

Welcome to the Panther Valley Ecumenical Church

We are glad you are worshiping with us today!



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Easter Sunday, April 9, 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 Lisa Gray who will be leading today's service.

PRELUDE

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

HANDBELLS **“Love is Divine, All Love's Excelling”**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP (liturgy Presbyterian Outlook Rev Teri McDowell Ott)

ONE: Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!

ALL: **Hosanna! Hosanna!**

ONE: Celebrate this day of days!

ALL: **Hosanna! Hosanna!**

ONE: Let all creation be amazed!

ALL: **Hosanna! Hosanna! Christ is Risen!**

ONE: Come, let us worship our risen Lord.

Alleluia

HYMN #322 **“Up from the Grave”**

CALL TO CONFESSION:

The joy of this Easter Sunday reminds us of God's resurrecting power. Let us confess all that turns us toward death, so we can know the grace of new life through Christ.

CONFESSION: (Unison)

Savior God, forgive our life-alienating ways, our exclusion and judgement of others; the way we evaluate and compare. Forgive our habits that demean and degrade, our addition to violent and destructive behavior. Lord especially forgive those who perpetrate gun violence and murder your children. On this holiest of days let us seek peace. Redeem us, restore us, resurrect us for life in Christ. Amen

SILENT PRAYER & PERSONAL CONFESSION ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Christ has conquered death to restore us to life. Believe the good news. Live this resurrection. Hope in God's promises because we are forgiven through Jesus Christ. Amen

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION (Unison)

Divine redeemer, bearer of life, open us to the wisdom of your Word today and enlighten us with your truth. Liberate us from all that distracts us and turns us from your path, guide us and ground us in Christ's everlasting hope.

First Reading: Psalm 118: 17-24

Epistle: Colossians 3:1-4

GOSPEL (ALL STAND) Matthew 28:1-10

MESSAGE: Nothing New Under the Sun, Except Easter! Elder Lisa Gray

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Book of Common Worship) UNISON

This is the good news which we have received, in which we stand, and by which we are saved if we hold fast: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day, and that he appeared first to the women, then to Peter, and to the twelve, and then to many Faithful witnesses. We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus Christ is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. He is our Lord and our God. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of glory, overwhelmed by your love, ecstatic with your grace, we shout our hallelujahs, and rejoice this Easter day. Hear our prayers of thanksgiving for the particular gifts of this day:

- + a good excuse to dress up, in brightly colored Easter outfits
- + the look of delight on a child's face when she finds a plastic egg full of candy
- + yellow daffodils blooming to trumpet the Gospels good news
- + Jubilant Easter hymns loudly sung

+ sanctuaries across the world full of Christ's followers

Savior God, you free us from death, heal and restore us to life. But the world is still so full of pain and suffering. Hear our prayers for those who struggle, for those whose suffering prevents them from rejoicing with us today. On this Easter day, we especially remember:

- + those who are sick and their caregivers
- + those who are lonely and isolated
- + victims of violence, abuse and oppression; victims of violent weather
- + refugees, asylum seekers and those in our country who are homeless
- + citizens of warring countries, hungry for peace...even our own political parties

As your people, we gather this Easter and pray for your continued mercy, O God, hear and receive our prayers of gratitude and praise as well as our prayers of intercession. The signs of Easter are miraculous, Holy God. You have the power to make sense of the senseless, to thwart violent means of persecution, to resurrect the dead, and to move massive stones from empty tombs. Ground us in this good news, Lord, keep our feet steady on your path. May we always find reasons to rejoice. May we return to worship you again and again, and to pray the prayer Christ taught us saying...

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

(ONE) *Invitation:* The Resurrection has begun! The day of Celebration is here!

(ALL): Alleluia!

(ONE): We gather at the table to share the banquet of life!

(ALL): Here we meet all who share with us the hope for a brighter future!

(ONE): All who wish to follow the way of life are welcome to eat and drink of God's table

(ONE): *Thanksgiving*: Christ is risen!

(ALL): He is risen indeed!

(ONE): We should give thanks.

(ALL): Thanks and praise to the One who brings life.

(ONE): Gracious God, we raise our voices hoarse from shouting alleluias. We give praise for the wonder of an empty tomb. We give thanks for the gift of life, life that breaks the bonds of death.

(ALL): We sing songs of praise for the world you have given us, for the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies.

(ONE): As the spring deepens and the earth thaws, as green breaks through the brown of winter.

(ALL): We sing songs of hope for new life springing from dead soil, for the promise held in every seed that is sown.

(ONE): *Story*: As people of faith, we remember all those who have gone before

(ALL): People like Moses and Miriam, leading their people to freedom; like Sarah and Abraham, seeking a new life in a strange land; like Peter and Mary, proclaiming an empty tomb and life beyond the cross.

(ONE): We remember these and many others, named and unnamed, who have embraced Your life, Your hope, and moved into a new age. We trust in telling their stories, we too can take the leap into New Life. Deep among all those memories we remember the life of a Special One-

(ALL): Jesus, Child of Mary.

(ONE): Born of a woman, he grew to adulthood among people who struggled daily for life. Baptized by John, he embraced the life to which You called him. He taught and preached a vision of a world where all divisions are broken down, where all had what they needed for abundant life, where the reign of God was as real on earth as in heaven. As inheritors of hope, we join together in the cries that welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem, the cries for the world:

(ALL): Hosanna! Hosanna! Holy One! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

(ONE): *Institution*: As we gather at this table, we remember a story told mere days ago.

(ALL): And yet an age ago.

(ONE): We remember that Jesus gathered with his closet friends in an Upper Room to share the feast of liberation. While sharing the ancient story of freedom, he called them to remember the promised freedom of God's Kingdom. We remember that at the table HE TOOK BREAD, GAVE THANKS FOR IT, BLESSED IT, BROKE IT and passed it among them saying: THIS IS MY BODY, BROKEN BY AND FOR THE WORLD. Whenever you eat it remember me. Then later he took the cup of wine, blessed it and passed it among them saying: THIS IS THE CUP OF THE NEW COVENANT, SEALED IN MY BLOOD. Whenever you drink it remember me. And look toward the fulfillment of God's Kingdom.

(ALL): And so we break the bread and pour the cup and we remember with hope.

(ONE): This Easter Day we share the banquet of freedom to celebrate life victorious.

(ONE): Transformation: God of life in the beginning your Spirit hovered over the water, calling forth life, creating and inspiring. Send your Spirit upon we who gather to share this meal, infuse the bread and this juice with the Spirit's power.

(ALL): As we eat and drink may we feel the power of Life Triumphant pulse in our veins, the fire of hope blaze in our hearts and the joy of the empty tomb dance in our souls. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

(ONE): Here at this table, we break the bread of life, on this day of celebration we pour the cup of. Promise. These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

(ALL): Thanks be to God.

(ONE): Come and eat for all is ready now. (those unable to come forward, will be served)

PASSING OF THE PEACE

We have eaten, we have drunk, let us embrace the peace of Christ which is above all understanding and share it with each other.

THE OFFERING

With glad and generous hearts, let us give from what we have received.

OFFERTORY

CHOIR

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

Risen Lord, you meet our needs and wants. Transform us for service to those who barely have their needs met. Accept these gifts as tokens of our gratitude and bless Christ's ministry with these offerings.

HYMN#308

Thine is the Glory

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

(ALL): Christ is risen, Christ is risen indeed!

(ONE): Leave this worship space a resurrected people, living in the hope of the Gospel's good news! Celebrate this day of days. Rejoice in God, your Savior!

DISMISSAL

(ONE): May the grace, hope, peace and love of God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be with you now and always. Amen.

All: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Today's Altar Flowers are given by Henry Newbold in honor of Terrie on our 50th Anniversary.

Credits: Image by Ninabeth Metcalf.

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Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please pray for: Our Church, the parishioners of PVEC, our world, our families and friends, Paul Rosa, Helen, Myrna, Patrick, Rob & Cecelia, Laura, Anne, Pam, Diane, the Rosselot Family, Pete Mason, Carol, Kim & family, Bill, John & Kathy, and Joy & Dan

4/16, 4/23, 4/30 Dan Ledwith preaching
4/21, 4/22, & 4/29 Spring Rummage Sale
Sun. 5/7 Rev. David Snyder preaching
Sat. 5/20 Craft Fair
Sat. 6/24 Fish & Chips Dinner

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: Judy Jepsen

Email: pvecsecretary@gmail.com

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

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FAITH ~ FAMILY ~ FRIENDS