



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Fourth Sunday of Advent "A Room with a View"

LOVE

December 19, 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.

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTROIT

Hope Waits for Us at Advent

VEC Bell Choir

GATHERING WORDS

**Love waits for us at Advent
Love waits for us to care.
Love waits for our compassion
freely offered, freely shared.
In this time of preparation
for the work of co-creation,
for the birthing of a world
where faith shapes all we do.
Love is born in us anew!**

THE LIGHT OF LOVE

Today we offer the Light of Love, Joy, Hope and Peace to illumine the Door of Welcome. May this light shine in our hearts, in our lives, and in our community. May Love awaken us to possibilities and lead us to greater hospitality. There *IS* room in this Inn, a House for the Holy.

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THE PEACE

“Do You Hear What I Hear?”

PVEC Bell Choir

FIRST READING Micah 5:2-5a

As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
though you are the least significant of Judah's forces,
one who is to be a ruler in Israel on my behalf will come out from you.
His origin is from remote times, from ancient days.
Therefore, he will give them up
until the time when she who is in labor gives birth.
The rest of his kin will return to the people of Israel.
He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
They will dwell secure,
because he will surely become great throughout the earth;
he will become one of peace.

HYMN

PVEC Choir

SECOND READING Luke 1: 46-55

Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

Mary said,
*"With all my heart I glorify the Lord!
In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.
He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.
Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored
because the mighty one has done great things for me.
Holy is his name.
He shows mercy to everyone,
from one generation to the next,
who honors him as God.*

He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

*He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly.*

*He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty-handed.*

*He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
remembering his mercy,*

just as he promised to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

MESSAGE *A View of the Kingdom of God*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Make of my heart a stable, a house for the holy, a warm and sturdy place for love to live and grow.

In this moment we open the doors of our hearts in honesty before God about what we've done and left undone that created less hope in a hurting world.

Silently pause

Make of my life a stable, a house for the holy, a warm and sturdy place for love to live and grow. In this moment we open the doors of our lives to the call of the Spirit, inviting us to become more than we can ask or imagine.

Silently pause

Make of our church a stable, a house for the holy, a warm and sturdy place for love to live and grow. In this moment we open the doors of this church, filling it with the compassion of Christ for all those who are struggling. We remember and pray for...

Lift up names in your heart or out loud...

... those who are suffering economic hardship, and insecurity in basic needs; may abundance be shared.

... those who are suffering mentally, finding it difficult to cope; may paths open and hope return.

... those who are suffering illness or injury; may healing abound.

... those who are suffering loneliness and isolation; may companionship and solace arrive.

... those who are suffering discrimination, fear and violence; may they know respect, respite, and safety.

May the Advent of Compassion be born in us, reside within us, move outward from us, to meet the needs of the world, making a house for the Holy that is each and every child of God. Amen.

THE 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 17th century and is used by reformed and Presbyterian churches.

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; 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 STORY OF INNKEEPING ~ THE OFFERING WITNESS

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.

CLOSING CAROL “In the Bleak Midwinter”

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

BENEDICTION

May God's Door of Welcome swing open in your heart and in your life.
May Christ's humble first dwelling remind you of the plenty you already know.
And may the Spirit lead you into more possibility and hospitality than you can
imagine, making room in The Inn for all.

**ALL: May it be so for you. May it be so for us. May it be so for this church.
Amen.**

POSTLUDE

Blue Christmas Open House ~ December 21 from 6pm – 8pm

Christmas Eve ~ December 24: “The Inn”

Family Candlelight Service at 4pm

Candlelight Communion Service at 7pm

Boxing Day Worship Service ~ December 26 @ 10:30am

Credits: *This liturgy is adapted from The Worship Design Studio. Used with permission.* © www.worshipdesignstudio.com/theinn

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Hope Waits for Us at Advent, Amanda Udis-Kessler, Handbell arr. Stephanie Rhoades, Used by permission. © www.worshipdesignstudio.com/theinn

Hymn: In the Bleak Midwinter, CCLI #294736, Public Domain

Announcements & Upcoming Events

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Tornado victims & Kentucky, The Ochifinto Family, The Rocoberton/Metcalf Family, The Lewis Family, Lenny & Norma, Jackie, Jennifer, all of us who have lost loved ones and are missing them dearly, Henry & Terrie Newbold, Bob having heart surgery this week, Edwin Fernandes, Ryan who has cancer, Lindsay, Loretta & Lauren, The Masterson Family, Bob, The Schultheis Family in the death of Betty's sister, Patti Pakkila, Matthew, Uncle Larry, Heather & Family, Heath, Lois, Gordon, Patti in hospital, Pat Custard, Herb T., Beth C., Vinnie Candido, Alice, Rick Nelson, Friends @ Heath Village, Mike, Ellie, Cindy & Family, Katie, Joe & Elaine O'Reilly, Amy Testa, Jim, Adam, Kailin (surgery) and her parents, Marie, Jim & Michelle, Janet, Wanda, Yvonne, Helen, Claire, Grey, Bernadette Jacobus, Robbie, The abducted missionaries in Haiti, Eloise Mial, Dong-Hee Nam, Kathy Pflugfelder, Kailynn, The De La Cruz Family, Rich K., Refugees and those seeking asylum, Churches as they try and do ministry in a new time.

The Sunday School vacuum has been located and we are fortunate that Arthur Strock also donated one to the church in the meantime. Thank you!

BOOK CLUB STARTING All invited to participate. First meeting 1/10/22 at 2 pm to discuss the first pick, The Chilbury Ladies Choir by Jennifer Ryan. Unless someone new would like to join us who works, we will continue meeting in the afternoons on the **2nd Monday of each month**. Contact Cylvia with questions.

Book list as of now:

Rules of Civility by Amor Towles - Feb.

Once We Were Brothers by Ronald H. Balson - Mar.

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi - Apr.

The Elegance of the Hedgehog by Muriel Barbery – May

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