

Good Enough:

Embracing the Imperfections
of Life and Faith

Lent 2

"So much is out of our control."



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**Second Week of Lent
March 13, 2022**

*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.

We continue our movement through the Lent season this week with another kind of “letting go.” This week we lament that so much in life is out of our control. This is frustrating to us and so sometimes we have been tempted to believe the sayings that tell us if we just “think positively,” we can turn it all around. Yet our experience tells us that this doesn’t always work. Let us turn ladder-climbing toward the expectation of a perfect life into garden-tending, nurturing “what is” and embracing our holy, good enough, lives.

*God of love,
in the face of violence, your grace persists.
In the winds of fear, your love endures.
In places of brokenness, your healing continues.
Give us gratitude, and trust.
Amen.*

CALL TO WORSHIP *Based on Psalm 27*

ONE: Let us pray together:

ALL: Holy One, Our Light and Salvation,

we call out to you, sometimes afraid of the adversaries in life.

Shelter us in days of trouble, lead us on level paths.

**Open us this day to your grace and peace, transform our frustrations
into simple and good enough moments that fill our days.**

Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

HONEST QUESTIONS, COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE

ONE: Even Jesus got dang frustrated when folks didn’t behave as he would have liked. We probably aren’t receiving death threats from Herod as Jesus was, but our wellbeing could be threatened by the idea that if we just try hard enough, are nice enough, say just the right thing, life will always go our way. We run around in so many directions, trying to herd the chicks into some imagined semblance of perfect formation (have you ever tried to herd chicks?). What if we could let go of needing all things and all people to be “just so” and instead learn to dance with the unfolding of that which is not ours to control? Let us take a moment of silent reflection...

Silent Reflection

Hear this compassionate word from the Psalmist:

"I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!"

Know that already, God is offering us freedom from feeling alone in fixing what feels oh so wrong with this world, inviting us to let go of the need to be God, so that we might recognize that God is with us, offering courage in difficulty.

And know, that despite our sometimes-faltering steps, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are being forgiven, even now.

**ALL: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
Glory to God! Amen.**

THE PEACE

HYMN

When Darkness and Unknowing

When darkness and unknowing weigh down our hearts with fear,
oh, loving gentle Jesus, you draw your dear ones near.
You feed us with yourself, Lord, and dwelling in our soul
you lead us by your light, though we cannot see the goal.

When evil and oppression make threat to bend your will,
you gather your beloved in peace, and gentle still.
You feed us with compassion: your very life you give,
so gentleness will also become the way we live.

Despite our fear and violence, the gentleness you've shown,
your mercy in the darkness, becomes our hope alone.
You feed us with your love now, and ban the evil powers,
and give us your compassion, so your peace may be ours.

Gospel Reading Luke 13: 31-35

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him,
"Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you."

He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons

and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.'

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

MESSAGE *So Much Is Out of Our Control*

HYMN

PVEC Choir

PRAYERS FOR THE LIFE OF OUR WORLD

Precious Holy One,

A brief look at the news shouts out that there are many dark places in our world.

Darkness through mindless violence.

Darkness through frustration and horror.

Darkness through grief and distress.

Darkness through pain and disease.

Darkness deep in the souls of those we love...

Holy One,

into these dark places,

into those unnamed dark places

into the darkness of fear and loneliness

pour out your radiance

shower down your light

break through pure brilliance

until the darkness is dispelled

and our hearts find peace

and the light of hope

can shine forth again

fresh and new with this new day

hear our prayers we pray,

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, or add PVEC to your online bill pay. Thank you for your generosity.

When we give our tithes and offerings, we are witnesses to the transforming love of God in Christ. I invite you to give as generously as you have received.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

**Generous God, in light of your extravagant blessings—
no matter what the state of the world or our imperfect lives—
we offer our gifts and ourselves, and know that you transform what we plant
into the produce of love. Amen.**

A BLESSING FOR WHEN YOU REALIZE EVERYONE IS STRUGGLING

“Blessed are you who see things clearly, where struggle is everyone’s normal.

You walk among the fellowship of the afflicted, a club no one wants to join.

And while this life isn’t shiny, it does come with superpowers.

Superpowers of ever-widening empathy and existential courage that gets you back up after another fall and a deepened awe at the beauty and love that can be found amid life’s rubble.

Like flowers that grow from the cracks in the sidewalk.

These virtues blossom in you. And thank God for you.

Blessed are all of us who struggle, for we are in good company, and we’ll never walk alone.”

BENEDICTION

And now, may the God who loves all of creation, especially the ordinary parts, and Jesus, our companion along this crooked path called life, and the Holy Spirit, who loves to improvise in surprising ways, go with you, dwell among you, and give you joy. Amen.

POSTLUDE

***Flowers are donated by Betty Schultheis in memory of
her mother Marjorie O'Hara.***

Credits: All liturgy and leader parts, except prayers for the Life of Our World are written by Marcia McFee © www.worshipdesignstudio.com/goodenough. Used and adapted with permission.

Prayers for the Life of Our World written by Julie Rennick and posted on RevGalBlogPals. <https://revgalblogpals.org/2018/03/05/monday-prayer-175/>

Hymn: When Darkness and Unknowing, Steve Garnaas-Holmes

Stewardship Snippet (Second Sunday in Lent - Year C)

Psalm 27: 1-3, 11-14

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident. The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence. I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

I don't know about you, but I can't hear these words right now without thinking of the people in Ukraine. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Early on amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine, faith leaders asked the people of the world to pray with the psalmist. Well, I am doing that, with Psalm 27. Donna Weinberg

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please pray for:

The Ukrainian People & Our World, Don, Greg Weinrich, Carol Tribus, Betty Schultheis, Family & Friends of Joe O'Reilly, Family & Friends of Harry Gorman

The **2022 PVEC Budget** has been approved.

The **Discernment Team & Search Committee** are organized and plan to meet on March 20 from 9am-12noon.

We need **plastic grocery bags, recycled eco-friendly tote bags, and packing paper/bubble wrap** for upcoming events if you have extras around the house. Thank you!

Join us for **Lunchtime Meditation Wednesdays from 12:30pm-1:00pm in the Sanctuary** to gain clarity and reduce anxiety. Each week we will explore a different meditation practice.

April Rummage Sale – **We are seeking donations.**

Event Dates

- Sun. 3/13* Deadline to Order Easter Flowers is **TODAY**, Moving Outward & Forward in Love
 - Sun. 3/20* Sacrament Class 11:45 am
 - Sun. 3/27* Moving Outward & Forward in Love
 - Sat. 4/2* PVEC Spring Fling Vendor Event & Chicken Slider Dinner 2-6pm
 - Sun. 4/10* Moving Outward & Forward in Love
 - Th. 4/14* Maundy Thursday Service 7pm
 - Fri. 4/15* Good Friday Service 7pm
 - Sat. 4/16* \$5 Bunny Breakfast, Photos & Egg Hunt
 - Sun. 4/17* Easter “Sonrise” 6:15am, Communion 10:30am
 - Fri. 4/22* Chicken Lunch/Dinner 12-6pm, First day for Rummage Sale 9am-6pm
 - Sat. 4/23* Rummage Sale 9am-2pm
 - Sun. 4/24* Moving Outward & Forward in Love & Rummage Sale after worship
for Congregation only
 - Sat. 4/30* Last day for Rummage Sale 9am-2pm
 - Sat. 6/18* Fish & Chips Dinner 4:30-7pm, proceeds to VBS
- Week of 8/1-8/5 * NEW VBS Dates***

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

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Music Director: Diane Van Dongen

Church Administrator: Nikki Nicinski

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