



Good Enough:

Embracing the Imperfections
of Life and Faith

Lent 5

"We are fragile."

PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Fifth Week of Lent

April 3, 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.

*Be Still and know that I am God.
~Psalm 46:10*

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am

Be still and know that

Be still and know

Be still

Be

CALL TO WORSHIP Based on Psalm 126

Leader: Let us pray together:

**Holy One, Lover of Souls,
we call out to you.**

**You know our tears and sorrows,
and you bear the seeds of grief with us.**

**Open us this day to your comfort
that nurtures these seeds into sheaves of joy –
the simple and good enough moments that fill our days.
Amen.**

CHILDREN'S TIME

HONEST QUESTIONS, COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE

Jesus speaks the words no one wanted to admit he was not always going to be around. "Oh, don't say that," so many of us have said to a loved one who speaks the truth about

the fragility of life. Perhaps we get uncomfortable because it reveals the precious nature of the present moment, laying bare the beauty and horror of it all. The indescribable pain we know we will one day face invades our senses like a pervasive perfume, inescapable. What if we stopped denying the limited nature of our lives and breathed in deeply the fragrance of vulnerability? Let us take a moment of silent reflection...

Silent Reflection

Hear this compassionate word from Paul's Letter to the Philippians: "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

Know that already, God is offering us freedom from the need to avoid suffering at the cost of denying the fullness of life.

We are invited into the knowledge that Christ's vulnerability in life, death, and resurrection shows us the sacred nature of the heights and depths of sorrow and joy in our own saga.

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

More Love to Thee, O Christ

UMH #453

More love to thee, O Christ, more love to thee!
Hear thou the prayer I make on bended knee.
This is my earnest plea: More love, O Christ, to thee;
more love to thee, more love to thee!

Once earthly joy I craved, sought peace and rest;
now thee alone I seek, give what is best.
This all my prayer shall be: More love, O Christ, to thee;
more love to thee, more love to thee!

Let sorrow do its work, come grief and pain;
sweet are thy messengers, sweet their refrain,
when they can sing with me: More love, O Christ, to thee;
more love to thee, more love to thee!

Then shall my latest breath whisper thy praise;
this be the parting cry my heart shall raise;
this still its prayer shall be: More love, O Christ, to thee;
more love to thee, more love to thee!

Gospel Reading John 12: 1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)

Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

MESSAGE *When actions speak louder than words*

HYMN O How He Loves You and Me *PVEC Choir*

PRAYERS FOR THE LIFE OF OUR WORLD

God, we 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 Savior 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

**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.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

ONE: The Holy Living God be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Lift up your hearts!

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord!

ONE: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, anytime and everywhere to give thanks to you. You created this world full of so much beauty and sorrow and called it Good. And called it Enough.

Although we feel lost at times, you are ever present.

We doubt, resist, turn away, and rage, insistent on our own power to pull us through, and yet sure that we are to blame, making life seem like a confusing paradox.

But you are patient.

You are here to meet us – reside with us in strange and alienating times, always faithful, always present in this Body ... in this Body.

And so, together we proclaim the praise-filled truth of your glory along with all the saints:

**ALL: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

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

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. He proclaimed freedom for the bound, justice for the oppressed, grace for the lost, love for the prodigal. Through the life and ministry of Jesus, we can imagine and live in a community where all who struggle are taken into loving arms and those who struggle to love are invited into greater compassion.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, We remember... We offer ourselves ... We proclaim God's time...

ALL: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and fruit of the vine. Make them be for us sustenance for our days, love for simple and ordinary lives, fuel for justice in this world. By your Spirit open us to each other. Open us to the world, making us one in you, through Christ, in the power of your amazing grace!

THE 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 17th 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.

WE SHARE THE MEAL

Behold the mystery - The Bread we break is the Bread of Life.

Behold the mystery - The Cup we Share is the Cup of Love.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

ALL: Thanks be to God

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of grace, you have given us all things, and you have fed us with Christ's presence through this sacrament. We commit ourselves to you now, and we give ourselves to the work of your kingdom, which is upon us in Jesus' life. Thanks be to God! Amen.

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 Donna Weinberg in honor of
her son Doug and her mother-in-law Fay.*

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 adapted from a prayer written by Christine Longhurst.

Hymn: More Love to Thee, O Christ. CCLI#36750, Public Domain.

O How He Loves You and Me. CCLI#15850, 1975, Curb Music.

Stewardship Snippet (5th Sunday in Lent - Year C) April 3, 2022 - John 12: 5-8

"Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (Judas said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave Mary alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

In other words, it *is* the poor Mary serves when she serves Jesus. Just as it is always, when, like Jesus, we love without reservation what God places in front of us, here and now. The time is short. The cross awaits. Here is Jesus, asking the hard question one more time: What are you going to do, while you still have me?

Blessings, Donna

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please pray for:

The Ukrainian People & Our World, Refugees Everywhere, Hunter & his family, Joy for the birth of Nico Angelo Rivera, Joy for the birth of Lynne & Kevin Moore's grandson Bennett Moore, Joy for the birth of Rick & Diane Wilson's grandson Canaan Wilson, Arlene Bailey, The Lawson Family, Patrick McNeal, Don, Rob, John Cecclia, Gordon, Lois, Sally

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ, wept over Jerusalem.
Today, we weep over Ukraine.
We weep for those uprooted from their homes and lives.
We weep for those cowering in basements.
We weep for those who have witnessed death and destruction on their streets.
We weep for those separated from parents, from children, from spouses and siblings.
We are amazed at the resilience of people seeking to comfort those in need and so we pray for
Governments opening up borders so that Ukrainians can have safe passage.
We pray for churches and individuals providing food, clothing and shelter.
We pray for medical workers ensuring that shattered bodies are put back together again.
We pray for ordinary Russians demonstrating and voicing their disapproval of the military actions in Ukraine.
May the Holy Spirit give us the willpower to turn our tears into action also.
May we, through our words, prayers and example pursue the things that make for a just peace in the world today and especially in Ukraine.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. AMEN

***The Discernment Team sent you a separate e-news requesting your attention. Please open and read or see below.**

What is the Next Chapter in PVEC's Story?

The PVEC Discernment Team has begun the process of learning where God is calling our church. A very important part of discerning the next chapter in the story of our church is...YOUR story.

Understanding where we have been on our 50+ year journey as a church and as a congregation will help us all gain insights into:

- Who we are today
- What has mattered and does matter to us individually and as a church
- What have been the high -- and low -- points in our 50+ years as a congregation
- How has the ministry of this church touched your life, the lives of others, our congregation as a whole, and our community
- What we want our church to be as we move forward

The Discernment Team invites everyone to tell the story of PVEC in your life in 2 ways.

Write on our timeline.

In Fellowship Hall the team has created a timeline on one wall. Using big, colored, lined post-it notes, please add your most important or meaningful PVEC experiences that have shaped your relationship with our church and your memories of our church. These can be:

- Moments of community, love, and support, or moments of discord
- Occasions of joy and accomplishment or occasions marked by challenges and obstacles...or both
- Times when you felt the Holy Spirit working in this place and in our hearts or times when we were seeking direction

We will also be inviting the larger community to share their memories of PVEC and what PVEC has meant to them.

Share a Longer Story

The second way we want you to share is to share a longer story of a meaningful event (or events) in your life as a member of the PVEC congregation. You can submit your story in writing to panthervalleychurch@gmail.com or contact the team if you would like to have us record your story.

Sharing your memories and your stories is just one step in our process and our journey. The Discernment Team will provide regular updates to the congregation and will invite your participation in other activities as we continue our work of learning where God is calling our church. The timeline will be available until May 1st.

Thank you for your voices, your stories, your memories, and your support on our church's journey to where God is calling us next.

The PVEC Discernment Team

Anne Ellis, Ashley Washer, Bettina Samanns, Cylvia Uitz, Diane Van Dongen, Elizabeth Efremov, Faye Kennedy, Mary Lightfoot

Event Dates

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 5-7pm, proceeds to VBS
8/1-8/5 VBS

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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FAMILY ~ FAITH ~ FRIENDS