



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Pajama Sunday

December 26, 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

GATHERING WORDS

**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 day.**

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Today we light the Christ Candle once again that illumines the Door of Welcome. May this light shine in our hearts, in our lives, and in our church.

May Christ's Light awaken us to possibilities and lead us to greater hospitality. There IS room in this Inn, a House for the Holy.

FIRST READING Colossians 3:12-17 (NRSV)

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to [Abba God] through him.

SONG

A Prayer Poem
“Homes for the Holy”
by John van de Laar

It's a radical thing to claim if you really think about it:
that God inhabits humanity;
that the Eternal Divine would dwell
in temporal human hearts, minds, and bodies;
But that is the unavoidable truth that Christmas dares to proclaim.

The great mystery is that this indwelling is not a once-off,
never-to-be-repeated event;
Yes, Christ is God incarnate, but so is the cosmos!
And since the Divine Spirit lives in us too, so are we!
We are homes for the Holy!

As this truly awesome reality sinks into our souls,
we hear the Spirit's whisper: that we can live in the power of this
truth; that we can host God's holy presence not just in this season,
but always! And we can carry the Divine presence, grace, and
compassion to all who need to find a home within the Divine Life.

Thank you God, for giving us the dignity of allowing us to be your
Divine dwelling, and for giving us the chance to help the homeless
ones — whether physically or spiritually— find their place within
your Divine hospitality. Amen.

MESSAGE *Housing the Holy*

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 16th

century for the Book of Common Prayer. This prayer is utilized by the Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church.

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. 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 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say:
 News, news!
 Jesus Christ is born today!
Ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
 Christ is born today,
 Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice,
with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss:
 News, news!
 Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door,
and ye are blest forevermore.



Christ was born for this,
Christ was born for this!

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

*Today's flowers are given by Carol Phillips
in honor of children in foster care.*

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

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Hymn: Good Christian Friends, Rejoice, CCLI #85158, Public Domain

Announcements & Upcoming Events

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

All who are struggling this Christmas, Hermina, Tornado victims & Kentucky, The Ochifinto Family, The Rocaberton/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, Refugees and those seeking asylum, Churches as they try and do ministry in a new time.

We are seeking a Treasurer effective January 1, 2022. Please contact Pastor Ninabeth for more information. Pastor Ninabeth can be reached by cell phone at 908-391-2561 or email at pvecpastor@gmail.com.

*No Sunday school December 26th or January 2nd!

*The Church Office will be closed for the holidays on:

Friday, 12/24 & Monday, 12/27 and Friday, 12/31 & Monday, 1/3

The flower sign-up sheets for January through May are in the narthex. Please pick a Sunday to place flowers on the altar in honor or memory of loved ones. Cost: \$20.

January 2, 2022 - Fellowship Hour after Worship

Menu: Authentic Jewish Chicken Soup, Hot Chicken Salad Sliders, Dessert by Penny

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