



# PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**Worship in the Presbyterian USA Tradition  
Baptism of the Lord  
January 9, 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.

## CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: The voice of God resounds upon the water.

**ALL: The Spirit of the Lord hovers over the stream.**

ONE: The Son of God is named, "Beloved."

**ALL: And all who worship shout out, "Glory!"**

ONE: Ascribe to the Lord majesty and strength.

**ALL: Let us worship God in holy splendor.**

## 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

**We are precious in your sight, yet we often forget that we are your beloved. We confess that our love is fickle and inconsistent. We follow selfish goals and deny that our way of life harms others and hurts your world. We are sorry and we want to change. Create in us a clean heart, strengthen our resolve, reconcile us one to another, and bless us with your peace. Amen.**

## DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Beloved, hear the words of our Creator, spoken through the prophet Isaiah (43:1):  
"I have called you by name. You are mine. Do not fear, for I have redeemed you."

## HYMN

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation.

O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!

All ye who hear, now to his temple draw near; join me in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigning  
bears thee on eagle's wings, e'er in his keeping maintaining.

God's care enfolds all, whose true good he upholds.

Hast thou not known his sustaining?

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!  
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him!  
Let the amen sound from his people again; gladly forever adore him.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**Holy God, when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan the heavens opened, the Spirit descended, and your voice affirmed your love in Jesus for the healing of the human race and all creation. By water and word you lovingly invite us into this same life-giving mission. May your Spirit, moving like a stream of water flowing from its source, work in us this day to realize your vision of a world made new in Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

### **SCRIPTURE**

#### **Luke 3:21-22 New International Version**

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too.

And as he was praying, heaven was opened  
and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven:

“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

#### **Acts 8:14-17 New International Version**

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

**MESSAGE**     *The Movement of the Spirit*

### **THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

Sisters and brothers in Christ: through the sacrament of baptism God's Spirit initiates us into Christ's holy church, puts us on the stage of God's saving drama,

and gives us new birth through water and the Spirit. So, come to the water -- water poured over and immersing us, water flowing freely for all who will receive it, water from the streams of God's saving power and justice, water that brings hope to all who thirst for righteousness, water that refreshes life, nurtures growth, and offers new birth.

Here we come to the waters, to baptize a child, and in each other's presence to renew our commitments to Christ who has raised us, the Spirit who has birthed us, and the Creator who is making all things new.

### **PRESENTATION FOR BAPTISM**

Pastor Ninabeth: On behalf of the Ecumenical Council,  
I present Skiley Nailah Okemwa.

Daughter of David M. Okemwa and Syndie Marseille  
Goddaughter of Alexandra Signifis, Florence Marseille, Yves Cazeau and  
Christopher T. Cazeau, to receive the sacrament of Baptism.

Pastor Ninabeth (to Parents): Do you desire that Skiley be baptized?

Pastor Ninabeth (to Godparents): Do you promise, through prayer and  
example, to support and encourage Skiley to  
be a faithful Christian?

Pastor Ninabeth (to Congregation): Do you, as members of the church of Jesus  
Christ, promise to guide and nurture Skiley by  
word and deed, with love and prayer,  
encouraging him to know and follow Christ  
and to be a faithful member of his church?

**Congregation: We do.**

### **PROFESSION OF FAITH**

With the whole church, let us confess:

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;**

he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

### **THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER**

ONE: The Spirit of the Lord is with us.

**ALL: Even so, come Lord Jesus!**

ONE: Let us pray. Almighty God, the life you birthed in us by baptism into Jesus Christ will never die. Your justice never fails. Your mercy is everlasting. Your healing river flows. Your Spirit blows where you will. We cannot stop you, God! But sometimes we try. We try to block the flow, we redirect the winds of the Spirit, or we walk so far away from the life-giving Stream that we do not hear its sound, and we forget its power. We parch ourselves.

**ALL: We are dry and thirsty, O God. Come, refresh us!**

ONE: Come upon us, Holy Spirit!

**ALL: Come upon us, Holy Spirit! Come upon these waters.**

**Let these waters be to us drops of your mercy.**

**Let these waters remind us of your righteousness and justice.**

**Let these waters renew in us the resurrection power of Jesus.**

**Let these waters make us long for your coming reign.**

**Most Holy God, Glory to you!**

**Jesus Christ, Glory to you!**

**Spirit of fire, Spirit over the waters, Spirit of holiness! Glory to you!**

**Eternal God, One in Three and Three in One!**

**All glory is yours, now and forever. Amen!**

### **BAPTISM**

*Skiley, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit, you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Pastor Ninabeth invites the congregation to welcome Skiley:

*Let us welcome our new sister in Christ. Child of God by water and the Spirit.*

**Congregation: We welcome you into God's new creation. Share with us in Christ's royal priesthood. With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you as a member of Christ's church.**

**HYMN**

*Spirit Song*

*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 Traditional text written in the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 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**

**We offer our gifts in recognition that we are baptized people, transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. So, we will hold nothing back but will share our lives, our hearts, our energies, as well as our efforts, in ministry to the world around us. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

## **BENEDICTION**

**We are God's beloved, and we go out into God's world to love, to serve, and to be made new. As we go, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the unity of the Holy Spirit keep us now and forever. Amen.**

## **POSTLUDE**

***Today's flowers are given by Donna Weinberg  
as prayers for her granddaughter Hope Edmonds (Covid).***

***Credits: Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession, Prayer of the Day is compiled by Kimberly Bracken Long in Feasting On the Word Worship Companion.***

***Image: Baptism of Christ, Xaç'atur. Baptism of Christ, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.  
<https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56383> [retrieved January 5, 2022]. Original source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/medmss/8614784984>.***

***Hymn: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, CCLI #43073, Public Domain,  
Spirit Song, CCLI#27824, 1979 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing***

## ***Stewardship Snippet***

**Jan 9, 2022** (First Sunday after Epiphany - Year C)

Acts 8: 14-17: When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

We are not our money, but our ability to share our resources with others is a very real part of who we are. Like the apostles in Acts, we too have an invitation to distribute and share what we have with those in need. Our baptismal call invites us into a deeper understanding of Christian stewardship. All that we have, all that we are belongs to God. Blessings, Donna Weinberg

## **Announcements & Upcoming Events**

### **PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

Cylvia in the loss of her mother, Donna's granddaughter Hope, Frank Reitz surgery on 2/10, family & friends who are sick now, The Loss of Desmond Tutu, Lenny & Norma, Healthcare Workers, Starry, Mary, Hermina

To PVEC Congregation,

The staff is incredibly grateful for your generous holiday gift. We are feeling very appreciated and loved. Hugs from Ninabeth, Diane, Liz and Nikki

### **PVEC Council Meeting - Sunday, January 16, 2022 @ 11:45 in person or via Zoom**

The sacristy has been spotlessly tidied and organized by some lovely, helpful, clean-up fairies this week. Hopefully, it can stay that way. We appreciate you!

We appreciate Bob & Kathy Zinckgraff clearing out all the holiday decorations and cleaning up inside and outside around the building.

***\*\*A special CONGRATULATIONS to Bob Z. on his retirement from the post office last Friday after 35 years ~ best wishes!\*\****

Happy Birthday to Pastor Ninabeth tomorrow, 1/10! Wishing you a year of peace, love and joy.

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. The cost is \$20.

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

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***FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH***