



Rockville United Church
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
4th Sunday of Lent
March 15, 2026 ~ Hybrid Worship

PRELUDE

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

Gather Us In

Haugen

Here in this place, the new light is streaming,
shadows of doubt are vanished away.
See in this space our fears and our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.

Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
gather us in; our spirits inflame.
Call to us now, and we shall awaken;
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

by Thom Shuman, adapted

We have gathered in the holy presence of God,
the One who etches grace upon our hearts.

Here we worship God who transforms us into disciples.

We praise God, who yearns for justice,
not just for a favored few, but for all the vulnerable of our world.

Here we worship God who writes compassion on our souls.

We give thanks to God for unceasing grace;
we remember God's persistence in loving all creation.

Here we worship God who breathes hope and peace into our lives.

*HYMN

Your Love O God

Chalice Hymnal, No. 71

Your love, O God, is broad like beach and meadow,
wide as the wind, and our eternal home.
You leave us free to seek you or reject you,
you give us room to answer "yes" or "no."

We long for freedom where our truest being
is given hope and courage to unfold.
We seek in freedom space and scope for dreaming,
and look for ground where trees and plants can grow.

But there are walls that keep us all divided;
we fence each other in with hate and war.
Fear is the bricks and mortar of our prison,
our pride of self, the prison coat we wear.

O judge us, God, and in your judgment free us,
and set our feet in freedom's open space;
take us as far as your compassion wanders
among the children of the human race.

OPENING PRAYER (responsive)

by Howard Thurman, adapted

Open unto us, hope for our despair.

Open unto us, dreams for our dread.

Open unto us, courage for our fear.

Open unto us, vision for our skepticism.

Open unto us, wisdom for our confusion.

Open unto us, care for our vulnerabilities.

Open unto us, justice for our oppressions.

Open unto us, love for our hates.

Open unto us, grace for our wrongs.

O God, our God, open unto us, your heart for our hearts.

**that we might open unto you, and know you in our midst,
and know ourselves made whole. Amen.**

MOMENT OF SILENCE

CHORAL RESPONSE

Bind Us Together

Gillman

SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 24:17-22

The Inclusive Bible

Do not deprive the foreigner living among you of justice, or the orphan either; nor take the cloak of the widow or widower as collateral. Do not forget that you were slaves in Egypt, and Yahweh, your God, redeemed you from that place. So it is that I command you to do these things. When you are harvesting in your field and overlook a sheaf of grain, do not go back for it afterward. Leave it for the foreigner, the orphan, or the widowed, so that Yahweh, your God, may bless you in all the work that you do. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains to the foreigner, the orphan, or the widowed. When you harvest grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the orphan, or the widowed. Remember that once you were slaves in Egypt, and this is why I command you to do this.

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: *Thanks be to God.*

WORD FOR CHILDREN

Pastor Jennifer

Following the “Word for Children,” we invite children (ages 3 years—5th grade) to attend a Sunday School class, dismissing to the classroom on the lower level through the front side door of the sanctuary. Parents/guardians are welcome to accompany your child(ren) if you choose; please pickup children in their classroom following the worship service. Visitors are welcome.

Nursery care for infants through age 3 is available in the nursery on the lower level. Our nursery caregiver is Caitlin Vredenburg. Our nursery helpers are Cindy Livingston and Mariana Nolan.

ANTHEM***Together We Rise (Tuko Pamoja)***

Johnson

SCRIPTURE**Matthew 19:13-15**

The Inclusive Bible

Then small children were brought to Jesus so he could lay hands on them and pray for them. The disciples began to scold the parents, but Jesus said, “Let the children alone—let them come to me. The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” And after laying his hands on them, Jesus left that town.

One: This is the word of God for the people of God.

All: *Thanks be to God.*

CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION *Jesus, Remember Me*

Taize

SERMON

“Centering the Children”

Rev. Jennifer Knutsen

HYMN**Restless Weaver, Ever Spinning***
(verses 1, 3 & 4)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 658

Restless Weaver, ever spinning threads of justice and shalom;
dreaming patterns of creation where all creatures find a home;
gathering up life’s varied fibers – every texture, every hue:
grant us your creative vision. With us weave your world anew.

When our violent lust for power ends in lives abused and torn,
from compassion’s sturdy fabric fashion hope and trust reborn.

Where injustice rules as tyrant, give us courage, God, to dare
live our dreams of transformation. Make our lives incarnate prayer.

Restless Weaver, still conceiving new life – now and yet to be –
binding all your vast creation in one living tapestry:
you have called us to be weavers. Let your love guide all we do.
With your Reign of Peace our pattern, we will weave your world anew.

MORNING PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Refrain: One: Holy One, in your mercy,

All: *Receive our prayers.*

THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TEACHES (unison) interpretation of John Philip Newell

Ground of all being, Mother of Life, Father of the universe,

Your name is sacred, beyond speaking.

May we know your presence,

*may your longings be our longings
in heart and in action.*

*May there be food for the human family today
and for the whole earth community.*

*Forgive us the falseness of what we have done
as we forgive those who are untrue to us.*

*Do not forsake us in our time of conflict
but lead us into new beginnings.*

*For the light of life, the vitality of life, and the glory of life
are yours now and forever. Amen.*

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Offertory

Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below

Praise God above, ye heavenly host;

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

by Michael Mair, adapted

*God of abundance and grace, receive now our offerings which we dedicate to the work
of building your kin-dom on earth. Along with our gifts, we offer ourselves, too.*

*Take and use us, that our hands may reach out in service, our feet walk paths of
reconciliation, our voices share words of peace, and our actions build communities
of justice. Amen.*

***HYMN**

Called as Partners in Christ's Service Chalice Hymnal, No. 453
(verses 1, 2 & 4)

Called as partners in Christ's service, called to ministries of grace,
we respond with deep commitment fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of sharing, side by side and friend with friend,
equal partners in our caring to fulfill God's chosen end.

Christ's example, Christ's inspiring, Christ's clear call to work and worth,
let us follow, never faltering, reconciling folk on earth.
Men and women, richer, poorer, all God's people, young and old,
blending human skills together gracious gifts from God unfold.

So God grant us for tomorrow ways to order human life
that surround each person's sorrow with a calm that conquers strife.
Make us partners in our living, our compassion to increase,
messengers of faith, thus giving hope and confidence and peace.

***BENEDICTION**

by Sarah A. Spead, A Sanctified Art

As you leave this place, hold fast to what is good; go with the good news in your heart.

The good news of the gospel is love and justice; it is liberation and joy.

Go into the world to share this good news:

When you meet anger, speak with love.

When you meet fear, speak with hope.

When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.

When you meet hate, speak with courage.

We will carry Christ's love and peace into the world.

Together we will go to share the good news. Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Thanks to our worship helpers today!

Liturgist: Donna Perry

Digital Host: Lori Merrill

Welcome Table: Elizabeth Cooper-Martin

Cover photo by Akinyemi Gbadamosi on unsplash.com.

Welcome to Rockville United Church!

We are glad you have joined us for worship this morning. We trust that you will find RUC to be a welcoming and engaging place to explore the life of faith within a community that honors each person's spiritual journey. We encourage you to ask questions, visit our website, and share your contact information at the welcome table near the front doors. I hope to greet you personally following worship, and invite you to contact me.

Blessings,
Rev. Jennifer Knutsen
jennifer@rockvilleunitedchurch.org

Our complimentary Wi-Fi network is **RUC Mesh**. The password is **heavenly**.



Please Scan Me To Give To RUC.

RUC Staff

Rev. Jennifer R. Knutsen, Senior Pastor
Rev. Guy S. Johnson, Associate Pastor
Jim Levy, Director of Music
Dalia Marciano, Administrative Coordinator
Lynne Brady, Communications Coordinator
Caitlin Vrendenburg, Nursery Coordinator
Juan Mendez, Sexton



Rockville United Church

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(Office Hours: Wed, Fri—10am to 3pm or by appointment)
Ecumenical † Just Peace † Open & Affirming † More Light