

Good Enough:

Embracing the Imperfections
of Life and Faith

Lent 3

"Lots of things can be medicine."



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**Third Week of Lent
March 20, 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.

*Our souls are rooted in you, O God.
Dig as you will; expose what you must, prune what you must.
Feed the soil of our souls.
Let the power of your grace flow up through our roots
and bear fruit in our love.*

INTROIT

This Is My Song

PVEC Bell Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP *Based on Psalm 63*

ONE: Let us pray together:

**ALL: Holy One, Our Balm, Our Feast
we lift our hands and call your name,
in need of healing—thirsting and hungry.
Your steadfast love is better than life.
Open us this day to your nourishment
in the songs of the land, in the beauty of the sky—
in the simple and good enough moments that fill our days.
Amen.**

CHILDREN'S TIME

HONEST QUESTIONS, COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE

In our Gospel scripture today, we will hear about the unproductive fig tree. It has been three years, where is the fruit? If it doesn't happen within the "expected" time frame, then it is a failure? Whose fault is it? What happens when our lives don't follow the "life-script?" The gardener offers an alternative medicine – patient, hope-filled tending. Lying fallow and getting fertilized with laughter and tears at the crappy stuff of life can help heal what ails us. What parts of your life feel fruitless? How might you tend to your own life and allow the Gardener to love you? Let us take a moment of silent reflection...

Silent Reflection

Hear this compassionate word from Isaiah: “Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Know that already, God is offering us love enough. We are invited to release oppressive expectations of ourselves and others so that we might recognize true worth afforded to all. 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

This Is My Song

UMC Hymnal 437

This is my song, O God of all the nations,
a song of peace for lands afar and mine.
This is my home, the country where my heart is;
here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;
but other hearts in other lands are beating
with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,
and sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine.
But other lands have sunlight too, and clover,
and skies are ev'rywhere as blue as mine.
O hear my song, thou God of all the nations,
a song of peace for their land and for mine.

This is my prayer, O Lord of all earth's kingdoms,
Thy kingdom come; on earth thy will be done.
Let Christ, be lifted up till all shall serve him,
and hearts united learn to live as one.
O hear my prayer, thou God of all the nations;
myself I give thee; let thy will be done.

Gospel Reading Luke 13: 1-9

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.

Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?'

He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

MESSAGE *Lots of things can be medicine*

PRAYERS FOR THE LIFE OF OUR WORLD

God, like the Israelites in the wilderness, we too have known Your love, and experienced Your care and provision. You invite us to extend that love to the world around us — to care for others as deeply as we care for ourselves. And so we bring the needs of our world before You now. In Your mercy, hear our prayer.

**We pray for the many who do not have enough:
enough food to eat, or shelter to keep warm;
enough employment, or money to pay their bills;
enough medicine or medical care.
Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**We also pray for those who have more than enough, but who still struggle to find meaning and purpose in life; who indulge in dangerous or self-serving activities to dull their pain or loneliness.
Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

God, Your grace reaches out to all of us.

You call us to live as citizens of heaven, working together with one heart and mind. Strengthen us to live in a manner worthy of the Good News we have received, offering our lives in service of Your kingdom, where the last are first, and the first are last, and there is grace enough for all.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, 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

God of mercy, root us in your grace; send the energy of your love through us that we may bear the fruit of your love in our lives, that by your grace all the world may feast on your goodness. Send us, as we pray in the name and the spirit and companionship of Christ. Amen.

A BLESSING FOR WHEN YOU ARE WEARY

Blessed are we who turn our gaze to seek the One who truly sees us and knows us, like newborns whose bleary sight focuses to find adoring eyes beaming down, delighting and filling, mirroring and multiplying.

Blessed are we who discover we are loved and held in arms that are strong enough to hold that which we cannot.

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

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 Christine Longhurst

Prayer of Dedication is written by Steve Garnaas-Holmes

Hymn: *This Is My Song*, CCLI#6327112, St. 1-2 © 1934, 1962, Lorenz Publishing Co; St. 3 © 1964, Lorenz Publishing Co

Stewardship Snippet (Third Sunday in Lent - Year C)

March 20, 2022 - Isaiah 55: 1-2

You there! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread,

And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance.

Isaiah asks, *Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy* (NASB)? Even though this verse was written 900 years before Christ, it could easily be a question Ninabeth might ask in this week's sermon. How is it that we have become so consumed with buying more and more things when neither food nor things ultimately satisfy us? Is it because we have believed the lie that things make us happy? If this is true, why did John D. Rockefeller admit, "I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness." Henry Ford confessed after becoming a multimillionaire, "I was happier doing a mechanic's job." Isaiah was right to ask why we buy what will not satisfy. **Think about it.** Donna Weinberg

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please pray for:

The Ukrainian People & Our World, The Warenberg Family, The O'Reilly Family, Eleanor at Heath Village, Don, Refugees Everywhere

***Date correction:** *The Discernment Team & Search Committee are organized and plan to meet on March 19 from 9am-12noon.*

New Policy on Masks

At Monday's Council Meeting the mask mandate for PVEC was lifted. Therefore, beginning immediately, masks **DO NOT** need to be worn in the church building. Of course, anyone who wishes may continue to wear a mask. However, we will closely monitor the numbers and could revisit this issue at a later date, if necessary.

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!

The Spring Fling is now sold out of vendor tables.

LET'S GO SHOPPING!
PVEC SPRING FLING
VENDOR & CRAFT FAIR

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| ESSENTIAL OILS | PAMPERED CHEF |
| SCENTED WAXES | NAIL POLISH STRIPS |
| RUGS & BASKETS | PERSONALIZED ITEMS |
| KIDS CRAFTS & TOYS | CHOCOLATE TREATS |

AND SO MUCH MORE!

APRIL 2
2PM-6PM

\$5 CHICKEN
DINNER

1490 County Rd 517, Hackettstown, NJ 07840

**Bunny
BREAKFAST**
PANTHER VALLEY
ECUMENICAL CHURCH

EASTER BUNNY PICTURES
EASTER EGG HUNT
\$5 PANCHE BREAKFAST

SATURDAY
APRIL 16 9AM

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

Event Dates

- Sun. 3/20 Sacrament Class 11:45 am
- Sun. 3/27 Moving Outward & Forward in Love meeting - FH/Zoom 11:45am
- Sat. 4/2 PVEC Spring Fling Vendor Event & Chicken Slider Dinner 2-6pm
- Sun. 4/10 Moving Outward & Forward in Love meeting - FH/Zoom 11:45am
- Th. 4/14 Maundy Thursday Service 7pm
- Fri. 4/15 Good Friday Service 7pm
- Sat. 4/16 \$5 Bunny Breakfast, Photos & Egg Hunt 9-11am
- 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 meeting - FH/Zoom 11:45am &
Rummage Sale after worship
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

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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Email: panthervalleychurch@gmail.com

FAMILY ~ FAITH ~ FRIENDS