



# PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Worship in the United Church of Christ Tradition  
January 16, 2022

*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.

*Our goal is to create a beloved community  
and this will require a qualitative change in our souls  
as well as a quantitative change in our lives.*

*~Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Our Mother-Father God has made us to be One Body with many members.

**All: United and uniting. This is our calling.**

ONE: God calls us to share our diverse gifts activated by the one and same Spirit .

**ALL: United and uniting. This is our redemption.**

ONE: God longs for us to be united in love and to manifest the Spirit in our different ways.

**ALL: United and uniting. This is our worship.**

**Let us gather in this hour to offer praise and worship to our Holy God, who challenges us and calls us to create *the Beloved Community*.**

## INVOCATION

**O God, all people are your Beloved, across races, nationalities, religions, sexual orientations and all the ways we are distinctive from one another. We are all manifestations of your image. *We are bound together in an inescapable network of mutuality and tied to a single garment of destiny.* You call us into your unending work of justice, peace and love. Let us know your presence among us now:**

**Let us delight in our diversity that offers glimpses of the mosaic of your beauty. Strengthen us with your steadfast love and transform our despairing fatigue into hope-filled action. Under the shadow of your wings in this hour may we find rest and strength, renewal and hope. We ask this, inspired by the example of your disciple, Martin Luther King, Jr., and in Jesus' name. Amen.**

## **CALL TO CONFESSION**

God loves us and calls us each by name. Knowing we are eternally forgiven and infinitely loved, let us boldly confess our sins before God.

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**O God, we long to co-create with you the Beloved Community which looks to the common good; privileges all equally and creates societal systems which celebrate the humanity and the gifts of all.**

**And yet we focus on our differences, envy each other's gifts, devalue manifestations of you, O God, that are not like our own.**

**Perhaps our sin is a slow wait for justice:**

**We allow the voices of brothers and sisters who do not look like us, love like us, or worship like us to be silenced.**

**We have told them to wait for freedom, justice and equality.**

**We foster in them *a denigrating sense of nobodiness*. Lord, have mercy.**

**Or perhaps we have kept silence ourselves in the face of their struggle for full human life. *For it is not solely hateful words and actions, but also appalling silence that follows the path of oppression*. Christ, have mercy.**

**Perhaps our sin is to give in to weariness, discouragement, bitterness:**

**You have called us to be *drum majors for justice, peace and righteousness*, yet the work of peace and justice overwhelms us at times, to build with God the Beloved Community seems impossible, and we grow weary.**

**We cry, "Peace, peace," but there is no peace within us or around us.**

**We find ourselves on the path of hatred and oppression, violence and war. Lord, have mercy.**

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Sisters and brothers, God is at work in us and with us!

God has promised:

"I will not keep silent and I will not rest until the vindication of my beloved people shines out like the dawn and their salvation like a burning torch.

My people shall no more be termed 'forsaken,' and their land shall no more be termed 'desolate.'"

We remember that you have given your Beloved people a new name:

"My delight is in them."

**ALL: Thank you, God for delighting in us even now, for forgiving us our slow action, our silence and our weariness, for empowering our work and inviting us once again to create with you the Beloved Community you long for.**

**HYMN**

*Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,  
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;  
thy justice like mountains high soaring above  
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light;  
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;  
all laud we would render: O help us to see  
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee.

**SCRIPTURE John 2:1-11** New Revised Standard Version

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

**MESSAGE**      *Radiant Hope*

**HYMN**                      *Lift Every Voice and Sing*                      *PVEC Choir*

## **JOYS AND CONCERNS**

### **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 Ecumenical Text which was developed in contemporary language by the English Language Liturgical Consultation in 1988.*

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

### **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](http://www.panthervalleychurch.org), or add PVEC to your online bill pay. Thank you for your generosity.

### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**O God, we commit to use all our gifts – wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, administration, hospitality, and finances – in the service of acting as co-workers with you and each other *for peace and justice to flow like a mighty stream.***

## **BENEDICTION**

Let us go forth to celebrate and strengthen *our inescapable network of mutuality*, and become *the radiant hope* needed in the world. As we go forth in this mutuality, may we experience our God rejoicing over us and with us.

Let us go forth confident that *unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word*. Amen!

## **POSTLUDE**

**Credits:** *Phrases from the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. have been woven into the prayer texts. They are identified by italics. Texts of King's work are available in A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., edited by James M. Washington; © 1986 Coretta Scott King. A brief essay on King's understanding of the term "Beloved Community" is available at <http://www.wilpf.org/mlksbelovedcommunity> .*

*Creating the Beloved Community: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday after Epiphany, Martin Luther King, Jr., Weekend was written by the Rev. Dr. Cari Jackson, Founder and Director of the Center for Spiritual Light, New York City.*

*Image: Swanson, John August. Wedding Feast, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=58581> [retrieved January 12, 2022]. Original source: [www.JohnAugustSwanson.com](http://www.JohnAugustSwanson.com) - copyright 1996 by John August Swanson.*

*Hymn: Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise, CCLI# 124466, Public Domain.  
Lift Every Voice and Sing, CCLI#7071034, Public Domain.*

## **Stewardship Snippet**

### **Jan 16, 2022 (Second Sunday after Epiphany - Year C)**

John 2:1-11: Jesus's First Miracle.

If you witnessed a miracle, wouldn't you want to tell everyone? If you saw the sun dance in the sky, a crippled man walk, or the Virgin Mary appear in front of you, wouldn't you just want to shout about it from a rooftop so all could hear? Maybe you would be afraid others would not believe you. You might choose instead to keep it to yourself to avoid criticism and ridicule. At least, if you saw a miracle, you would have a choice: to tell or not to tell.

Stewardship is like that. You can give of yourself, your wealth or your possessions, and thank God you are able; or you can do nothing. The choice is yours . Donna Weinberg, your Stewardship Chairperson

## **Announcements & Upcoming Events**

### **PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

Healthcare Workers, Joe, Stevie & Matthew, Jonathan, Jordan & Chris, Jim & Michelle, The Samanns Family, The Ledwiths, Ray, Addison, Jerry, The Family & Friends of Patti Zellars, Ed Belenguer, Greg Weinrich

### **PVEC COUNCIL MEETING**

The Council will meet after worship and via Zoom at 11:45am today, January 16<sup>th</sup>

**Reminder** that Ninabeth will be on respite January 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## **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

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

Tel: 908-852-5444

Email: [panthervalleychurch@gmail.com](mailto:panthervalleychurch@gmail.com)

***FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH***