



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Fourth Sunday of Easter May 8, 2022

Worship in the United Church of Christ Tradition

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

Our Worship can be viewed on our website

PantherValleyChurch.org

FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH

A Mother's Day Prayer

Loving and nurturing God, we thank you for mothers.

For all they mean or have meant to us.

We thank you for the love they have shown and the care they have given.

For the many times they gave us hugs and held us close.

Loving and nurturing God, we thank you for the qualities of mothers.

For their patience, their kindness, concern and understanding, in so many ways reflecting who you are.

We thank you for the part they play in our lives, and for this special day of saying 'thank you' to them.

Loving and nurturing God, we thank you for the wonder of your mothering.

As a mother protects her children, you watch over us day by day.

We thank you for your arms which always encircle and protect us,

Your hands shield and deliver us from harm.

Loving God, we pray for those for whom Mother's day brings heartache rather than celebration.

We pray for those who have never known their mother or whose mothers have died.

We thank you for your mothering heart and your tender love, which nurtures all who feel abandoned and lost.

We wait with those who long to be mothers but as yet have not had their own children.

We grieve with those who ache because they will never be mothers.

We thank you for their mothering hearts which long to be expressed.

Lord in your mercy, mother us all with your love.

We pray for those who struggle with the way their children have chosen to live their lives.

And grieve with those who are orphaned or have a difficult relationship with their mother.

We thank you that when we long for a mother's love you do not abandon us.

Lord in your mercy, mother us all with your love.

May all of us have the comfort of knowing that your mothering love is constant,

Your understanding is perfect and your compassion is never-ending.

We thank you that you gave birth to all of us with delight and joy,

Lord in your mercy mother us all with your love.

Amen.

PRELUDE

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We gather once more as a great multitude
From various peoples and places, we've come.

**All: Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving
Honor and power be to our God.**

One: We gather once more to shout "Alleluia!"
Salvation belongs to the Holy One.

**All: Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving
Honor and power be to our God.**

One: We gather to worship day and night
The one who guides us to the springs of life.

**All: Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving
Honor and power be to our God.**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

God, our shepherd—Restorer of our souls—

The one who calls us to nap in green pastures—

We enter into this moment of worshipful gathering

trusting that you will guide us along the paths of righteousness.

**Wherever we may be in this world, let us know the comforting presence of
your rod and staff. We are expectant, O God, that our fears will fade,**

**that our cups will overflow, and that your goodness and mercy will
accompany us in this hour and beyond. Now, let us worship you in spirit and
in truth.**

Amen.

HYMN

Maker In Whom We Live

UMH #88

Maker, in whom we live, in whom we are and move,
the glory, power, and praise receive for thy creating love.

Let all the angel throng give thanks to God on high,
while earth repeats the joyful song and echoes to the sky.

Incarnate Deity, let all the ransomed race
render in thanks their lives to thee for thy redeeming grace.
The grace to sinners showed ye heavenly choirs proclaim,
and cry, "Salvation to our God, salvation to the Lamb!"

Spirit of Holiness, let all thy saints adore
thy sacred energy, and bless thine heart-renewing power.
No angel tongues can tell thy love's ecstatic height,
the glorious joy unspeakable, the beatific sight.

Eternal, Triune God, let all the hosts above,
let all on earth below record and dwell upon thy love.
When heaven and earth are fled before thy glorious face,
sing all the saints thy love hath made thine everlasting praise.

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

ONE: God, as you call us more intentionally into the fullness of life that abounds in your presence, let us acknowledge the ways our unbelief has separated us from your vision for our lives and all creation.

Moment of silence

**All: God, we confess that we often let hopelessness have too much power over our lives.
In the face of crisis, our faith has frequently faltered.
In the midst of calamity, our fearlessness has faded.
In the presence of tribulation, our worry has weakened our ability to act justly.
Help our unbelief, O God!
Bring us back to you, Great Redeemer.
Remind us of the unfailing treasure that is in your love and care for all of creation—
For your grace is sufficient, from the valley of death to the tables you've prepared for us.
Embolden us, again, and revive our spirits.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

ONE: Friends, hear the Good News: God believes in us even when our belief in God is challenged. God's grace and mercy abounds, and in God and Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Revelation 7:9-17

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing,

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and might
be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and worship him day and night within his temple,
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.
They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them,
nor any scorching heat;
for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

MESSAGE “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.”

~ John 10:7

Easter Hope

SPECIAL MUSIC

Sing Alleluia to the Lord

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Good Shepherd,

Teach us to follow you, to care for all that are close to us, to protect those who are threatened, to welcome those who are rejected, to forgive those who are burdened by guilt, to heal those who are broken and sick, to share with those who have little or nothing, to take the time to really know one another and love as you have loved us.

Good Shepherd,

Teach us to follow you, to spread compassion to those who are far away, to speak for those who are voiceless, to defend those who are oppressed and abused, to work for justice for those who are exploited, to make peace for those who suffer violence, to take the time to recognize our connectedness, and to love as you have loved us.

Good Shepherd,

Teach us to follow you and to be faithful to calling you gave us; to be shepherds in your name. Amen.

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 Ecumenical Text which was developed in contemporary language by the English Language Liturgical Consultation in 1988.

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours Now and for ever. 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

We believe in the God of justice and righteousness, and God believes in us to carry forth the mission of loving and caring for community. Let us now share our gifts and resources so that we may continue to walk humbly with God and with neighbors.

BENEDICTION

Let us go forth knowing that we are led by God, that we are sheltered by God, that God never leaves nor forsakes us even in the bleakest valley. In God, may we hunger and thirst no more, and may a peace that surpasses all understanding abide with us, now and forever more. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Today’s Altar Flowers are given in celebration of Betty Schultheis’s daughter, Cyndy Corbett’s birthday.

Credits: Today’s liturgy is adapted from *Rev. Mia M. McClain*.

Hymn: Maker In Whom We Live, Public Domain

Image: Angus Dei, Cláudio Pastro, Agnus Dei. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=58936>

Stewardship Snippet (4th Sunday of Easter - Year C) May 8, 2022, Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

Psalm 23 is the one psalm that almost everyone seems to be able to recite. And so when our cup is overflowing the question that remains is who do we then follow? Who will be our shepherd through life? Will it be the one who has filled our cups to overflowing? Or will it be something else? In other words, can we really say with all honesty and conviction that "the Lord is my shepherd?" Before you answer that, know that there are many shepherds out there you can choose. You can choose the shepherd of fear, who tells you that you will never be enough. You can choose the shepherd of anger, who reacts to the world with rage. You can choose the shepherd of greed, who tells you that you need more. Or you can choose the shepherd of narcissism, who tells you that you are the only one who matters on the path. So this psalm is a good reminder not only to praise and pray, but constantly to be aware of who we are and whose we are. We have so many blessings. We have enough. And we always, always have enough to share and room for one more. Our cups run over. We have no need to want, for God will provide means and a way. Blessings, Donna Weinberg

Announcements & Upcoming Events

The Ukrainian People & Our World, Refugees Everywhere, Dale Hooey & Family, Ron McKinnon & Family, Pat Custard, The Bambrick Family

The April Rummage Sale **raised over \$3,500!**

There will be a **Council Meeting** on Wednesday, May 11th at 7pm via Zoom.

Reminder that **Nikki will be on vacation** from May 11-27. There will be office coverage.

There is a **mandatory Fish & Chips meeting** on Friday, May 20th @ 6:30pm at church or via Zoom.

Pastor Ninabeth will be away from May 21st - 28th for the service of death and resurrection, interment, and celebration of her parents. Dan Ledwith will be leading worship on Sunday, May 22nd.

Tickets on sale now for Fish & Chips Dinner Sat. June 18th from 5-7pm.

IMAGINING HEAVEN ON EARTH

MAKING SENSE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION
4 WEEK SERMON SERIES

SUNDAYS AT 10:30AM
MAY 8TH, 15TH, 22ND & 29TH



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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

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FAMILY ~ FAITH ~ FRIENDS