

Welcome to the Panther Valley Ecumenical Church

We are glad you are worshiping with us today!



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

February 5, 2023

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

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

FAITH ~ FAMILY ~ FRIENDS

Thank you to Elder Mel Prestamo who will be leading today's service.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

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

CALL TO WORSHIP [Adapted from 1 Corinthians / Isaiah 64]

ALL: From ages past no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived what God has prepared for those who love him. The Lord God works for those who wait for him. The Lord God meets those who gladly do right and remember God's ways. Come, let us worship the Lord our God.

HYMN #145 "Morning Has Broken"

CALL TO CONFESSION:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." [1 John 1:9]

CONFESSION: [adapted from Isaiah 58:1-9]

ALL: Father God, you have tasked us to loosen the bonds of injustice, to break the yoke of injustice and let the oppressed go free, to share bread with the hungry, to welcome in the homeless, to clothe the naked, to let your light break forth like a dawn so that your healing can spring forth. But Father, we have fallen short of what you have asked of us. We forget to love justice as you have loved us. We forget kindness for those who are hungry and homeless and who are naked. We forget that your light cannot break forth into this world unless we first reflect it into the world.

Father, forgive us and breathe again into our hearts your Spirit. Fill us with your desire to bring healing to the world and to bring your Kingdom of Heaven at hand. Make it be that when you call for us to shine your light that we respond, "Here I am!"

SLIENT PRAYER & PERSONAL CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

My Friends, as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. Know that your sins are forgiven.

STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE: Anne Ellis

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION (Unison)

May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you O Lord, our rock and our redeemer.

First Reading: Psalm 112: 1-9

Blessings of the Righteous

¹ Praise the LORD!

Happy are those who fear the LORD,
who greatly delight in his commandments.

² Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

⁴ They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright;
they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.

⁵ It is well with those who deal generously and lend,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

⁶ For the righteous will never be moved;
they will be remembered forever.

⁷ They are not afraid of evil tidings;
their hearts are firm, secure in the LORD.

⁸ Their hearts are steady; they will not be afraid;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

⁹ They have distributed freely; they have given to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn is exalted in honor.

Gospel Reading, ALL STAND: Matthew 5:13-20

MESSAGE: Nil est utilius Sale et Levi

[There is nothing more useful than Salt & Light] Elder Mel Prestamo

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: Apostles Creed

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth;*

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

*He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.*

*He 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,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy universal Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For Joys: Let the people respond, *"Thanks be to God!"*

For Concerns: Let the people respond: *"Lord, hear our prayer"*

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.

SHARING OF COMMUNION

Communion Litany

Luke tells us that on the day of Jesus' resurrection, two of his disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus returning home from their pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. They were discussing between themselves the events of the week in Jerusalem. While they were walking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them but they did not recognize him.

As they walked, he asked them, "What are you discussing?"

They responded, "Are you the only one in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there? The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth who was a mighty prophet before God and how the chief priests had him handed over to be crucified? Jesus walked with them and explained why it was necessary that the Messiah suffer these things and then enter into his glory. He began with Moses and then all the prophets and interpreted for them the things about himself.

As they approached their village, they urged him to stay with them. So, he entered into their home and sat with them to eat. When he was at the table, he took bread, blessed it and broke it and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.

My friends, let us pray that as we come to the table that our eyes will be opened to see the risen Lord.

My friends, this is the Lord's table. It is not a Presbyterian table nor one belonging to any religion or denomination. The Lord Jesus welcomes all who believe in him to join with him in the sharing of this meal that he has prepared for us.

One: The Lord 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 our Lord our God.

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

You are holy of God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, whom you sent to save us. He came with healing in his touch and was wounded for our sins. He came with mercy in his voice and was mocked as one despised. He came with peace in his heart and was met with violence and death.

We give you thanks that the Lord Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread, and after giving thanks to You, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. [PAUSE – allowing the people to eat the bread]

In the same way he took the cup, saying: This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me. [PAUSE – allowing the people to drink]

When they had done this, he said to them, “I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.” This is a foretelling to us of our promised place in the Kingdom of God when Jesus will greet us in all his glory. Let us rejoice in the promise of the Word of God.

Father God, as we take this bread and this fruit of the vine from the gifts you have given us, we celebrate with joy the redemption won for us in Jesus Christ. Accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving as a living and holy offering of ourselves, that our lives may proclaim the One crucified and risen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

THE OFFERING

Ascribe to the Lord and bring honor and gifts unto His name.

SPECIAL MUSIC

THE DOXOLOGY (unison)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

OFFERING PRAYER, ALL STAND

Father God, you have been gracious to us, lavishing us with your gifts of Grace and Mercy. We offer these gifts cheerfully and gratefully returning to you a measure of what we have received to display our desire to participate with you in your ministry to our community and the world. Amen.

HYMN: They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

Verse 1

We are one in the Spirit
We are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit
We are one in the Lord
And we pray that all unity
May one day be restored

Chorus

And they'll know we are Christians
By our love by our love
Yes they'll know we are Christians
By our love

Verse 2

We will walk with each other
We will walk hand in hand
We will walk with each other
We will walk hand in hand
And together we'll spread the news
That God is in our land

Verse 3

We will work with each other
We will work side by side
We will work with each other
We will work side by side
And we'll guard each man's dignity
And save each man's pride

Verse 4

All praise to the Father
From whom all things come
And all praise to Christ Jesus
His only Son
And all praise to the Spirit
Who makes us one

CHARGE & BENEDICTION:

My friends, my charge for you this week is to come to the table here and take a spoon full of this Salt, put it into a plastic baggie and carry it with you as you go through the week. Let it remind you how useless it is in the bag and that it can only be useful if it is put to use. My friends, don't become a stale, useless Christian. Put your faith into action. Be the Salt that brings flavor to the world.

May the Lord that gives you breath and life watch over and protect you and guide you on your way this day and every day. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Leader: Let us go forth rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

***Today's Altar Flowers are given by Donna Weinberg
in honor of Faye Kennedy (our Bell Choir Director).***

Credits: Image by Ninabeth Metcalf.

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Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please pray for: Our Church, Our World, Kat, Franklin, the Quick family, Nadia, Chuck's mom in hospice, Rob & Cecelia, Amanda, and Kim & family

Donation Statements that have not been picked up in the narthex were mailed out this week.

THE SOUPER BOWL SOUP SALE IS BACK!

PLACE YOUR ORDER BY: Sunday, February 5th

ORDER PICK UP: February 12, Noon through 2 p.m.

Gourmet Soups: \$9 per Quart, \$5 per Pint

Soup List: Bean & Bacon, Celery, Chicken Noodle, Corn & Crab, Cream of Broccoli, Creamy Tortellini, Hamburger, Italian Wedding, Lentil, Manhattan Clam Chowder, Potato Leek, Split Pea, Squash, Tomato Orzo, Vegetarian, Veggie & Beef

*Each order comes with sliced Italian bread.

Call the office to place your order, (908) 852-5444

Important Dates

- Sun. 2/5** Souper Bowl Soup Orders Due to Office
Elder Mel Prestamo Guest Pastor & Communion
Bells playing
Stewardship Message: Anne Ellis
- Sat. 2/11** \$5 Pancake Breakfast sponsored by Youth Squad 9-11am
- Sun. 2/12** Souper Bowl (Soup) Sale Pick-up bet. 12 & 2pm (Cash or check, only)
Council Meeting
Dan Ledwith is preaching
- Sun. 2/19** Dan Ledwith is preaching
- Sun. 2/26** Rev. Wil Joseph from Knowlton UMC is preaching
- Sun. 3/12** Dan Ledwith is preaching
- Sun. 3/19** Dan Ledwith is preaching
- Fri. 3/24** Youth Squad Meeting 6-7:30pm
- Sun. 3/26** Darasue Braun is preaching
- April** Spring Rummage Sale 4/21, 4/22, 4/29
(Donations can be brought in beginning in February.)

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: Mel Prestamo

Music Director: Diane Van Dongen

Church Administrator: Judy Jepsen

Email: pvecsecretary@gmail.com

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

Website: <http://www.panthervalleychurch.org>

Tel: 908-852-5444

Email: panthervalleychurch@gmail.com

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