



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Second Sunday of Advent "A Place at the Table"

PEACE

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

December 5, 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

**Peace waits for us at Advent
Peace waits for us to rest.
Peace waits for our acceptance
of the truth that we are blessed.
In this time of preparation
for the work of co-creation,
for the birthing of a world
of gentleness and play.
Peace is born in us each day!**

THE LIGHT OF PEACE

Today we offer the Light of Hope and Peace to illumine the Door of Welcome.
May this light shine in our hearts, in our lives, and in our community.
May Peace 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

Shalom to You

Shalom to you now
Shalom my friends
May God's full mercies bless you my friends
In all your living and through your loving
Christ be your shalom Christ be your shalom

FIRST READING Baruch 5: 1-5 (CEB)

Take off your mourning clothes
and oppression, Jerusalem!
Dress yourself in the dignity
of God's glory forever.
Wrap the justice that comes from God around yourself like a robe.
Place the eternal one's glory
on your head like a crown.
God will show your brilliance everywhere under heaven.
God will give you this name
by which to be called forever:
The Peace That Comes from Justice,
The Honor That Comes
from Reverence for God!
Get up, Jerusalem!
Stand on the high place,
and look around to the east!
See your children gathered
from the west to the east
by the holy one's word,
as they rejoice that God has remembered them.

HYMN

PVEC Choir

SECOND READING Philippians 1:3-11 (CEB)

I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers. I'm thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it's always a prayer full of joy. I'm glad because of the way you have been my partners in the ministry of the gospel from the time you first believed it until now. I'm sure about this: the one who started a good work in you will stay with you to complete the job by the day of Christ Jesus. I have good reason to think this way about all of you because I keep you in my heart. You are all my partners in God's grace, both during my time in prison and in the defense and support of the gospel. God is my witness that I feel affection for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.

This is my prayer: that your love might become even more and more rich with knowledge and all kinds of insight. I pray this so that you will be able to decide what really matters and so you will be sincere and blameless on the day of Christ. I pray that you will then be filled with the fruit of righteousness, which comes from Jesus Christ, in order to give glory and praise to God.

MESSAGE *A Place At the Table*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Make of my heart a stable, a house for the holy, a warm and sturdy place for peace 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 peace 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 peace 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 STORY OF INNKEEPING ~ 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, or add PVEC to your online bill pay. Thank you for your generosity.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

ONE: The Holy One be with you

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Lift up your hearts

ALL: We lift them up to our God.

ONE: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Birthing God, creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image. You breathed into us the Spirit of Life.

Yet, we have not always understood ourselves as sacred creation, a place for the dwelling of the Holy inside of us. We have not always seen that in others. When we turn away from each other and from you, your love remains steadfast. You deliver us from the captivity of isolation and fear, make covenant to be our steadfast, indwelling God, and continue to speak to us through prophetic utterance, in the Spirit and through the people.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

In the midst of a time of despair, oppression, division, and fear, You brought Jesus, the Christ, into this world.

Into The Inn of simple means came a life dedicated and anointed by the Spirit to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and sat at a table with those who suffer, and those who perpetuated suffering, laying bare complicity and compassion.

His baptism, ministry, death, and resurrection gave the blueprints for the building of church community, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made a new covenant with us to be midwives, by water and the Spirit, birthing more hope, more peace, more joy, more love in this world, making more room in this house, at this table, for all.

In another house, on another night– the night in which he gave himself up for us– he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Open our hearts in and through this act, stripping away any excuse or fearful hesitation, so that we will open our doors to the world as the body of Christ, redeemed by his love.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

And now as the beloved children of God, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:

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.

CLOSING CAROL "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

**It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.**

**But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song, which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!**

**For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.**

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

**** Our Annual Congregational Meeting is TODAY! ****

All are invited to attend after worship at 11:45am (In person or via Zoom)

Zoom Meeting ID: 880 8931 1178

Passcode: PVEC

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

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

Image: Adapted from the Worship Design Studio

Hymn: Shalom To You, CCLI 114122, 1983 The United Methodist Publishing House, It Came Upon The Midnight Clear, CCLI# 31078

Announcements & Upcoming Events

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

The Schultheis Family in the death of Betty's sister Patti Pakkila, Matthew, Uncle Larry, Heather & Family, Heath, Lois, Gordon, Patti in the hospital, Pat Custard, Herb T., Beth C., Vinnie Candido, Alice, Rick Nelson, Keith, Friends @ Heath Village, Mike, Ellie, Cindy & Family, Katie, Joe, Elaine O'Reilly, Amy Testa, Jim, Adam, Kailin & her parents, Marie, Jim & Michelle, Walter, Janet, Wanda, Yvonne, Helen, Claire, Grey, Bernadette Jacobus, Robbie, the abducted missionaries in Haiti, Eloise Mial, Dong-Hee Nam, Kathy Pflugfelder, Bruce, Kailynn, The DeLaCruz Family, Rich K., Ann Custard, Anne Ellis, George Cappola, Bridget, refugees and those seeking asylum, Zachary, Churches as they try to do ministry in a new time, Rich Pearson & Family.

*Following the Annual Meeting, Donna Weinberg and Penny Newell will be providing lunch in Fellowship Hall.

Thank you Kathy Z. for putting up the beautiful holiday decorations and bringing the spirit of the season!

CHRISTMAS ANGELS

We still have Christmas Angels available for people to choose for buying gifts. Please wrap your gifts and attach the angel with its letter showing on the outside of the package. Please also write the angel letter on your package in case the actual angel should come off. All gifts are due back at church by Sunday, Dec. 12th. They will be taken to Allamuchy School on Dec. 13th. Thank you to all who are participating in our annual angel program.

SING WITH US

Help spread the joy of Christmas with the Allamuchy community! We would love to have a group of singers, both youth and adult, to sing some Christmas carols at the Allamuchy tree lighting ceremony to be held on Tuesday, December 7 at 6:00 PM outside at town hall. As in the past, it's sure to be a beautiful event. All are welcome. The more, the merrier! If interested, please contact the church office or Diane Van Dongen (908) 892-3265 for further information.

CHRISTMAS SALE to benefit The Bell Choir in Fellowship Hall

HANDMADE by Penny Newell & Cylvia Ultz

HOMEMADE SYRUP by Lynne Moore

\$10 with proceeds going toward Campership

Stewardship Snippet

Dec. 5th 2021 (Second Sunday of Advent, Year C)

Luke 3: Verse 4 The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the

Lord, make his paths straight'.

If Jesus had shown up at your door last night, what would He have found you doing? Would He have found your house in order? Would He have found your life cleaned up? Would He have found you prepared for His coming? The truth is that all of us still have preparations that need to be made. And that's okay because Christ has not come back yet. But let us continue to make preparations, because He could return at any moment. Repent from any habit of sin in your life. Turn from it and return to God. That is how you prepare the way for the Lord in your own life.

Thanksgiving Gratitude

We are thankful for the generous food pantry donations from Allamuchy Township School families & Dr. Jim Fedich and patients. We appreciate Kathy Z. for picking up the items from the doctor's office!

The Case of the Missing Vacuum

Liz Silva is looking for the labeled *Sunday School* vacuum that has been kept in the entry closet. It is a green and grey bagless upright. We have searched everywhere we could think of, please let us know if you have seen it or find it. Thank you!



December 1 John 1:1-5
December 2 Isaiah 9:2-7
December 3 Isaiah 11:1-10
December 4 Jeremiah 33:14-16
December 5 Luke 1:5-10
December 6 Luke 1:11-17
December 7 Luke 1:18-25
December 8 Luke 1:26-38
December 9 Matthew 1:18-21
December 10 Matthew 1:22-26
December 11 Luke 1:39-45
December 12 Luke 1:46-56
December 13 Luke 2:1-5
December 14 Luke 2:6-7
December 15 Luke 2:8-12
December 16 Luke 2:13-14
December 17 Luke 2:15-18
December 18 Luke 2:19-20
December 19 Micah 5:2-5
December 20 Matthew 2:1-2
December 21 Matthew 2:3-6
December 22 Matthew 2:7-8
December 23 Matthew 2:9-12
December 24 John 1:14

My Heart Is Song

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>

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FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH