



Rockville United Church
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
5th Sunday of Easter
May 3, 2026 ~ Hybrid Worship

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

Njalo

South African

*CALL TO WORSHIP

In you, O God, we seek sanctuary; in you, Holy One, we seek refuge.

For your name's sake, lead us and guide us; draw us out from every hidden net.

You are indeed our rock of refuge and our tender shelter.

Our times are in your hands—our grief and hope, our questions and calling.

In your house there are many dwelling places—a home prepared for each of us.

Make room within us for Love to draw near; make room among us for all to dwell in safety.

Abide in us that we might abide in you.

Let your face shine upon us and fill us with your steadfast love.

*HYMN

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Chalice Hymnal, No. 65

(verses 1, 3 & 4)

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
our helper he, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.

For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe,
with craft and power great, and armed with cruel hate,
on earth without an equal.

And though this world with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed the truth to triumph through us.

The powers of darkness grim, we tremble not for them;
their rage we can endure, for lo! their doom is sure:
One little word shall fell them.

God's word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth.
The Spirit and the gifts are ours, through Christ, who with us sideth.

Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also.
The body they may kill, God's truth abideth still,
God's reign endures forever.

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (unison)

Holy One, our rock and our refuge, we confess that we have tried to build our lives on shifting ground. We have forgotten that you are the firm foundation that holds us up when the world feels unstable. We acknowledge that we have often been like jagged rocks, sharp and unyielding, creating edges that push others away instead of drawing them in. We have failed to be the smooth and steady stones that make your house a place of safety and peace. We have hesitated to do the work of living with compassion and justice. We have chased our own ambitions and ignored the greater works of healing that our community requires. Forgive us for the times we have been silent. Forgive us for the times we have chosen to pile burdens on the most vulnerable rather than strengthening the foundation that supports the weak. Smooth our rough edges and reshape us into living stones, rooted in your truth and grounded in your love. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Receive the assurance of Christ our cornerstone, who gives you strength and support. Receive the mercy of God, who calls you from despair into hope, from suffering into repair, from hopelessness into resolve. God has given you capacity for strength and compassion, so move in the world with courage and conviction to make real your faith, to do the good works, to bind up the brokenhearted, and bring liberation to all who are oppressed.

CHORAL RESPONSE

Bind Us Together

Gillman

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

The Inclusive Bible

In you, O God, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame;
in your righteousness deliver me;
Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily.
Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.
You are indeed my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me;
take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.
Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O faithful God.
My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.
Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: *Thanks be to God.*

SERMON

“Our Rock of Refuge”

Rev. Jennifer Knutsen

***HYMN**

Hope of the World
(verses 1 & 2)

Chalice Hymnal, No. 538

Hope of the world, O Christ of great compassion:
speak to our fearful hearts by conflict rent;
save us, your people, from consuming passion,
who by our own false hopes and aims are spent.

Hope of the world, God’s gift from highest heaven,
bringing to hungry souls the bread of life:
still let your Spirit unto us be given
to heal earth’s wounds and end its bitter strife.

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)

***Living God, you are the foundation upon which we stand. As these gifts are gathered,
we pray they become the spiritual mortar and stone that strengthens our community.
May our resources build structures that offer care and protection, and endure in faith,
love, and justice. Amen.***

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.

Communion Servers: Donna Perry Lalley and Dan Hockensmith

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT (unison)

***Holy God, great us the steadfastness of people who have journeyed in uncertain times,
holding onto your promise that you would be with them. As we venture forth from this
table of abundance, help us to be your hope for the world. Be with us as we do the work
of liberating the world from all that separates us from one another and from you,
nourished, strengthened, and supported in the love of Jesus Christ. Amen.***

***HYMN**

How Firm a Foundation

Chalice Hymnal, No. 618

(verses 1, 2, 3 & 5)

How firm a foundation, ye saints of our God,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Fear not, I am with thee, oh be not dismayed,
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid.
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!

***BENEDICTION**

Let not your hearts be troubled.

Believe in the power of God at work in you and through you.

Do the work of loving God, neighbor, and self.

Do the work of holding the complexity of life in tension with compassion and care.

Do the work of believing a future with hope is possible.

Do the work of nurturing that hope into a vision, and the vision into reality.

Do the work of glorifying God in all you do.

And may the grace of God, the love of Christ, and the power of the Spirit go with you.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Thanks to our worship helpers today!

Liturgist: Dan Hockensmith
Digital Host: Beth Marshwood
Welcome Table: Frances Hockensmith
Greeter: Stephen Sugg

Cover photo: Ranchos Church 1930 by Georgia O'Keeffe

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

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

Ecumenical † Just Peace † Open & Affirming † More Light