



Rockville United Church
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
20th Sunday after Pentecost
October 26, 2025 ~ Hybrid Worship

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

A Voice is Heard

Watts/O'Brien

*CALL TO WORSHIP

We come to this sacred place to encounter the presence of the living God.

How lovely is God's dwelling place!

The whole world speaks of God's goodness.

The earth is filled with sacred places showing forth love and beauty.

We come into God's presence, where we are at home, where we belong.

Let us renew our strength as we rest in the safety of Divine Love.

Let us lift our voices in song and praise to the Great Spirit

Let us praise God with joy in worship.

*HYMN

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Chalice Hymnal, No. 2

(verses 1, 2, 4)

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive our fear and doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee.

Mortals, join the happy chorus; stars of morning, take your part;
love divine is reigning o'er us, binding those of tender heart.
Ever singing, move we onward, victors in the midst of strife,
joyful music leads us sunward In the triumph song of life.

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (unison)

Giver of life, Breath of our souls, You hear our sorrows.

***Turn Your listening ear to the vibrations of our yearning,
as we turn our spirits towards You.***

In places of despair, breathe life.

In places of pain, breathe healing.

*In times of fear, breathe strength.
In places of war, breathe peace.
In places of hate, breathe love.
In times of sorrow, breathe joy.
By the indwelling Holy Spirit, Ruach, the Christ within,
remind us, we are born in Your love to be Your love in the world.
Be with us as we journey in this life
to be repairers of the breach and co-creators of peace.*

(from UCC Prayers for Peace, by Rev. Michael Young)

MOMENT OF SILENCE

CHORAL RESPONSE

Water, River, Spirit, Grace

Chalice Hymnal, No. 366

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 84:1 -7

How lovely is your dwelling place,
O Holy One!
My soul longs, indeed it faints,
for the courts of your dwelling place;
my heart and my flesh sing for joy
to the living God.
Even the sparrow finds a home
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
at your altars, O Sacred One,
my Creator and my God.
Happy are those who live in your house,
ever singing your praise.
Happy are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.
As they go through the valley of Baca,
they make it a place of springs;
the early rain also covers it with pools.
They go from strength to strength;
the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

WORD FOR CHILDREN

Ray Plante

Nursery care for infants through age 3 is available in the nursery on the lower level. Our nursery caregiver is Caitlin Vrendenburg. Our nursery helper is Cindy Livingston. Older children are encouraged to remain in worship. The rug space in the sanctuary is available for quiet play, coloring and reading.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Cecilia Noelle Zimmerman

Presentation of the Candidate

Chris Frentrup, Council President

Prayer of Invocation and Address

Congregational Assent

One: Jesus calls us to welcome all people as his disciples and to offer anyone who seeks it the gift of grace in baptism. Do you who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care of Cecilia as she lives and grows as a disciple of Christ?

All: *We promise our love, support and care.*

Questions to the Parents and Godparents

Prayer of Baptism (in unison)

We thank you, God, for your love in all creation, especially for your gift of water to sustain, refresh and cleanse all life. We thank you that through the waters of baptism you cleanse us. Renew us by your Spirit and bring us to new life. Thanks to you, eternal God, who was, and is, and always shall be. Amen.

Act of Baptism

Presentation

Closing Prayer

One: Let us pray:

All: *We give you thanks, O Holy One, for Cecilia and for the grace acknowledged here today through water and the Holy Spirit. Embrace us all in the one household of your love, and help us to receive, nurture and befriend Cecilia as a member of the body of Christ. We pray that she will have the strength needed for life's journey, the courage required in times of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and the hope of new life. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

ANTHEM

Down In the River To Pray

Traditional

SCRIPTURE

Living Psalm 84:1-7

as reimagined by
Rev. Justo Gonzalez II

Thanks to you my dwelling, my place of comfort and rest
where I can be who I am and not have to wear the mask
that others want me to wear —is ever welcoming.
How lovely it is to breathe and chill in your presence,
O Lord of the Chill, Calm and Relax.
My inner self strives to be the person who models love, grace, and compassion.
Indeed, it seeks such closeness to you, and I can inhale your majesty
in your Holy place of universal welcome;
my heart jumps for joy and I claim my voice.
I sing for joy to you the Incarnate Christ
and always loving and inviting God.
Every living being finds a home in your presence.
The sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for herself,
the coquis of Puerto Rico sing forth their welcome
and shout, “rest here and simply be”
as the universal choir of all living things sing,
“Lay your young here. This is casa, our home.”
At the altar of gratefulness, O LORD of hosts, my love and my God,
we simply pause and say, “Gracias / Thank you.”
Smiles of welcome embrace us.
We who live, not just survive, in the house,
love, mercy and transformation that You provide,
we sing your praise, in this lovely grace-filled place.
Our hearts overflow with appreciation,
for you have covered us from our own disappear;
we are blessed, our strength is in you.
To the One who has promised to never abandon us,
you are driving on the highways to Zion.
As we go through the valley of tears, and despair,
You make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.
These are the pools of divine blessings
and reenergize us as we continue the journey to You.
In you we go from despair and giving up to accepting You and your strength.
In You is certainty that we are NEVER alone; we will see the God of Gods in Zion.

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

All: Thanks be to God.

SUNG PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION *So Let the Words Of Our Mouth*

Cliff

SERMON

“From Strength to Strength”

Rev. Jennifer Knutsen

***HYMN**

How Lovely, Lord, How Lovely

Chalice Hymnal, No. 285

How lovely, Lord, how lovely is your abiding place;
my soul is longing, fainting, to feast upon your grace.
The sparrow finds a shelter, a place to build her nest;
and so your temple calls us within its walls to rest.

In your blest courts to worship, O God, a single day
is better than a thousand if I from you should stray.
I'd rather keep the entrance and claim you as my Lord
than revel in the riches the ways of sin afford.

A sun and shield forever are you, O God most high;
you shower us with blessings; no good will you deny.
The saints, your grace receiving, from strength to strength shall go,
and from their life shall rivers of blessing overflow.

MORNING PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Refrain: One: Holy One, in your mercy,
 All: Receive our prayers.

THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TEACHES (Womanist interpretation by Rev. Yolanda Norton)

*Our Mother, who is in heaven and within us,
We call upon your names,
Your Wisdom come.
Your will be done in all the spaces in which you dwell.
Give us each day sustenance and perseverance.
Remind us of our limits, as we give grace to the limits of others.
Separate us from the temptation of empire,
And deliver us into community.
For you are the dwelling place within us,
the empowerment around us,
and the celebration among us,
now and forever. Amen*

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Stewardship Story

Arthur Sloan

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)

Dependable God, in whom we live and move and have our being, once again you have filled us with hope and blessed us with grace, and we are grateful. Along with our gifts, we dedicate ourselves to your healing work in the world. Receive us, transform us, and move through us to bring the world to greater wholeness. Amen.

*HYMN

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Chalice Hymnal No. 560

What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms;
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain:

*Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;
leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.*

O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, leaning on the everlasting arms;
O how bright the path grows from day to day, leaning on the everlasting arms. [Refrain]

What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my God so near, leaning on the everlasting arms. [Refrain]

*BENEDICTION

Go now into the world and may the peace of God dwell within you and all you meet.
May God's love take shape in your life and in all your relationships.
May you walk in confident friendship with Christ, who walks with you.
May you rejoice in the song of the Spirit, acknowledging the life in your breath.
May God lead you forth in grace and peace that you may go from strength to strength.
Amen.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Thanks to our worship helpers today!

Liturgist: Susan Kirby
Digital Host: Dan Hockensmith
Welcome Table: Mary Sue Pletcher
Greeter: Ed Peterson

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.



Rockville United Church

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
355 Linthicum Street, Rockville, Maryland 20851
301-424-6733 ~ www.RockvilleUnitedChurch.org
(Office Hours: Wed, Fri—10am to 3pm or by appointment)
Ecumenical † Just Peace † Open & Affirming † More Light