by the other person's culture or color?

In relation to my neighbor's pain do I have eyes that are aware or blind?

Do I see people as mere statistics or, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said,  
"sacraments of God's presence"?

## YOUR OFFERING AND TITHES

*We invite you 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.*

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## Announcements & Upcoming Events

### PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Rick Nelson, Joe & Eileen O'Reilly, Amy Testa, Jim, Adam, Kailin (surgery) and her parents, Marie, Jim & Michelle, Charles, Walter, Bonnie Sue, Yvonne, Helen, Claire, Grey, Bernadette Jacobus, The abducted missionaries in Haiti, Eloise Mial, Dong-Hee Nam, Lisa & Brandon in the passing of Brandon's father, Kathy Pflugfelder, Bruce, Angus, Rick Wilson's father, Kailynn, The De La Cruz Family, Rich K., Ann Custard, Anne Ellis, George Capola, Bridget, Refugees and those seeking asylum, Zachary, Churches as they try and do ministry in a new time, The Tamarco Family, The Miller Family, Meghan Rose, Anne, Julie, The Ward Family, Rich Pearson & Family, The Willet Family, Carol D., Derek Fleming, Lauren, Tom & Lisa Grillo, Jaylyn & Savanna, Brian, Dee Lartie, Robyn, Diane, Amy, Nick, Leslie M., Jackie, Mike, Danielle, Carolyn, Patrick, Anne, Maggie, Giselle, Judy, Marianne

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

**New Bible Study** begins Monday, November 8 via Zoom.

God the Creator By Randy Frazee - The goal is to introduce you to the lower (human perspective) and upper stories (God's perspective) as told in the Old Testament books of Genesis through Ruth.

We will have the first three sessions before stopping for an Advent Study. We will resume this on January 3-January 31st. The full description with links is in this week's e-news. Any questions contact Terrie Newbold 908-892-6474 or email [tlnewbold47@gmail.com](mailto:tlnewbold47@gmail.com).

**Oct. 31, 2021 (23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)**

**Mark 12:33** –To love God with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself --this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

*Church stewardship is often preoccupied with money, but what does God really want? Today's Gospel explains it succinctly: Truly loving God and neighbor is worth more than offerings and sacrifices. When we achieve this kind of love, giving generously comes much more easily.*

## **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***