



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**Christmas Eve Family Service
December 24, 2019**

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

*Our Worship can be viewed on our website
PantherValleyChurch.org*

As we joyfully greet each other today and share the gifts of friendship and love, you are invited to begin your personal preparation for worship at the beginning of the prelude.

***Those who are able, please stand.**

PRELUDE

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Humble yourselves for a gift is coming;

ALL: A gift the angels promised!

ONE: Prepare yourselves for a gift is coming;

ALL: We are prepared for Jesus's arrival!

ONE: Make room in your hearts for a gift is coming;

ALL: Our hearts are stables for Jesus's love!

ONE: Tomorrow the gift will arrive;

ALL: Tomorrow we receive the greatest gift the world has seen!

Advent:

Love comes to us at Christmas
Love comes to heal our souls.
Love brings an invitation
that our hearts might be made whole.
As we gather at the stable
in the darkness, glad and grateful
for the sacred in our midst,
for wonder and delight,
Christ is born in us this night.

Tonight we offer the Lights of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love to illumine
the Door of Welcome.

And we add the brightest light of all... the Light of the Newborn Jesus.
It shines bright like the star that rose over Bethlehem.

May this light also shine in our hearts, in our lives, and in our church.
May this light awaken us to possibilities and lead us to greater hospitality.
There *IS* room in this Inn, a House for the Holy.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Dear God, we are humbled at the gift you bestowed upon the world. The redeemer is born tomorrow for a world in need of redeeming. Your steadfast love is shown through the birth of your son Jesus the Christ. We come together this night in anticipation and wonder of a child born for us through your love. Let us prepare our hearts and minds for this gift with only one expectation, love. Amen.

GOSPEL READING:

Luke 2: 1-7 (NRSV)

In those days, a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

INTRODUCTION

Join us as we prepare for the great gift that is coming. We are reminded to be humble and to temper expectations of the holiday season. Do not be fooled by the size of a package nor the wrapping it comes in. Remind yourselves that a great gift can be the size of a baby, wrapped in nothing but cloth and lain in a dirty stable.

Christmas Pageant “Great Expectations”

Connor, Lilly, Riley, Sophia, Kaylynn, Leyland, Lane, Dylann, Kaylee, Jaime, Landon, Kai, Preston

***HYMN Silent Night**

Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child! Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing: “Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!”

Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light,
radiant beams from thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth! Jesus Lord, at thy birth!

Silent night! Holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King:
“Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born.”

BENEDICTION

Go now in wonder of a child born tomorrow for us. Let this gift reside in your heart. This gift is not just yours, but everyone’s so share it. Let it be that all may come know this wondrous gift that is love, through Jesus the Christ.

YOUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING

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 offering: 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.*

**Please join us in Worship on December 26th at 10:30am!
Wear your pajamas in celebration of all the Pajama’s and Books we collected for the Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children in Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties.**

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

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

Tel: 908-852-5444

Email: panthervalleychurch@gmail.com

FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH