



Rockville United Church
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
Second Sunday of Easter
April 27, 2025 ~ Hybrid Worship

Cover image from unsplash.com by Monika Thomas

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

The Lone Wild Bird

Trad. American

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Great Spirit of the East, You are dreaming me, singing me from the stars, laughing in dawn's sunbeams, calling me from little green leaves.

Dance your vision in my bones. Birth your love in my being. Surprise me with the taste of joy, and teach me the sounds of hope.

Great Spirit of the South, I lift up my face toward your light, I unite my heart with your love. Spring is promising me new life. My fruitful times will be restored.

The emptiness of winter days will be left far behind me. Receive my gratitude. Touch my open heart and fill it.

Great Spirit of the West, even in springtime, surrender is required. The yielding soil is broken open and readied for the garden to receive the seed. My springtime heart turns toward you to receive the teachings you offer.

Give clarity to my decisions and actions so I can release what keeps me from growing. May every yielding of my strong will be a graceful letting go so new life can stir.

Great Spirit of the North, light returns in abundance as spring appears. Come with your strong rays of hope. Come with your whispering winds of rain.

Send courage to accept the inevitable pain that is a part of the birthing process. May I lean into your strong embrace as the first signs of revitalization grow stronger in me every day.

*HYMN

Morning Has Broken
(verses 1-3)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 53

Morning has broken like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day!

PRAYER OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

We give thanks for the creative power that pours forth its bounty in grass and grain. The earth and all its fullness are yours, O God. You are the seed within the seed, giving it life and sustaining all your creatures. Rested and restored through winter, now through spring and summer and autumn your radiant power makes the earth yield its fruit. For this we give you praise and pledge that more than words shall show our thankfulness. We shall cherish the good earth you have placed in our keeping; we shall share with others the food we have gathered; and we shall work to make this a world where only good is sown that our harvest may generate contentment and peace.
Amen

(Central Conference of American Rabbis)

CHORAL RESPONSE

Ruah

Fulmer

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 150

Psalms for Praying Nan C. Merrill

Praise the Beloved!
Praises be to You in earth's sanctuary;
praises be to You in the mighty firmament!
Praise the mighty works of Love;
Praise the glory and extol the greatness of Love Divine!
Give praise with trumpets;
give praise with lute and harp!
Give praise with timbrel and dance;
give praise with strings and reed!
Give praise with booming drums;
give praise with crashing cymbals!
Let everything that breathes
praise the Beloved with their lives!
May it be so now and forever! Amen.

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: Thanks be to God.

WORD FOR CHILDREN Green Green: A Community Gardening Story

Ray Plante

by Marie Lamba, Baldev Lamba illustrated by Sonia Sanchez

Children (ages 3 years old though 5th grade) are invited to attend a Sunday School faith formation class. Following the Word for Children, children will dismiss with their teachers to the classrooms on the lower level, through the front side door of the sanctuary. Parents/guardians, please pick up children in their classroom following the worship service. Parents/guardians are welcome to accompany their child(ren) if they choose. 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.

ANTHEM***Now the Green Blade Riseth***

Trad. French

SCRIPTURE**John 20:19-31**

The Inclusive Bible

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were locked in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Temple authorities. Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Having said this, the savior showed them the marks of the crucifixion. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw Jesus, who said to them again, “Peace be with you. As Abba God sent me, so I’m sending you.” After saying this, Jesus breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you retain anyone’s sins, they are retained.” It happened that one of the Twelve, Thomas — nicknamed Didymus, or “Twin” — was absent when Jesus came. The other disciples kept telling him, “We’ve seen Jesus!” Thomas’ answer was, “I’ll never believe it without putting my finger in the nail marks and my hand into the spear wound.” On the eighth day, the disciples were once more in the room, and this time Thomas was with them. Despite the locked doors, Jesus came and stood before them, saying “Peace be with you.” Then, to Thomas, Jesus said, “Take your finger and examine my hands. Put your hand into my side. Don’t persist in your unbelief, but believe!” Thomas said in response, “My Savior and my God!” Jesus then said, “You’ve become a believer because you saw me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Jesus performed many other signs as well — signs not recorded here — in the presence of the disciples. But these have been recorded to help you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Only Begotten, so that by believing you may have life in Jesus’ Name.

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

All: *Thanks be to God.*

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

Rutter

SERMON

“Trust but Verify”

Chris Frentrup

***HYMN**

That Easter Day With Joy Was Bright Chalice Hymnal, No. 229

(verses 1, 2 & 4)

That Easter day with joy was bright, the sun shone out with fairer light,
when, to their longing eyes restored, the glad apostles saw their Lord.

His risen flesh with radiance glowed; his wounded hands and feet he showed
those scars their solemn witness gave, that Christ was risen from the grave.

Come, risen Christ, with us abide in this our joyful Eastertide;
your own redeemed forever shield from ev'ry weapon death can wield.

MORNING PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Refrain: One: Holy One, in your mercy,

All: *Receive our prayers.*

THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TEACHES (unison)

Our Loving God 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 sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

And lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil

for thine is the kingdom

and the power and the glory forever.

Amen.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Our scripture reminds us that real safety comes with the flourishing of all people. Even in the midst of our fears, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and sent out. So let us unlock our hearts and unclench our fists, offering what we have in this moment as a symbol of our commitment to go out and be the presence of Love in our world.

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)

*In the presence of fear, may these gifts bring hope.
Where doors are locked, may these offerings open new possibilities.
Where there are wounds, may these gifts honor their truth.
In the presence of despair, may these offerings testify to a new world rising up.
To this collective liberation, we dedicate ourselves and our offerings. Amen.*

(Sharon Fennema)

*HYMN

In the Bulb There Is A Flower

Chalice Hymnal, No. 638

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection, at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

*BENEDICTION

Each leaf, each petal, each grain, each person sings the wisdom of your ways.
***Awaken us to the wonder of life that springs each moment from the heart
of divine love.***
Open our minds, fill our senses, widen our embrace, strengthen our stance,
and go with us into the world in courage, peace, hope and joy. Amen.

(David Miller)

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Thanks to our worship helpers today!

Liturgist: John Abrahams
Digital Host: Dan Hockensmith
Welcome Table: Mary Wallace

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