



**PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH**  
**May 7, 2023**

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

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

**FAITH ~ FAMILY ~ FRIENDS**

**Thank you to David Snyder who will be leading today's service.**

## **PRELUDE**

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

## **CALL TO WORSHIP (1 Peter 2)**

One: Once we were not a people.

**All: Now we are God's people.**

One: Once we ate food that did not satisfy.

**All: Now we drink the spiritual milk of our Lord.**

**Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

## **OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 31, 1 Peter 2, John 14)**

**Merciful God, our refuge and our strength, train our hearts on the words of your Son: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me." Feed our souls with your spiritual milk, and build our very lives into spiritual houses that neither famine nor storm can shake the foundation of our faith. In the name of the master builder and the living stone, we pray. Amen.**

## **HYMN #577**

**God of Grace and God of Glory**

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Good Shepherd, we take your care for granted. In the midst of your many blessings, we complain of not having enough. In the presence of danger, we fail to trust your abiding love. When you set a table before us, we turn aside from you. Call us back into your care and help us trust your caring presence, that our actions may proclaim your truth. Amen.**

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives. God forgives our failures and calls us back into the flock.**

<b>FIRST READING</b>	<b>Acts 7:55-60</b>
<b>PSALM</b>	<b>31:1-5-15-16</b>
<b>SECOND READING</b>	<b>1 Peter 2:10</b>
<b>GOSPEL READING</b>	<b>John 14:1-14</b>
<b>MESSAGE</b>	<b>“Faith to Ease Troubled Hearts” David Snyder</b>

## **MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**

### **PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE (Acts 7, 1 Peter 2, John 14)**

Leader: Living God, in times of spiritual homelessness,

People: we long to hear Jesus’s assurance that he has prepared a place for us;

Leader: we yearn to be formed by the Master Builder into spiritual houses, like living stones.

People: Grant us the courage of Stephen and the confidence of Peter,

**All: As we strive to be a holy priesthood, In your blessed name, we pray,  
Amen.**

### **LORD’S PRAYER**

*We invite you to pray the prayer in the language you are used to speaking.*

**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.**

### **SHARING OF COMMUNION**

## Invitation

This is the joyful feast of the people of God. My friends, this is the Lord's table. Our Savior invites all those who believe and trust in him to share the feast which he Has prepared.

## The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: May the God of new beginnings be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

One: People of God, lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them to the One who makes all things, including us, new.**

One: Children of God, sing praises to the One who gives you new life.

All: **We praise the One who continues to surprise us with hope and grace.**

Before there was time, Hope of Eternity,  
You took a moment to bring creation out of chaos.  
You took time to create mountains, and carve deep canyons;  
You made the time to fill the oceans and to plant food for all creatures;  
You found the time to plow rivers  
to water a Garden, and to shape us in Your image.  
But we did not have time for You,  
preferring to spend our days chasing sin,  
and our nights seeking death.  
You always made time for us, speaking of Your hopes  
through the prophets, sharing Your dreams through the angels.  
Then, one day You decided to do a new thing, becoming one of us  
as Jesus became human to bring hope and grace to us.

So we join with the saints in heaven, and our sisters and brothers on earth, who  
sing of Your glory:

**Holy, holy, holy, God of every time and space.**

**All creation sings of Your majesty and glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One who gives us the water of life.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

Holy are You, Keeper of our days, and blessed is Jesus Christ,  
who is with us in every season of life.  
He comes, not to judge us but to forgive us;

He comes, not to cast us out, but to gather us into the new Jerusalem;  
He comes, not to watch us suffer but to die on the cross, that we might live with  
You. As we give thanks for his life, and remember his death and resurrection,  
we would talk of that mystery which is our faith:

**Christ died, so sin would have no more power over us;  
Christ rose, destroying death's grip on us;  
when the new heaven and new earth come,  
Christ will make all things, including us, new.**

In these sacred moments, send Your Spirit to sanctify the bread and the cup,  
and to open the hearts of those who approach the Table.

As the Bread of Life touches our lips, may we be strengthened to serve  
those whom the world has forgotten.

As the Cup of salvation quenches our thirst for You, may we be enabled to bring  
relief to those who wander the desert wastes of our society.

And when all time ends, and all people are gathered around Your Table in  
Heaven, we will rejoice in Your presence, and sing your praises forever:  
One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION FOR COMMUNION**

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took a loaf of bread, and when he  
had given thanks, he broke it and said, "**This is my body that is for you. Do  
this in remembrance of me.**"

In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "**This cup is the  
new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in  
remembrance of me.**" For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you  
proclaim the Lord's death until he Comes again.

This is the bread of life and the cup of salvation. Come and eat. (Those unable  
to come forward will be served at their seats.)

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

God of expectations, God of promise, God of child-like hope, we have eaten and  
drunk from your table. May this fill us with hope and joy as we wait for the day  
when the world will be changed. Amen.

## **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

God calls us to love one another as God loves us. In this we know the truth of Christ's peace. Share signs of Christ's peace with one another this day.

## **THE OFFERING**

The Shepherd cares for us, providing all that we need in abundance. The Shepherd calls us to love one another in truth and action. May our gifts reflect our trust in the Shepherd's care. May our offerings show our willingness to love on another. 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.

## **OFFERTORY**

**Choir**

## **DOXOLOGY**

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER (All Stand)**

**God of overflowing abundance, you feed our spirits with spiritual milk and nourish our souls with heavenly food. You are our fortress and our rock when the snares of this world threatened to overwhelm us. In gratitude for your mercy and your many blessings, we offer you our gifts and our ministries, that a wounded world might know your grace. Amen.**

## **HYMN#534**

**Be Still, My Soul**

## **BENEDICTION**

## **DISMISSAL**

Leader: Once we were not a people.

People: Now we go as God's people.

Leader: Once our souls were parched from thirst.

People: But now we go satisfied, fed by God's spiritual milk.

Leader: Once our hearts were troubled.

**All: Now they rest secure.**

## POSTLUDE

***Today's Altar Flowers are given by Betty Schultheis in honor of her daughter, Cindy's, birthday.***

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### **Announcements & Upcoming Events**

**Please pray for:** Our Church, the parishioners of PVEC, our world, our families and friends, Laura, Walter, Charles, Lori, Myrna & Simon, Keith, Bruce, Ann, Bonnie Sue, Helen, Anne, Kim, Cindy, Harry & Donna, Ellie, Rob & Cecelia, Laura & Bob McFarlane.

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|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sun. 5/7</b>  | Lunch for Coffee hour – Sandwiches by Shoprite, Asian Cashew Salad by Donna & Sweet Treats by Penny |
| <b>Sun. 5/14</b> | Dan Ledwith preaching                                                                               |
| <b>Sat. 5/20</b> | PVEC Craft Fair & Craft n' Crop                                                                     |
| <b>Sun. 5/21</b> | James Vespoli preaching<br>May Counseling Meeting (11:30am)                                         |
| <b>Sun. 5/28</b> | Dan Ledwith preaching                                                                               |
| <b>Sun. 6/4</b>  | Joy Mounts preaching                                                                                |
| <b>Sat. 6/24</b> | Fish & Chips Dinner                                                                                 |
| <b>Fri. 7/14</b> | Lifeline Screening                                                                                  |

# **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.

**Pastor:** TBA, transition period

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

**Music Director:** Diane Van Dongen

**Church Administrator:** Melissa Zabriskie

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

**Office hours:** M,T,W & Fri. 9:00am – 2:00pm

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

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**FAITH ~ FAMILY ~ FRIENDS**