



Rockville United Church
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
2nd Sunday of Lent
March 1, 2026 ~ Hybrid Worship

PRELUDE

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

Honey In the Rock

Georgia Sea Island Song

*CALL TO WORSHIP

We come, for God gathers us here, with that community called faith:

where the hungry are served first, where the thirsty drink life's water.

We come, for God welcomes us here, into that home called grace:

where the naked are clothed in robes of hope; where the outsiders are welcomed in.

With what shall we come before God to worship?

God has shown us what is good.

What does God require of us?

To act with justice, to love with tenderness, and to walk with humility in God's presence.

May God bless us with good news, enrich us with compassion, and instruct us with truth.

Let us worship God.

*HYMN

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore you, God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you, opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you, earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain, sound their praise eternally.

You are giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing, let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.

INVITATION TO PRAYER

We are called to love God and to love our neighbors. As we come to God in prayer, let us consider the depth of our relationships with those we encounter and with the One who calls us to faith, Let us pray:

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (unison)

Holy One, we long to be faithful stewards of your abundant grace, to serve each other in love and humility, to serve your world with wisdom and energy. Forgive us when we stumble over pride, when our words and actions are not guided by love. Forgive us when we want to expedite our giving without really engaging with those we are called to serve. Turn our hearts when we act in folly. Restore our energy when it is gone. Renew our determination to live as faithful disciples. Help us to work with you for the well-being of your creation, that the fortunes of all your peoples may be restored. Sometimes, many times, O God, our efforts fail; but your abundant grace is strong and eternal. Thanks be to you, Gracious God. Amen.

adapted from prayer by Joanna Harader

MOMENT OF SILENCE

CHORAL RESPONSE

Nine-fold Amen

Trad.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:35-40

The Inclusive Bible

For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me; in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then these just will ask, ‘When did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you?’ The ruler will answer them, ‘The truth is, every time you did this for the least of my sisters or brothers, you did it for me.’

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: Thanks be to God.

WORD FOR CHILDREN

The Greatest Table

Pastor Jennifer

by Michael J. Rosen and Becca Stadtlander

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 helpers are Mariana Nolan.

ANTHEM*Psalm 121*

Levy

SCRIPTURE**Luke 7:36-50**

The Inclusive Bible

One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to dinner. Jesus went to his house and reclined at table. A woman who had a low reputation in that town came to the house. She had learned that Jesus was dining with the Pharisee, so she brought with her an alabaster jar of perfumed oil. She stood behind Jesus, crying, and her tears fell on his feet. Then she dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the oil. When the Pharisee saw this, he said to himself, “If this fellow were the Prophet, he’d know who this woman is that is touching him, and what a low reputation she has.” In answer to the Pharisee’s thoughts Jesus said, “Simon, I have something to tell you.” “Tell me, Teacher,” he said. “Two people owed money to a creditor. One owed the creditor the equivalent of two years’ wages; the other, two months’ wages. Both were unable to pay, so the creditor wrote off both debts. Which of them was more grateful to the moneylender?” Simon answered, “I suppose the one who owed more.” Jesus said, “You are right.” Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, “See this woman? I came into your house and you gave me no water to wash my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss of greeting, but she covered my feet with kisses. You didn’t anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with oil. For this reason, I tell you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven—see how much she loves! But the one who is forgiven little, loves little.” Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.” Those also sitting at the table began to ask among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” Meanwhile Jesus said to her, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

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

“A Neighborly Day”

Rev. Jennifer Knutsen

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

*Please use the prayer card to write your prayer requests, and place the card in the offering plate. Online, please write your prayer requests in the chat.
We will share your prayers during the Prayers of the Congregation.*

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)

***Creator of all life and love, you have filled our earth with bountiful blessings.
We dedicate now our gifts and ourselves to you, who calls us into discipleship,
and who surrounds us and sustains us with everlasting love. Amen.***

*HYMN

Here Am I

Chalice Hymnal, No. 654

Here am I, where underneath the bridges
of our winter cities homeless people sleep.
Here am I, where in decaying houses
little children shiver, crying at the cold.
Where are you?

Here am I, with people in the line-up,
anxious for a handout, aching for a job.
Here am I, where pensioners and strikers
sing and march together, wanting something new.
Where are you?

Here am I, where two or three are gathered,
ready to be altered, sharing wine and bread.
Here am I, where those who hear the preaching
change their way of living, find the way to life.
Where are you?

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

The Invitation

Come all who give thanks for the gift of life.
Come all who long for a just and joyful world.
Come all who seek peace and pursue it;
And together we will work to transform pain into hope,
fear into love, sorrow into rejoicing.

***Here in this place, the communion table is open
to people of all races, creeds, gender identities, sexual orientations,
economic circumstances, ages: adults, teens, and children.***

This is Christ's table; all are invited to share the feast.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to God most high.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Let us continue in prayer...

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER OF BLESSING

I invite you to raise your hands over the food you share
in an ancient sign of blessing as we pray:

***Loving God, pour out your Spirit upon us
and on these gifts we share that we may be one with Christ
in whom you came to be one with us. Amen.***

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

You are invited to come forward to receive the bread and take a cup of juice.

A gluten-free option is available at the table.

If you prefer to stay seated, please raise your hand,
notifying one of the ushers or communion servers.

Servers: Denise Giacomozzi and Jan May

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT (unison)

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you give of yourself to help us grow. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your blessing, to work in your name and rest in your grace, to choose your way of love, justice, compassion, and kindness, trusting your presence with us and with all creation. Amen.

***HYMN**

O God of Love, This is a Time of Turning
FINLANDIA, Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2026

O God of love, this is a time of turning —
a time of change, with conflict in the news.
For in our land, some mighty winds are churning;
There's much at stake that we could gain or lose.
Love sings out strong, yet fires of hate are burning;
O God of all, you call us all to choose.

O God of peace, we hear your gracious promise:
Your love can heal the hearts of humankind.
May we stand firm for truth and peace and justice;
May we leave fear and hatred far behind.
May we sing out, and — singing — be a witness,
and show resolve to work for what is kind.

O God of all, of immigrant and neighbor,
of those in power — and of the refugee,
You give us all our common life and labor —
our common hope, the peace we long to see.
God, may we turn and be made strong together.
May we seek justice, love and unity.

***BENEDICTION**

The peace of God go with you to dwell within you and all you meet.

God's love and peace will make a difference in our lives, in all our relationships.

Walk in confident friendship with Christ, who walks with you.

Christ's presence will strengthen us wherever our journeys take us.

Rejoice in the song of the Spirit, acknowledging the life in your breath.

We welcome the guiding wind of God's Spirit to lead us forth in grace and peace.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Thanks to our worship helpers today!

Liturgist: Elizabeth Cooper-Martin

Digital Host: Beth Marshwood

Greeter: Stephen Sugg

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*

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

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(Office Hours: Wed, Fri—10am to 3pm or by appointment)
Ecumenical † Just Peace † Open & Affirming † More Light