



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH
Sunday, July 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

Musical Prelude---

Welcome and Announcements

. Call to worship:

"Come to me," Jesus invites.

We come to you.

"Come to me, if you are tired."

We come to you.

"Come to me, if you carry burdens."

We come to you.

"Come, and discover rest for your souls."

Opening Prayer:

Lord of love and mercy, we come to you this day, at the beginning of the summer season. This should be a time of relaxation and restoration, but our spirits still carry the burdens of the year. Please give to us your healing love. Strengthen us. We offer our cares and our prayers to you in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

Hymn # 384

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Prayer of Confession:

Wise and loving God, you know how we are. We have spent so much time getting ready for the summer months, planning when and how we shall relax and gain some peace in our lives. We have rushed around, and now we are exhausted. Our need for rest is so important, but we have let plans and schedules crowd in, shouting their demands on our time and energies. Forgive us, Lord, when we have focused so much time on these things and have not sought your healing, restoring love. Be with us as we enter into this summer period. Give us peace. For we ask these things in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

SILENT PRAYER

Words of Assurance:

Come to the Lord, all of you. There is healing and rest in the Lord. You are given love and peace by God for all of your days. AMEN

SCRIPTURE READING

1st READING:

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

2nd READING:

Psalm 45:10-17

Gospel READING:

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30**Prayer of People:**

Message by Dan Ledwith

Lord of the seasons and of all life, we come to you this day with so many cares and concerns on our lives. We have planned for the summer months as times of relaxation and refreshment. We need to take some time to stop the frantic running around, to focus on your healing love, to let go of all those demands that weigh us down. Heal and restore us, O Lord. Help us be the church in times of leisure as well as in times of work and stress. As we have brought our cares to you in our prayers, let us bring our lives to your healing mercies. Strengthen and heal us, Lord. Get us gently ready for all the joyful opportunities that stretch before us. We ask these things in Jesus' Name.

Lords Prayer

Passing of Peace:

In the midst of sin, may you find peace.

Peace and forgiveness.

Fatigued by life's pain, may you find peace.

Peace and comfort.

Burdened by the law of do and do not, may you find peace.

Peace and joy.

The peace of Christ Jesus be unto us all.

Offering Prayer:

Dear God, we are reminded that you have blessed us abundantly. You have bestowed upon us the gift of life, the gift of community, and the gift of salvation through your Son. You have provided for us in countless ways, and for that, we are truly grateful.

In your infinite wisdom and mercy, you have revealed the truth of your kingdom to the humble and the receptive. As Jesus expressed his gratitude to you, Father, we

also offer our heartfelt thanks. We acknowledge that it is through your gracious will that we can experience rest for our weary souls.

Lord, you called us to take up your yoke, to learn from you and find rest for our souls. Help us, O Lord, to embrace the simplicity of this invitation. Teach us to surrender our burdens, worries, and anxieties to you, knowing that you are the source of true rest and peace. As we bring our offerings before you today, we do so with open hands and open hearts, desiring to align our lives with your will. May these offerings be a reflection of our gratitude, faith, and commitment to you. May they be used to advance your kingdom, to bring hope to the hopeless, and to share the good news of your salvation. Guide us, Lord, in using our resources wisely and generously, to honor you and to serve others with humility and love.

Closing Hymn #400

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Closing Prayer: Dear God, we are reminded of the countless examples you have set before us in your Word. Your faithfulness, compassion, wisdom, and love inspire us to seek a deeper understanding of who you are and to walk in your ways.

Lord, we confess that at times we have failed to learn from the examples you have given us. We have been slow to grasp the lessons embedded in the lives of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and most importantly, your Son, Jesus Christ. Forgive us, Lord, for our complacency and apathy towards your teachings. Open our eyes to see the profound wisdom and guidance you offer through your Word.

Today, we ask for that guidance and wisdom as we strive to learn from your examples. Help us to cultivate hearts that hunger for your truth and minds that are open to receive your instruction. May your Holy Spirit illuminate our understanding, revealing the richness and depth of your teachings.

Grant us the courage to emulate the virtues we see in your examples—forgiveness, humility, selflessness, and love. May our lives reflect your character, shining as beacons of light in a world that desperately needs your grace.

Lord, we also pray for the strength to persevere in times of trial and temptation this coming week. Help us to remember the examples of your faithful servants who faced challenges and remained steadfast in their faith. May their stories

serve as encouragement and motivation for us to press on, knowing that you are with us every step of the way.

As we leave this place, Lord, may we carry the lessons we have learned into our daily lives. May our words, actions, and attitudes bring honor and glory to your name. Let our lives be living testimonies of your transformative power.

We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, our ultimate example and Savior. Amen.

Benediction

SILENT PRAYER/POSTLUDE

Today's Altar Flowers are given by Syndie Marseille in Honor of Dyllan's Birthday

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please pray for: Our Church, the parishioners of PVEC, our world, our world families, Myrna & Simon, Anne, Danielle, Clark Family, Ellyn, Rand, and Rhys, Maureen, Rob and Cecelia, Ellie & Laura, Maureen Bloom

7/14 Life Screening

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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
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Music Director: Diane Van Dongen

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