



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Easter Sunday April 17, 2021

*Connecting with the Community,
Growing Disciples, and Serving Jesus Christ*

*Our Worship can be viewed on our website
PantherValleyChurch.org*

FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH

PRELUDE

We invite you to begin your personal preparation at the beginning of the prelude.

OPENING WORDS

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Christ is risen!

All: Christ is risen indeed!

ONE: Light out of darkness!

ALL: Life out of death!

ONE: Hope out of despair!

ALL: Power out of surrender!

ONE: God, this is your grace, marvelous and wonderful!

ALL: This is your way, always and forever.

ONE: You raise us up with Christ, and we thank you.

ALL: You create us anew, and we worship you. Alleluia!

HYMN

Up from the Grave He Arose

UMH #322

Low in the grave he lay, Jesus my Savior,
waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord!

Refrain:

Up from the grave he arose;
with a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
he arose a victor from the dark domain,
and he lives forever, with his saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch his bed, Jesus my Savior,
vainly they seal the dead, Jesus my Lord!
(Refrain)

Death cannot keep its prey, Jesus my Savior;
he tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!
(Refrain)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, we thank you and praise you for the mystery of your grace. On the cross Jesus your Christ bore all that separates us from you and from life; yet sin and evil and suffering and death were unable to defeat him. By his glorious resurrection you have delivered us from the power of death. Gracious God, make us die every day to sin. Birth us anew, so that we may walk in newness of life with Christ, in the joy of eternal life and in the company of the Holy Spirit, O God, our Creator and Redeemer. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: PSALM 118:1-2, 14-24

*O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!
Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever."
The LORD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.
There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of
the LORD does valiantly;
the right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly."
I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.
The LORD has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death.
Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give
thanks to the LORD.
This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.
I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.
The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.
This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

GOSPEL READING: John 20:11-18

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord;" and she told them that he had said these things to her.

MESSAGE An Unexpected Beginning**SPECIAL MUSIC** *Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks / Easter Song* PVEC Choir**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 these beloved daughters of God, 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 Amy Neely, Kaylee Neeley, Lori Neely, and Syndie Okemwa to receive the sacrament of Baptism.

Pastor Ninabeth: Do you desire to be baptized?

Pastor Ninabeth: Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture Syndie, Lori, Kaylee, and Amy by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging them to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of his church?

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

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.

Let us welcome our new sisters in Christ. Children 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.

AFFIRMATION

Alleluia! Blessed be God, who has given us Jesus Christ.

In Mercy God has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

God, rich in mercy, out of great love for us,

has made us alive together with Christ,

and raised us up and seated us with Christ.

We have been buried with Christ by baptism into death,

so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of God,

we too might walk in newness of life.

Gracious God, we have died, and our life is hidden with Christ in you.

Spirit of Life, create us anew!

Create in us a clean heart, and put a new and right spirit within us.

Forgive our sin, and wash us clean in the water of new birth.

Heal us, redeem us, and set us free.

Spirit of Blessing, be our freedom and our life!

Through your risen Christ give us courage to love fearlessly,

and to resist evil, injustice and oppression

in whatever forms they present themselves.

**Through your crucified and risen Christ, we pray for your church,
that, committing our spirit into your hands,
we may die and rise to newness of life.**

We pray for all those who suffer, struggle or despair,
that they may find renewal, hope and peace.

**Grant us the joy of your life-giving resurrection,
and make us by your grace a new and holy people. 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: dropping it into the “church” located in the Narthex, by mail, through our website, or add PVEC to your online bill pay. Thank you for your generosity.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Together or alone, we continue to offer our gift to others – to those who hunger for hope in a time of uncertainty, to those who long for community to replace their loneliness, for those who seek faith instead of fears. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Christ has risen and we have risen to new life with him. Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin, and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, you have walked patiently with us throughout our Lenten journey. You have celebrated our successes and our growing understanding of your love; and you have mourned our failures and rejections of your healing mercies. This day, as we have gathered to celebrate the joy of Easter, let us remember that we are to become “Easter People,” people of the Resurrection; people who know that what was thought to be impossible has been conquered. Forgive our stubbornness and fears. Fill us with your healing love and help us to become the

disciples that you need to serve in this world. For we ask this in the name of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Darkness is gone! Light floods into our souls! Christ is Risen! His love and mercy are poured out for you. Rejoice! You have been saved through the gift of Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

God is with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your heart.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to the Holy One, our God.

It is good and beautiful for give God our praise.

God, we thank you, for you create us in love...

... Therefore with all Creation we sing your praise.

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full – full of your glory.***

Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed are all who come in your name and blessed is Jesus, ...

... as we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

Christ has died.

Christ has risen.

Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and cup, ...

...Praise to you, God, Son and Spirit. Alleluia.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*We invite you to come forward
to receive the bread and cup at the direction of the ushers.*

BENEDICTION

Go forth in peace. May the grace of the Risen Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Stewardship Snippet (Easter Sunday - Year C) April 17, 2022, Acts 10:40-43

God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

How do we understand "resurrection?" Is this but a promise for the future, or also assurance in the present? During the season of Easter what is sowed is the very present hope made possible by the victory of Christ over death and evil. What is reaped is an outflow of joy and generosity undeterred by fears of scarcity or inadequacy. "Gifted by God" with this Easter faith, "we offer ourselves in praise," letting our giving testify to the unstoppable power of God's great love.

Credits: Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Steve Garnaas-Holmes
<https://unfoldinglight.net/2022/04/03/easter-april-17-2022/>

Hymn: Up From the Grave He Arose, CCLI #27783, Public Domain

Announcements & Upcoming Events

The Ukrainian People & Our World, Refugees Everywhere, Friends & Family of Arlene Bailey, Steve, Lauren & Charlee, Charlotte, Rob, John, Stacey, Cecelia, Sally, Gordon, Lois, Donald



Thanks to those of you who have written on **The Discernment Team's** PVEC timeline in Fellowship Hall. *We hope to see many more responses between now and May 1st.* Remember you can also share a longer story.

CAN YOU HELP?

Liz would appreciate any **bakers able to make and donate treats** for the first day of the Rummage Sale on 4/22 ~ next week! Please contact her at (908)343-1305. She is still in need of assistance from a few more people for the sale.

- Fri. 4/22* First day for Rummage Sale 9am-6pm, Chicken Lunch/Dinner 12-6pm
- Sat. 4/23* Rummage Sale 9am-2pm, Bag Day \$5 small/\$8 large
- Sun. 4/24* After worship, Bag Day as above
- Sat. 4/30* Last day for Rummage Sale 9am-2pm, Dollar Day

Eloise Mial has moved to assisted living and she would welcome visits according to her daughter Beverly. Please update your church directory.

Eloise Mial
Abington Manor
Room 222
215 Cedar Park Blvd.
Easton, PA 18042

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

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FAMILY ~ FAITH ~ FRIENDS