



## Rockville United Church

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ

5th Sunday after Epiphany

February 8, 2026 ~ Hybrid Worship

## CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

## GATHERING MUSIC

**Fugue no. 4 (The Art of the Fugue)**

Bach

String Quartet: Naomi Malka, First Violin; Natasha Tynes, Second Violin;  
Timothy Doerr, Viola; Marty Mangold, Cello

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Call it out—no holding back!

***There is truth that needs to be spoken.***

Let the people rise and hear it.

***We are listening. We stand ready.***

Call to the weary, the overlooked, the worn-thin:

***With courage, we gather; with voices, we speak words of life.***

Call to the hearts carrying hidden weight,

***The Holy One meets us here in our honesty.***

Call to the systems that press people down,

***Their power is not the final word.***

A new song is rising,

***A song that frees, a rhythm that restores, a melody that repairs.***

Call to the builders, the dreamers, the stubbornly hopeful:

***The time has come to lift the burdens, to loosen the grip of harm,  
to rebuild what has been broken.***

Come, beloved community, bring your resolve, your compassion, your wide-awake faith.

***Let us worship God who calls us to this work of love and justice.***

**\*HYMN**

***The Voice of God is Calling***  
(verses 1, 2 and 4)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 666

The voice of God is calling to women and to men;  
the voice once heard in Zion, resounds on earth again:  
whom shall I send to succor my people in their need?  
Whom shall I send to loosen the bonds of shame and greed?

I hear my people crying in slum and mine and mill;  
no field or mart is silent, no city street is still.  
I see my people falling in darkness and despair.  
Whom shall I send to shatter the fetters which they bear?

From ease and plenty save us; from pride of place absolve;  
purge us of low desire; lift us to high resolve;  
take us, and make us holy; teach us your will and way.  
Speak, and, behold! we answer; command, and we obey!

#### **PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (unison)**

*Calling presence, we admit that we have not always chosen the path that frees. We have stayed silent when truth asked for our voice; we have protected our comfort when compassion asked for our hands; we have waited for others to do the work you have entrusted to us. Remind us that the righteous will never be shaken. Remind us that we have no fear of bad news, for we trust in you. Remind us that we have no fear, and that our righteousness endures forever. Loosen our resistance, lift the habits that keep us from seeing one another clearly, and break the patterns that bind us to what harms. Teach us the courage to act with mercy, the discipline of repair, and let this moment mark a turning toward your justice, your tenderness, toward the life you image for us. In your grace, make us new. Amen.*

#### **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

#### **WORD OF ASSURANCE**

Hear the good news: The One who calls us out in truth, meets us not with shame, but with mercy that lifts what is heavy, and compassion that steadies our steps. When we turn toward justice, God's healing begins working in us. When we loosen what harms, God loosens the weight within us. In this promise, let us receive God's grace and be restored. Amen.

#### **CHORAL RESPONSE**

***So Let the Words Of My Mouth***

Cliff

#### **SCRIPTURE**

**Isaiah 58:1-12**

The Inclusive Bible

This is the sort of fast that pleases me: Remove the chains of injustice! Undo the ropes of the yoke! Let those who are oppressed go free, and break every yoke you encounter! Share your bread with those who are hungry, clothe those who are naked, and don't hide from the needs of your own flesh and blood! Do this, and your light will shine like the dawn—and your integrity will go before you, and the glory of God will be your rearguard. Cry, and God will answer; call, and God will say 'I am here' provided you remove from your midst all oppression, finger pointing, and malicious talk! If you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your shadows will become like noon. God will always guide you, giving relief in desert places. God will give strength to your bones and you will be like a

watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never run dry. You will rebuild the ancient ruins, and build upon age-old foundations. You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, and Restorer of Ruined Neighborhoods.”

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: ***Thanks be to God.***

## **WORD FOR CHILDREN**

### Say Something

Ray Plante

by Peter H. Reynolds

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 Marian Coger.

## **MUSICAL MEDITATION**

“Vivace Assai” (Quartet No. 30)

Haydn

## **SCRIPTURE**

**Matthew 5:13-20**

The Inclusive Bible

You are the salt of the earth. But what if salt were to lose its flavor? How could you restore it? It would be fit for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. You don’t build a city on a hill, then try to hide it, do you? You don’t light a lamp, then put it under a bushel basket, do you? No, you set it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, your light must shine before others so that they may see your good acts and give praise to your God in heaven. Don’t think I’ve come to abolish the Law and the Prophets. I have come not to abolish them, but to fulfill them. The truth is, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter of the Law, not even the smallest part of a letter, will be done away with until it is all fulfilled. That’s why whoever breaks the least significant of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever fulfills and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your sense of justice surpasses that of the religious scholars and the Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: ***Thanks be to God.***

## **CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION** *Open Thou Mine Eyes*

Rutter

## **SERMON**

“The Light We Bring”

Rev. Jennifer Knutsen

You are salt for the earth, O people, salt for the kin-dom of God!  
Share the flavor of life, O people: life in the kin-dom of God!

Refrain

*Bring forth the kin-dom of mercy, bring forth the kin-dom of peace;  
bring forth the kin-dom of justice, bring forth the city of God!*

You are a light on the hill, O people, light for the city of God!  
Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine for the kin-dom of God! (Refrain)

You are a seed of the word, O people, bring forth the kin-dom of God!  
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the kin-dom of God! (Refrain)

**MORNING PRAYER**

**PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

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

**THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TEACHES**

(an interpretation from New Zealand)

***Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.***

**OFFERING OUR GIFTS**

**Offertory**

***Sending You Light***

Demore

I am sending you light, to heal you, to hold you.  
I am sending you light, to hold you in love. [repeat]

No matter where you go,  
No matter where you've been,  
You'll never walk alone,  
I feel you deep within. [Refrain]

**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)

*Guiding Spirit of God, we give thanks for every gift offered today—for open hands, willing hearts, and the courage to imagine a shared life made whole. Bless what we have brought. Let it move where relief is needed, where repair can begin, where dignity can rise. Make these gifts more than generosity—make them instruments of justice, seeds of compassion, signs that your vision is taking root among us. Carry us forward in this work with gratitude deep enough to shape the world we are building together. Amen.*

**\*HYMN*****We Are Called***

Come! Live in the light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!  
We are called to be light for the kingdom,  
to live in the freedom of the city of God!

**Refrain:**

*We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly,  
we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God!*

Come! Open your heart! Show your mercy to all those in fear!  
We are called to be hope for the hopeless,  
so all hatred and blindness will be no more! (refrain)

Sing! Sing a new song! Sing of that great day when all will be one!  
God will reign, and we'll walk with each other  
as sisters and brothers united in love! (refrain)

**\*BENEDICTION**

May the Way, Truth and Life go with you,  
the Presence that unsettles what must change  
and steadies what must endure.  
Let the weight on your shoulders grow lighter,  
not by forgetting it, but by letting others walk beside you.  
Carry within you a courage that listens deeply,  
an imagination wide enough to rebuild ruins,  
and a tenderness fierce enough to unlearn every habit of harm.  
Go in the love of God to do the work of justice.

*We go in boldness, in gentleness, in community.  
We go in the name of Christ who leads us  
in the sacred work of making all things whole. Amen.*

**BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

*The Lord Bless and Keep You*

Lutkin

*Liturgical prayers adapted from Rev. Michael Anthony Howard, Worship Ways, UCC.org*

**Thanks to our worship helpers today!**

Liturgist: Denise Rozell

Digital Host: Beth Marshwood

Greeter: Karl Knutsen

Welcome Table: Frances Hockensmith

**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](mailto:jennifer@rockvilleunitedchurch.org)*

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

## **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*



Please Scan Me To Give To RUC.

*The cover pic is by John August Swanson “Festival of Lights”*



## **Rockville United Church**

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ

355 Linthicum Street, Rockville, Maryland 20851

301-424-6733 ~ [www.RockvilleUnitedChurch.org](http://www.RockvilleUnitedChurch.org)

(Office Hours: Wed, Fri—10am to 3pm or by appointment)

Ecumenical † Just Peace † Open & Affirming † More Light