



Rockville United Church
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
Easter Sunday
April 5, 2026 ~ Hybrid Worship

PRELUDE

Trumpet Prelude
Jonathan Zack, Trumpet Soloist

Bliss

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

Easter Alleluia

Carey Creed

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

At early dawn, when the light was just emerging and the shadows still long and deep the earth began to sing a tender and persistent hallelujah.

And the resurrection smelled like death and dirt. Christ, the Power of Love, is risen indeed. Hallelujah.

At early dawn, with the salt of tears still crusting their eyes, the women began to sing a grieving and faithful hallelujah.

And the empty tomb sounded like weeping and questions. Christ, the Wounded One, is risen indeed. Hallelujah.

At early dawn, when no one could remember the sound of hope or the promise of a new day rising, the world began to sing a fierce and determined hallelujah.

And the rising up tasted like bread and rejoicing. Christ, the Way of Truth and Life, is risen indeed. Hallelujah.

At early dawn, as each day brings forth new agonies and injustices, we gather to sing a grateful and liberating hallelujah.

And this Easter feels like protest and praise. Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

***HYMN**

Christ the Lord is Risen Today

Chalice Hymnal, No. 216

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!

All creation, join to say, Alleluia!

Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!

Sing, O heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!

Where, O death, is now your sting? Alleluia!

Jesus died, our souls to save, Alleluia!

Where your victory, O grave? Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!

Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!

Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!

Christ has opened paradise. Alleluia!

INVOCATION

Resurrecting God, we meet you in the empty tomb where our griefs and joys, despairs and hopes intermingle. Through our prayers and praise this Easter day, open our hearts to remember that the power of love and life will overcome every death-dealing force, no matter how pervasive or persuasive. In this troubling and joyful time, dazzle us with good news, Holy Rising Up One, in whose path we follow and name we pray. Amen.

CALL TO PRAYER

There can be no resurrection without facing the power of death, the daily crucifixions that we experience and participate in continuing. So, centered in our resurrection hope and trusting in God's grace, let us turn unflinchingly toward these truths, and open ourselves to transformation and new life. Let us pray.

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

Holy Love, in every ending, there is a beginning, and each new beginning also signals an end. May the promise of new life enable us to end the things that threaten the wholeness and wellbeing of your creation, to end the attitudes that do not honor you and respect our neighbors, and to end the ways in which we are complacent and complicit in the continuing injustices of the world. Empower us to leave our death-dealing ways behind and follow your ways of love and justice that lead to new life. Long ago, faithful women proclaimed the good news of Jesus' resurrection, and the world was changed forever. Teach us to keep faith with them, that our witness may be as bold, our love as deep, and our faith as true. When the realities of life overwhelm us, threaten to consume us, and mire us in fear, grant us the assurance of your grace. God of promise, of all endings and all beginnings, renew our hearts and minds. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

Beloved in faith, Christ is risen. The Holy One is yet alive in our midst, doing a new thing. Receive the grace of God that meets us in our weakness. Embrace the grace of God to move forward boldly in new life.

CHORAL RESPONSE

Seven-fold Amen

Jack Reid

SCRIPTURE**Psalm 118**

interpretation by Nan C. Merrill

We give thanks to You, O Beloved, for You are kind; your steadfast Love endures forever! Let every nation proclaim, “Your steadfast Love endures forever.” Let all the people cry, “Your steadfast Love endures forever.” Let those who reverence You sing, “Your steadfast Love endures forever.” Out of my distress I call upon You; You answered, setting me on a new path. With you beside me, I do not fear. What can others do to me? You live within me and answer my prayer as I face the fears that well up from within. Harken to songs of victory, to the music of my soul: “You, O Loving Presence, have been my strength, You have stood beside me in the darkness, You have walked with me into the light!” I shall not give in to fear, but I shall live in peace, and give witness to your saving grace. You turned your face from my weakness, and You opened the door leading to new life. We give thanks to You, O Blessed One, for you are kind; your steadfast love endures forever.

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: *Thanks be to God.*

WORD FOR CHILDRENWaiting for Wings

Pastor Jennifer

By Lois Ehlert

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 pick up 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 helper is Mariana Nolan.

ANTHEM***Festival Sanctus***

Leavitt

SCRIPTURE**Matthew 28:1-10**

The Inclusive Bible

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary of Magdala came with Mary to inspect the tomb. Suddenly, there was a severe earthquake, and an angel of God descended from heaven, rolled back the stone, and sat on it. The angel’s appearance was like lightning, with garments white as snow. The guards shook with fear and fell down as though they were dead. Then the angel spoke, addressing the women: “Don’t be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus the crucified, who is no longer here. Jesus has been raised, exactly as it was foretold. Come and see the burial place. Then go quickly and tell the disciples that Jesus has risen from the dead and now goes ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Jesus there. That is the message I have for you.” The women hurried away from the tomb with awe and great joy and ran to carry

the good news to the disciples. Suddenly Jesus stood before them and said, “Shalom!” The women came up, embraced Jesus’ feet and worshiped. At this, Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid! Go tell the disciples to go to Galilee, where they will see me.”

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

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

CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION *Sending You Light*

Demore

SERMON

“Eyes Wide Open”

Rev. Jennifer R. Knutsen

***HYMN**

Now the Green Blade Rises

Chalice Hymnal, No. 230

Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
love lives again, that with the dead has been;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

In the grave they laid the love by hatred slain,
thinking that Jesus would not wake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

Christ came forth at Easter, like the risen grain,
who that for three days in the grave had lain;
raised from the dead, the risen Christ is seen;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

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

As resurrection people, every moment offers us an opportunity to divest from the power of death and invest in the power of new life, to use our resources to build up a new world of flourishing for all.

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)

To the witness of new life emerging, God open us.

To the work of new world building, God commit us.

To the power of love persisting, God dedicate us.

For the calling of faith rising up, God equip us. Amen.

*HYMN

The Strife is O'er (verses 1-3)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 221

The strife is o'er, the battle done;
the victory of life is won;
the song of triumph has begun. Alleluia!

The powers of death have done their worst,
but Christ their legions has dispersed.
let shouts of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!

The three sad days are quickly sped,
Christ rises glorious from the dead:
all glory to our risen Head! Alleluia!

*BENEDICTION

This blessing emerges through grief when the sorrows
have not yet left us and the hope has not yet found us.

Hallelujah. Even now, new life.

This blessing calls from emptiness when we have
more questions than answers and fear turns to amazement turns to joy.

Hallelujah. Even now, resurrection.

This blessing reminds us that God's presence knows no bounds
and God's realm knows no limits.

Hallelujah. Even now, rise up.

Christ is risen indeed! And the power of Christ lives in us.

Go forth renewed and rededicated to be the good news in the world God loves.

Go in peace to rise up in protest and praise,

until new life is witnessed, known, and enjoyed by all creation.

Hallelujah. Amen!

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

*We thank Arthur Sloan, violin, and Jonathan Zack, trumpet, for their musical
contributions today.*

Thanks to our worship helpers today!

Liturgist: Susan Kirby

Digital Host: John Junod

Welcome Table: Elizabeth Cooper-Martin

Greeters: Mary Wallace and Ray Plante



Please Scan Me To Give To RUC.

Cover photo by Meritt Thomas 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**.

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