



# PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

**Epiphany**  
**January 1, 2023**

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

*Our Worship can be viewed on our website  
[PantherValleyChurch.org](http://PantherValleyChurch.org)*

## MUSICAL PRELUDE

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

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### HANDBELLS

Go Tell It on the Mountain

**CALL TO WORSHIP:** Based on Psalm 98 and Jeremiah 29:11

Leader: On this special day of welcoming in the new year, let us sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things!

**People: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth! Break forth in song! Rejoice, and sing praises!**

Leader: Sing to the Lord with a song of thanksgiving.

**People: Let the rivers clap their hands; Let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for He is coming to judge the earth.**

Leader: With righteousness the Lord shall judge the earth. In this coming new year, let us praise the Lord, for He has plans to give us a future and a hope.

**People: All the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. We offer the Lord praise and glory.**

## OPENING PRAYER

### HYMN #218

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

## CALL TO CONFESSION

God loves us and calls us each by name. Knowing we are eternally forgiven and infinitely loved, let us boldly confess our sins before God.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison) Psalm 51

**All: Have mercy upon us, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies. Blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities, and cleanse us from our sin. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within us. O Lord, open our lips, that our mouth shall show forth Your praise. Amen.**

## SILENT PRAYER

### **PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS:** Colossians 1:13-14

Leader: The Good News is this: Almighty God has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins.

**People: Thanks be to God for the new life offered in Jesus Christ. Amen!**

### The Passing of the Peace

Leader: As God so loves us, let us love one another. May the peace of Christ be with you this day.

**People: And also, with you.**

Leader: May you rise and greet one another with the peace of Christ.

## God's Word for God's People

### HYMN #245

### The First Noel

## PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

**SCRIPTURES:** Isaiah 43:16-21; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 17-21; Philippians 3:12-14

### Isaiah 43:16-21:

“Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings forth chariot and horse, army, and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.” (English Standard Version).

2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 17-21:

“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (English Standard Version).

Philippians 3:12-14:

“Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (New American Standard Bible).

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON:** A New Creation in Christ

**MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**

**The People Respond to God’s Word**

**\*Affirmation of Faith in the form of the Apostles’ Creed, Traditional**

**All: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,  
And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the  
Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day  
He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on  
the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence He shall come  
to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church; the communion  
of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and  
the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**People: Lord, hear our prayers.**

**All: Lord's Prayer**

**CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: Doxology: "Jesus, Remember Me."**

**Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom,**

**Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.**

## **OFFERTORY INVITATION**

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](http://www.panthervalleychurch.org), or add PVEC to your online bill pay. Thank you for your generosity.

**All: Doxology: Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING: (Psalm 100)**

## The People Go Out in God's Name

Closing Hymn #220

Angels from the Realms of Glory

### CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

### SILENT PRAYER

### MUSICAL POSTLUDE

#### ***Credits:***

It Came upon the Midnight Clear, Edmund Hamilton Sears | Richard Storrs Willis; The First Noel - traditional English carol; Angels from the Realms of Glory, Henry Thomas Smart | James Montgomery © Words: Public Domain, Music: Public Domain

**Pajama & Book Program** to help children in Foster Care is collecting through January-February 2023 until we have enough items to make this donation to CASA SHaW. Sizes needed are from infant through young adult. Please do not wrap them. Thank you for your help!

#### **DATES & EVENTS**

**Sun. 1/1** Guest Preacher

**Mon. 1/2** **The church office will be CLOSED on Monday, January 2nd.**

**Sun. 1/8** \*Guest Pastor Elder Lisa Gray & Communion

\*New Member Class

**Mon. 1/9** **Monday night Bible study group "Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets" by Andy Stanley.** Contact Terrie Newbold, 908-892-6474 with questions or if you would like to join us.

**Sun. 1/15** Council Meeting

**Sat. 1/21** Craft N' Crop Event 9am-5pm in FH

## The Year Ahead

May God make your year a happy one!  
Not by shielding us from all sorrows and pain,  
But by strengthening us to bear it, as it comes;  
Not by making our path easy,  
But by making us sturdy to travel any path;  
Not by taking hardships from us,  
But by taking fear from our heart;  
Not by granting us unbroken sunshine,  
But by keeping our face bright, even in the shadows;  
Not by making our life always pleasant,  
But by showing us when people and their causes need us most,  
and by making us anxious to be there to help.  
God's love, peace, hope and joy to us for the year ahead.

*- Author Unknown; Adapted by Debra Mooney*

# **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.

**Guest Preacher:** DaraSue Braun

**Music Director:** Diane Van Dongen

**Church Administrator:** Nikki Nicinski

Email: [pvecsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:pvecsecretary@gmail.com)

**Office hours:** Mon. – Fri. 9:00am – 2:00pm

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**FAITH ~ FAMILY ~ FRIENDS**