



Rockville United Church  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ  
3rd Sunday of Lent  
March 8, 2026 ~ Hybrid Worship

## PRELUDE

## CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

### GATHERING MUSIC

*Prayer for Peace*

Haas

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

(based on Psalm 133)

by Joanna Harader, posted on Spacious Faith, adapted

Though we may be inclined to boast,  
let us come together with humility.

***How good a thing it is when all of God's people live together in unity.***

Though we may be tempted to use harsh words,  
let us come together with gentleness.

***How good a thing it is when all of God's people live together in unity.***

Though we may want everything to happen quickly,  
let us come together with patience.

***How good a thing it is when all of God's people live together in unity.***

Though the world around often encourages hate,  
let us come together in love.

***How good a thing it is when all of God's people live together in unity.***

In humility, gentleness, patience, love, and unity,

***Let us worship the God who has called us together.***

### \*HYMN

***O God of Vision***

Chalice Hymnal, No. 288

(verses 1, 2 & 4)

O God of vision far greater than all human scheming,  
gather us now in your presence, refreshing, redeeming.  
Show us anew life in your breathtaking view, lovely beyond all our dreaming.

Pour out your Spirit on all now assembled before you.  
May our diversity here be a means to adore you.  
Women and men, young, old, and youthful again, make us as one, we implore you.

Break the sun's rays into color, a rainbow around us.  
Storm clouds, though real and near, are not enough to confound us.  
Arched in the sky, beauty and promise are high, giving us hope to astound us.

## PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (unison)

*Holy One, you have never asked us to stand back and watch while you work. You place bread in our hands and ask us to share it. You stir compassion in our hearts and ask us to act on it. When we offer what we have — our time, our courage, our small and imperfect gifts — you multiply it in ways we cannot predict. Forgive us when we wait for miracles instead of becoming part of them. Align our hands with your love, our choices with your justice, and our lives with your abundance, so that together, what seems small may become more than enough. Amen.*

## MOMENT OF SILENCE

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The wideness of God's mercy, the range of God's forgiveness, the infinite love of God, the Heart of hope which is never empty: all these gifts are ours, as God restores us to the fullness of life meant for each of us.

*Grounded in love, rooted in discipleship, we offer ourselves in service to others, recognizing the limitless grace which is ours to share. Thanks be to God. Amen.*

## CHORAL RESPONSE

*Seven-fold Amen*

Reid

## SCRIPTURE

**Mark 6:32-44**

The Inclusive Bible

So they went away in a boat to a deserted area. The people saw them leaving and many recognized them, so they ran together on foot from all the cities and got there ahead of the apostles. When Jesus went ashore, there was a large crowd waiting for him, and he felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things. By now it was getting very late, and his disciples came up to him and said, "This is a deserted place and it's very late. Why not dismiss them so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy something to eat?" Jesus replied, "Give them something to eat yourselves." They answered, "You want us to spend half a year's wages on bread for them to eat?" "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Go look." When they found out they reported back, "Five, and two fish." Jesus told them to have the people sit down on the grass in groups of hundreds and fifties. Then Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. Jesus broke the loaves and handed them to the disciples to distribute among the people. He also passed out the two fish among them. They all ate until they had their fill. The disciples gathered up the leftovers and filled twelve baskets of broken bread and fish. In all, five thousand families ate that day.

**One:** Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

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

**WORD FOR CHILDREN**Thank You Omu!

Pastor Jennifer

by Oge Mora

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.

**ANTHEM*****Leaning On the Everlasting Arms***

Hoffman/Showalter (1887)

arr. Shackley (2026)

**SCRIPTURE****Ephesians 3:20-21**

The Inclusive Bible

To God—whose power now at work in us can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine—to God be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus through all generations, world without end! Amen.

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

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

**CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION** ***Bind Us Together***

Gillman

**SERMON**

“Magic and Miracles”

Dr. Joni Miller

**\*HYMN*****Fill the World with Love***  
(verses 1, 3 & 4)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 467

With the vision in our minds of how the world could be,  
and the fullness of our hearts from the suffering we see;  
when we make all that we are and have part of God’s destiny,  
we can fill the world with love, we can fill the world with love.

We whose spirits long to share, long to comfort and to heal,  
know that when we act alone, hope is difficult to feel;  
but together as we labor God’s compassion to reveal  
we will fill the world with love, we will fill the world with love.

Let us hesitate no longer in our doubt and our dismay;  
there’s a pow’r at work within us that has promised a new day.  
And the time will surely come, it will not be long delayed  
when God fills the world with love, when God fills the world with love.

## MORNING PRAYER

### PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

**THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TEACHES** (unison) (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

Our generosity is born out of our identity in a God whose love is unending and offered to all. In gratitude and joy, we are invited to share from our resource to spread equity and hope among all people.

#### 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. We now offer our gifts and ourselves as an offering to you. Receive us, transform us, and use us for your glory. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

**\*HYMN**

**Unidos**

Chalice Hymnal, No. 496

Unidos, unidos, en tu nombre unidos. (*repeat*)  
Pues en este mundo paz y amor tendremos, (*repeat*)

Unidos, siempre unidos,  
tomándonos las manos iremos  
por el mundo cantando al amor.

[La gloria de Jesus, al fin resplandecerá  
Y el mundo llenará de amor y de paz.]  
(*repeat*)

de amor y de paz, de amor y de paz

Together, together, in your name, we gather. (*repeat*)  
Then we'll have in this world peace and love around us. (*repeat*)

Together we're united;  
we hold hands as we struggle;  
We walk into the world singing God's song of love.

[The glory of Jesus will ever shine in splendor.  
The whole world will be joyful with love and peace.]  
(*repeat*)

with love and peace, with love and peace.

**\*BENEDICTION**

As you leave this place, hold fast to what is good; go with the good news in your heart.

***The good news of the gospel is love and justice; it is liberation and joy.***

Go into the world to share this good news:

When you meet anger, speak with love.

When you meet fear, speak with hope.

When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.

When you meet hate, speak with courage.

***We will carry Christ's love and peace into the world.***

***Together we will go to share the good news. Thanks be to God.***

**BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

**POSTLUDE**

*Liturgy adapted from prayers by Rev. Sarah A. Spead | A Sanctified Art LLC |  
sanctified art.org*

**Thanks to our worship helpers today!**

Liturgist: Lori Merrill

Digital Host: Bill Kirby

Welcome Table: Mary Wallace

*Cover photo by Lucas Mendes.*

**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**.



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

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

Ecumenical † Just Peace † Open & Affirming † More Light