



Rockville United Church

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

4th Sunday of Easter

April 26, 2026 ~ Hybrid Worship

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

Njalo

South African

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, walk in green pastures.

We follow the Shepherd.

Come, lie down in green pastures.

We trust the Shepherd.

Come, dine at the table of abundance.

We are fed by the Shepherd.

Come, dwell in God's house.

We live in the Shepherd's care.

*HYMN

Praise to Our God, the Almighty

Chalice Hymnal, No. 25

(verses 1, 3 & 5)

Praise to our God, the Almighty, who rules all creation.
O my soul, worship the well-spring of health and salvation.
All ye who hear, now to God's temple draw near.
Join me in glad adoration.

Praise to our God, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee.
Surely God's goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
who with great love doth befriend thee.

Praise to our God! O let all of earth's peoples and races,
all that hath life and breath, give thanks for manifold graces.
Let the Amen sound from God's people again.
Gladly forever sing praises.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Holy Shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, where we celebrate with you forever. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

May the Good Shepherd who calls us by name go before you and guard the gates of your life. Hear his voice; follow where she leads, and know the fullness of life they give. And the blessing of God Almighty — Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer — be with you now and always. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE

Seven-fold Amen

Reid

WRAPPED IN WARMTH

Phyllis Windle and Donna Perry

Olivia Clausen -- Kate & Scott Clausen, brother Wyatt

Jane Guest -- Christine Hammell & Johnathan Guest

Cecelia Zimmerman -- Grace Manno-Zimmerman & Stanley Zimmerman

BLESSING PRAYER (unison)

Holy One, remind us how Jesus enacted Your love, “moving in and through the world, touching, blessing, cleansing, transforming the world, person by person, story by story.” Today, let these blankets represent our call to do the same. May the crocheters, the yarn, the wool (and the sheep) weave us together in this community. May these blankets wrap us in warmth, bring us comfort, and enfold us in beauty. Let them assure us that we are beloved. Amen.

Adapted by Phyllis Windle from Pastor Jennifer's 1/11/26 sermon.

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 23

The Inclusive Bible

Yahweh, you are my shepherd – I want nothing more. You let me lie down in green meadows; you lead me beside restful waters: you refresh my soul. You guide me to lush pastures for the sake of your Name. Even if I'm surrounded by shadows of Death, I fear no danger, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff – they give me courage. You spread a table for me in the presence of my enemies, and you anoint my head with oil – my cup overflows! Only goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in your house, Yahweh, for days without end.

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: *Thanks be to God.*

WORD FOR CHILDREN

Psalm Twenty-Three

Pastor Jennifer

illustrated by Tim Ladwig

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.

ANTHEM***The Lord Is My Shepherd***

Goodall

SCRIPTURE**John 10:1-10**

The Inclusive Bible

“The truth of the matter is, whoever doesn’t enter the sheepfold through the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep, the one for whom the keeper opens the gate. The sheep know the shepherd’s voice; the shepherd calls them by name and leads them out. Having led them all out of the fold, the shepherd walks in front of them and they follow because they recognize the shepherd’s voice. They simply won’t follow strangers – they’ll flee from them because they don’t recognize the voice of strangers.” Even though Jesus used this metaphor with them, they didn’t grasp what he was trying to tell them. He therefore said to them again: “The truth of the matter is, I am the sheep gate. All who came before me were thieves and marauders whom the sheep didn’t heed. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be safe – you’ll go in and out and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy. I come that you might have life and have it to the full.”

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

HYMN**God Leadeth Me***

Chalice Hymnal, No. 545

God leadeth me: O blessed thought!
 O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
 Whate’er I do, where’er I be,
 still ‘tis God’s hand that leadeth me.

Refrain:

*God leadeth me, God leadeth me; by God’s own hand God leadeth me:
 God’s faithful follower I would be, for by God’s hand God leadeth me.*

God, I would place my hand in thine,
 nor ever murmur nor repine;
 by waters still, o’er troubled sea,
 still ‘tis thy hand that leadeth me. (Refrain)

And when my task on earth is done,
 when, by thy grace, the victory’s won,
 e’en death’s cold wave I will not flee,
 since God thro’ Jordan leadeth me. (Refrain)

MORNING PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Refrain: One: Holy One, in your mercy,

All: *Receive our prayers.*

THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TEACHES (unison)

Our Shepherd, who gathers us in the fold: Hallowed be your name. May your kingdom come, a safe pasture where no sheep is lost: May your rod and staff lead us to righteousness. Give us today our daily grazing: And restore our souls by still waters. Forgive us when we wander, as we trust you to carry us back: Even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will not fear, for you are with us. Protect us from the wolves and the pitfalls of temptation: And bring us to the table you prepare in the presence of our enemies. For you are our guardian and our peace: Forever and ever. 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)

Holy Shepherd, you who lead us beside still waters and restore our souls, we bring these gifts before you as an offering of gratitude and trust.

Take what we place in your care today and use it to bring comfort to the weary, hope to those walking through shadowed valleys, and justice to those who long for mercy. May these gifts become green pastures for those in need and may our lives themselves become signs of your goodness and steadfast love in a world aching for your peace. In the name of the One who is our Shepherd, we pray. Amen.

***HYMN**

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Chalice Hymnal, No. 558

Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need thy tender care;
in thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use thy folds prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are;
blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are.

We are thine; do thou befriend us; be the guardian of our way;
keep thy flock; from sin defend us; seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear, thy children when we pray;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear, thy children when we pray;

Early let us seek thy favor, early let us do thy will;
blessed Lord and only Savior, with thy love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast loved us, love us still;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast loved us, love us still.

***BENEDICTION**

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Thanks to our worship helpers today!

Liturgist: Sylvia George
Digital Host: Dan Hockensmith
Welcome Table: Frances Hockensmith
Greeter: Ann Seltz

Cover photo by Ricci Shryock for The New York Times (2020)

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

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