



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**Christmas Eve 2022
Family Service & Children's Pageant**

Wishing You the Love of Christ this Christmas Season

PRELUDE

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Welcome tonight to a celebration like no other!

ALL: Tomorrow is day of the holy birth.

ONE: Let the love of Jesus be born in your hearts & spirits!

ALL: Open our hearts to receive this gift, Loving God.

ONE: Rejoice, good friends, the Good News is here!

ALL: Christ the Savior is born! Hallelujah, AMEN.

OPENING PRAYER

Happy Birthday to you, **Jesus, Son of God.**

Happy Birthday to you, **Jesus, Forgiver of Sins.**

Happy Birthday to you, **Jesus, Light of the World.**

Thank you, heavenly father, for the greatest gift the world has seen. Provider of light in the dark and warmth in the cold. We celebrate the blessing of your son's birth for the whole world. We worship him and sing the greatest Happy Birthday of the year. In your loving name we pray, **AMEN.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES & CHRIST CANDLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

When Mary & Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, they found there was no room. We confess that in the midst of our anxieties we have not made room in our hearts for others. We confess that, paralyzed by fear, prejudice or apathy, we have not made room in our homes for the stranger. We confess that in the busy time of Christmas we have not made you the focus.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

ONE: God is good! God is faithful! God is merciful! God comes to us, in vulnerability, again & again, to show us how much we are loved.

ALL: **We are forgiven, we are beloved, we are blessed, thanks be to God!**
Amen.

SCRIPTURE Reading Luke 2: 1-20

MESSAGE

CHILDREN'S PAGEANT

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Even on this night on which we celebrate the fulfillment of love, we recognize that there are many who are still waiting for fulfillment:

fulfillment of adequate food and shelter...

fulfillment of peace and the end of violence...

fulfillment of the release of grief...

fulfillment of a restoration of broken relationships...

fulfillment of a renewing of heart, mind or body...

fulfillment of healing from a chronic illness...

Give us the courage to do your work in the world and to share the peace coming to us in the manger.

We pray this night especially for those who have traveled to be here...

for those who have lost loved ones in the last year...

for those struggling with illness...

for those who work on Christmas...

especially medical workers, police & emergency personnel...

for those who cannot make it home for Christmas...

hear us we pray, O God,

Restore us and make your face shine that we might be saved.

In all that we do and all that we are, send your spirit to send us forward with the majesty of this night and to share the grace we find with everyone we encounter.

This we pray in the name of your son, who taught us to pray by saying:

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.

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

There are so many things to be thankful for tonight, God. Receive these tokens of our gratitude for your love incarnate in the babe of Bethlehem. May they become God-with-us for all the world. May they breathe magic back into a world that needs a sense of wonder & joy. Amen.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Tomorrow, Christmas Day, there will be no service at PVEC, however, the following churches have prerecorded services for Christmas Day:

*The United Methodist Church GNJ

<https://vimeo.com/777154997/8aeb86b7e0>

*The Presbyterian Church USA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73lp_capU8

The beautiful poinsettias decorating our sanctuary are dedicated by the following PVEC members in honor or dedication or loved ones, friends and family.



Ali Bancroft ~ In memory of Rosemary Boyer

Anne Cuff ~ Part-time Pastor Fund

Anne Ellis ~ In memory of Viola S. Ellis, Richard & Anne Ellis
~ In memory of Jane & John Matey, Doris Michinsky

Catherine M. Fletcher ~ In memory of her husband Sylvester J. Fletcher
~ And to the Part-Time Pastor Fund

Joan Gibbs ~ In memory of Frank Gibbs
~ And to the Part-Time Pastor Fund

Mary Lightfoot ~ In memory of Robert & Veronica Lightfoot, beloved parents
~ In honor of Rob, Stacey, Amanda & Peter, and all her beautiful grandchildren

Derek & Jennifer Mandery ~ In memory of Donald Mandery & Sonia Manague
~ In memory of Richard & Jay Drake
~ And to the Christian Education Fund

Henry Newbold ~ In memory of Corbin & Jean Wald
~ In memory of Anthony & Katherine Newbold
~ In honor of The Music – Choir & Bells

Carol Phillips ~ In memory of loved ones

Betty Schultheis ~ In memory of Ron

Donna Weinberg ~ In honor of God's work at PVEC

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.

Dan & Sarah Ledwith

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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FAITH ~ FAMILY ~ FRIENDS